

Family Department.

A HARD LESSON.

A TALE.

[Written for the Church Guardian.]

(Continued.)

He had decided the matter for himself, but nevertheless it was a relief to him when he heard the long, keen whistle of the train, which told him that hesitation was no longer possible.

The iron gate swung back from his hand, and, at the sound it made, a girl who had been sitting on a low seat beside the fire sprang up and stood for a moment, listening with a loudly-beating heart.

"And how is my fairy to night?" said Archie Lennox, after an affectionate welcome from Mrs. Goodwin, and he put out his hand to draw the child to him.

"Bad, bad, Chee-chee!" She said, shaking her head with great disapproval, "Tixie no weeties." "Chee chee has brought nothing but himself," said Archie, laughing, and was very near not bringing even that, and in answer to Inez questioning look he told them of his having been on his way to the station, en route to Hillerton, and how it had come to pass that he was with them after all.

"Don't be alarmed," he added, "seeing a little look of anxiety flit across the face turned towards him, there will be the abundance of time to see Miss Culpepper on the twenty-sixth, and indeed I should have rebelled at once, when Dryson proposed my going, only that this very morning something had happened which was one of the thousand reasons I wanted to see you to-night, can you guess? not—what would you say if I told you that in a year from now the 'mysterious' Co. after Dryson & Picket would represent a name that is not quite unknown to you."

In any way, divide them. And then they all thought of him who would have been so glad of Archie's success, and the women's eyes filled with tears.

The evening passed only too quickly, an evening to which they were destined to look back with a strange regret. They had so much to say to each other, so much of the happy past, and of what they trusted, would be the happier future. It was not until Miss Trixie's bed time, however, that they could enjoy a peaceful talk.

When Lennox had arrived he had taken off his overcoat and, remembering Trixie's invariable habit of investigating his pockets, had transferred to it his note book with its valuable contents. There hung the coat, and Trixie's eyes rested on it as she passed out into the hall on her way to Katie. Immediately the thought of possible treasures in the pockets of that coat suggests itself to her mind, and the next moment she is standing on tiptoe on a hall chair, vainly endeavouring to reach it.

She does not take it to Inez or Archie to open it, for she has some latent consciousness that she is a culprit, and at last she grows impatient with it, and tosses it from her, picks it up again, and throws it—anywhere, and it lodges between the carved top of a small old-fashioned secretary, half book case, half medicine chest, and the wall.

For a long time, the three sat around the pleasant fire. What a skill, calm

might it was. Christmas peace seemed brooding over the earth, a something which chastened earthly happiness, and drew the thoughts upward to a higher, which faded not away. To the mother especially, for whom the morning and noon-tide brightness of life had passed away, this PEACE was precious; but to Inez and Archie, too, a message seemed to come from the Prince of Peace, who was the Man of Sorrows also.

There is nothing, I think, more awful in this strange checkered human life of ours than the fact that only a brief moment of time so often separates great joy from equal sorrow or misfortune. One moment, it may be, we are looking forward with an anticipation which, in itself, is delight to the speedy meeting with one who is dear to us as life itself, the next, and the message is put into our hands which seems for us to blot the sun out of heaven.

Archie has read the blessed story of the Angels' Message, and the Wondrous Birth; and they stand lingering for a few moments before wishing each other "Good Night!" We wish we could prolong those moments, for we know that when Archie closes the door behind him, he will enter upon a very different phase of life.

At last Mrs. Goodwin points to the clock, and says that he must positively go, and, with a laughing pretense of terror at her severity, he hurries away.

(To be continued.)

THEOLOGY IN A SHIPYARD.

"At high water to-morrow we launch her," said the carpenter-sexton to me, as he was shutting the vestry after meeting. I wanted to see that launch. On time I was there. Around and over the stately hull there was time to stroll. The clatter of a hundred beetles and mallets, the racket of braces, "shores" knocked away, and cries of the carpenters, kept the ears busy.

"You, sir, on that log yonder, you are a minister are you? Now if you'll mind it, I can show you some theology here that will help you pray and preach better than some of you commonly do."

"Now," said the ship, "I'm a kind of system of theology in nature and condition."

"Theology, and a system' of it! I should like to see how," said I.

Whereupon, grave as a professor, it spake thus: "By nature I'm of the dry land; sprang from it; each timber in me grew there; each bolt and spike was mined there. All parts of me are of the earth, an I so, earthy. That's my natural state—you've heard that phrase? Now I'm a ship, made of parts and powers, and worth forty times what the stook in me by nature is worth, if only I can change myself out of this, my natural state. I'm a dead loss, utterly useless as to the end for which I was made, unless I quit this 'natural state'—that is, get into this sea before us. There I shall come under new laws of life, motion, service and destiny—i. e. live a wholly new kind of life."

"Did I see it?—I thought I did." "You preachers call such a change in a man's conversion, and say men are lost if not so changed—converted. Now this launching of me is like your conversion, said the ship. "In a moment I'm by it in a new world; under new laws—conditions of existence; in new uses and work, and such as were not possible to me before; and mark—once in that new state, or off land, I never can get back again—except (sadly) as a ruined wreck."

You hear that racket of mauls and mallets all around under me 'driving up wedges' and 'knocking out the props'?"

Indeed, I could not hear much else just then.

"That's what you ministers have to do to get sinners who are vain and self-confident ready to rest on Christ. These props and shores I lean upon are just like the good works, good resolutions, and such like to which men stick so tenaciously."

And I thought the ship was right.—Lynman Whitting, D. D.

THE SINGING DOG.

So much that is wonderful and interesting has been already related about animals in general, and more especially about dogs, that it scarcely seems possible to tell of any new trait in the latter. The fact of a dog attempting to sing the scale, and succeeding in doing so is, however, I think, a novelty; but as I have more than once witnessed the performance, I can vouch for the truth of it. "Fluff's" appearance corresponded to his name; he was a lovely white poodle, coveted with long curls; he wore a blue ribbon round his neck, and when curled up upon the rug he looked like a fluffy snowball.

So she no day took him upon her lap and gently reproved him for making such a noise. She then began to sing the scale. Fluff appeared to be listening attentively for a few minutes, then he suddenly opened his mouth and produced a very good, clear note, a decided Do. My friend could not help being struck by the tone, and she said laughingly, "Well done, Fluff! try again: sing the Do after me." She then sang the note loudly, striking it at the same time upon the piano. Fluff opened his mouth, and in the most comical manner repeated the note, which was perfectly true.

In this way Mrs. H— went patiently through the whole scale trying each tone, always returning to the Do, in order to make him perfect in the starting note. After an hour's hard work—which, however, did not seem at all distasteful to him—Fluff had mastered the scale, and could sing it after his mistress, note for note. Of course he was patted and praised for his performance, which was renewed the next day. To my friend's great pleasure and amusement Fluff had not forgotten his lesson. He seemed rather pleased than otherwise at being placed on the chair near the piano, at once opened his mouth, and was ready to begin. After two or three days she tried him with the piano alone, and discovered that he was capable of singing the scale equally well without the help of her voice.

Of course, the next step was to make Fluff's performance known, and Mrs. H—'s friends, of whom I myself was one, had often the opportunity of hearing this prodigy. It was certainly a strange sight to watch little Fluff, when he was called, come immediately to the piano, take his place, open his mouth, whilst he shook his curly head, and looked all round out of his bright brown eyes. This done, he would perform his musical feat as well as any boy or girl might have done. He kept it up for about a year. Six months then elapsed, during which time I did not see Fluff. Calling at the house the other day, I asked my friend whether he still continued to sing. She informed me, and said that he had given it up, because he had been laughed at. Being of a very sensitive disposition, poor Fluff had mistaken the laughter, which was meant for approval, for ridicule, and had accordingly ceased to sing.—MARCILLA.

[The foregoing anecdote appeared to be scarcely reasonable, and our cor-

respondent, who is an authoress of good standing, was desired to revise her statement, and give her own voucher of personal knowledge of the incident. She has done this in the completest manner.—Ed.]—Animal World.

In these days of hurry and bustle, we find ourselves face to face with a terrible danger; and it is this—no time to be alone with God. The world, in these last days, is running fast; we live in what is called "the age of progress," and you know we must keep pace with the times." So the world says.

But this spirit of the world has not confined itself to the world. It is alas, to be found among the saints of God. And what is the result? The result is—no time to be alone with God. And this is immediately followed by no inclination to be alone with God. And what next? Surely the question does not need an answer.

Can there be any condition more deplorable than the condition of a child of God who has no inclination to be alone with his Father?

Do you want a Scriptural assurance of your interest in Christ? It can only be maintained by an unshaken reliance on His atonement, and a growing conformity to His image; for "we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." Beware, then, of substituting an ideal for a real sanctification. Let nothing satisfy you but a work of grace in the heart, evidencing itself by those fruits of the Spirit which are in all goodness and righteousness and truth.—J. Z.

I AM persuaded that many persons say more about their sins being too great to be pardoned than they either believe or feel, from a supposition that it is a token of humility to talk thus. God cannot be glorified, nor Christ honoured, by doubting of His ability or willingness to save.—James.

BOOK NOTICES.

THE DAILY ROUND: Meditation, Prayer and Praise, adapted to the course of the Christian Year.

WE most earnestly recommend to the notice of our readers, this little book, lately published in England, which seems successfully to supply a want long felt by many. Its teaching is thoroughly sound and earnest, and the practical, thoughtful tone throughout the whole book could scarcely fail to arouse attention and serious thought, and moreover to be of great help and comfort in the daily life. A short meditation follows the text, which forms the heading and subject of each daily reading, often interspersed with personal questions to be put to each individual soul; this is followed by a very brief prayer, ending with a verse of some hymn. To those who have not time or opportunity for longer and more elaborate daily reading, we feel convinced that the "Daily Round" will, after perusal, commend itself most heartily by its very simplicity and earnestness. The book has already received, as it heartily deserves, very favorable mention from the pens of Bishops and Clergy, on the other side of the Atlantic.

Marriages.

PUBLICOVER—PUBLICOVER.—On the 15th inst., at St. Barnabas Church, Blandford, by the Rev. John Manning, Rector, Mr. Artemas Augustine Publicover to Helena, daughter of James Publicover, Esq., of Blandford.

BEST—GEENER.—At Belle Isle, Annapolis Co., at the residence of the bride's father, on 14th inst., by Rev. L. M. Wilkins, B. A., Mr. Sylvester Best to Miss Arminda, daughter of Mr. George Geener.

MILLS—YOUNG.—Also, at Belle Isle by the same, on 16th inst., at the residence of Mr. W. H. Young, father of the bride, Mr. Samuel Mills, of Granville Ferry, to Miss Emily Euphemia Young.

MCALPINE—TOWNSEND.—At the Church of St. Bartholomew, Mission of Louisburg, C. B., on Thursday, 16th December, by Clarence W. McCally, Deacon in charge, Edmund S. McAlpine, merchant, and Mrs., widow of the late Joshua Townsend.

Deaths.

McKAY, W.—At Kingsclear on the evening of the 16th inst. of congestion of the lungs. William McKay, aged 61 years. Deceased was a native of White Hall, near Ballyvaughan, County Antrim, Ireland, and over fifty years a resident of Kingsclear, York County, N. B. Entered into rest Dec. 17th, at Bellevue, Fredericktown, Hannah Elizabeth, wife of Beverly R. Jouett, Esq., aged 70 years. "For so He giveth His beloved sleep."