The Provincial Wesleyan.

Published under the direction of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference of Eastern British America.

Volume XVI. No. 1. HALIFAX, N. S., WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 1864. Whole No. 756

Religious Miscellany.

Hymn.

BY ALICE CARY.

ourner, mourn not vanished light,
ut fix your fearful hopes above;
watch r, through the long, dark night,
hall see the day-break of God's love.

land all green and bright and fair
Lies just beyond the vale of tears,
And we shall meet, immortal there,
The pleasures of our mortal years.

He who to death has doomed our race,
With steadfast faith our souls has armed,
And made us children of his grace
To go into the cave unharmed.

he storm may beat, the night may close,
The face may change, the blood run chill,
ut his great love no limit knows,
And therefore we should fear no ill.

ust as we are, and steeped in guilt,
How strange, how wondrous, how divine,
hat he hath for us mansions built,
Where everlasting splendors shine.

ny days with beauty let us trim,
As nature trims with flowers the sod;
living the glory all to Him—
Our Friend, our Father, and our God.

For the Provincial Wesleyan

Last Sabbath of the Year.

BY MARY E. HERBERT.

"Sweet Sabbath of the year,
While evening lights delay,
Methinks I see thy parting steps,
Steal from the earth away."

The shadows of evening are fast gathering over the landscape. The Sabbath has nearly gone, the last Sabbath of another year!

"Backward, flow backward, oh Time in your flight."

nd let us, in this hour, "due to meditation," nd sacred thought, review the past, and cast, it may be, a glance of mingled awe and trust into e unknown mysteries of another year.

Come, my Christian friend and brother, come, d with me contemplate the past, review the acious dealings of our Father in Heaven; me,

"Praise Him for all that is past,
And trust him for all that's to come!"

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord," exclaimed the Psalmist, and surely at such a period, and remembering Him, who, "crowneth the year with his goodness," basely ungrateful should we be, were our voices silent in thanksgiving. We, who so often perchance, during the past year, under the pressure of care or grief ave again and again ejaculated, "God be merciful," now, as its closing hours draw near, shall we refuse to cry from the depths of loving hearts "God be praised?"

Yes, God be praised for the mercies of another year! Day by day has deciphered for us the hand-writing in the mysterious roll, the New Year's earliest gift; with smiles and anon with tears we have persued its records, yet written with a Father's hand, and signed with a Father's signature, can we doubt that its contents, however painful at times they may have appeared, were the dictates of unerring Wisdom and Infinite Love? What blessings did each recurring season yield; gladly we hailed the vernal ints, the opening bud, the springing grass, the timid note of woodland choristers, these harbingers of spring; how our hearts swelled with emotion as summer's maturer charms met our gaze, when

"Away from the haunts of care-worn men,"

we rambled through sylvan solitudes, drank rich draughts of the balmy health inspiring air,—plucked the modest wild flowers of our native land, and felt how soothing, how refining, how ennobling, the influences of Nature; and Autumn

The seiz... on board the ...teous harvest, its soft and mellow well which, its gorgeously-tinted forests, a number ...ovely as their beauty passed away," the custo... Secretar... not all the lavish gifts of an indulation of it, and formed to awaken in the heart, traders. ...t emotions of praise?

The Gov... to succor and defend, His presence wise relativ... ...h us, surrounding and sustaining It has been can vessels void waste as in the city full," having pape... felt, Marshall M... He vital breathes there must be life." boats plying ...paired to pro... a shadow on your brow, and unregulations st... dimming your eyes; your song of nforced by th... ...e gladest cadence mingled with it a as had the ...ning, and the lips that utter thanks- ...s had ...urray in tremulous with repressed emotion. ...ss of p...the memories of the past are thickly ...ering to-night, and your mute upbraiding Th... ...e seems to whisper, "Has the year been ...unshine?"

Ah, my friend, it may be you anticipated its ...ing with a heart beating high with hope, ...pes that were doomed to perish; perhaps, ...ough joyous its commencement, sorrows of ...ich you little recked, have since haunted your ...idnight pillow, causing you to water your couch ...th your tears, until you have been ready to claim with another tried and tempted one, "I ...sthe it, I would not live always."

It may be that the flowers that adorned your ...th faded ere plucked or pierced your hand ...ith thorns; that the fair and graceful reed on ...hich so confidently you leaned became

"A spear
n whose sharp point Hope bleeds and Peace expires."

Have these been your experiences? Do the ...hadows of the past seem to cast a dense gloom ...ver the future? Is the path so dark so intricate, ...hat with fear and trembling you look forward to ...eading its wildening mazes, remember for your ...ncouragement that "Unto the upright there ...riseth light in the darkness." Blessed promise, ...at "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." Blessed promise, that but this ...orn, so eloquently and earnestly enforced ...y Heaven's high ambassador, fell so sweet- ...on the Christian's ear, consoling the ...adened spirit and urging to renewed confidence ..."Him who doth not willingly afflict the chil- ...en of men," I counsel thee, friend, to take it ...thine heart; and let it be thy talisman through ...e coming year, thy star of promise in the darkest night.

...and strangely, in beautiful illustration of this ...precious ...ing back the memory of a ...ream, as ...the early dawning ...f the vanishing year, a vision fraught with encouragement, and worthy of remembrance and record. "I dreamed," said one "that I was walking in a strange and solitary city. Through the intense darkness that surrounded me, a darkness thet might be felt, I still dimly discerned tall, ghostly, deserted dwellings that seemed to frown on me as I passed. The path was new, and I knew not whither it led, yet safely and with unfaltering confidence I pursued my way, singing as I went some sweet song of hope and trust, now and then looking back, and with cheerful words encouraging some, who, fearful and at a distance, were yet fellow travellers in the way. All at once another voice mingled with mine in the sacred strain; another form seemed travelling by my side, and cheered by the companionship of one like-minded, with increased vigour and confidence I moved onward, when suddenly a vision flitted across my path; my faith seemed to fail, giving place to a terrible sense of danger, when instantaneously it seemed I was surrounded by light. The friend, whose companionship had cheered part of the pilgrimage, and dear ones, over whose grave the grass had waved for years were around me; they embraced me; they lavished the fondest caresses, and in tones of gentle rebuke, mingled with ineffable tenderness, whispered, "Why so easily did thy courage fail? We were all hovering around, watching over thy every step, thou needest not to have been afraid."

The dreamer awoke, and encouraged by the vision to pursue, unfaltering the path of duty, assured that her experince would be verified in the promise of Sacred Writ, "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." Yes, move forward cheerfully trusting in Him who giveth songs in the night, and be assured that the sorrows that now cloud your brow, and weigh down your spirits, shall pass away when they have fulfilled their mission, "Working the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby."

Yes, more forward, cheerfully trusting in Him who giveth songs in the night, and be assured that the sorrows that now cloud your brow, and weigh down your spirits, shall pass away when they have fulfilled their mission, "working the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby."

And they, our departed ones, whose memory, ever precious, comes back at such an hour as this with strange vividness and beauty, think you, they are not interested spectators of our career, sympathizing in our sorrows, whispering words of encouragement to the desponding heart,—and watching over us with tenderest affection? Oh, ye beloved, who so early passed away from our sight, we remember you still with fond regret, with deepest yearnings to behold you again; another year has nearly flown, if years be marked in the cycles of eternity, how has it sped with you? Another year in Heaven! What new revelations of glory have been unfolded to your enraptured gaze; to what fresh heights of knowledge have you obtained, what added bliss has been your experience during its passage! But to us, your kindred, who still linger here darkly groping amid the mists and shadows of earth, to us, how sadly at times has it flown,—to us

"Who mourn the broken household band."

Yet still we joy in your joy; we rejoiced in your happiness on earth; we participate now, by faith, in your exalted bliss,—and, though it be but slowly and painfully, yet still we trust, upward and onward, we pursue the path that leads to immortality and you?

"There fairer flowers than Eden's bloom,
Or sin or sorrow knew;
Blest seats, through wild and stormy seas
We onward press to you!"

Nor in this hour of pensive yet hallowed remembrance, shall they be forgotten, our absent friends, with whom we once "took sweet counsel," and "walked to the house of God in company,"—but from whom we are now severed by "mount, or stream, or sea." The friends of "Auld Langsyne."

"Oh is our tenderness by their's repaid,
And do they sigh lost moments to regain;
And wish each look recalled, each word unsaid,
That ever chanced to give each other pain?
Yes, doubt it not, though cold and sundered long.
Pride to the power of time and distance bends,—
Forgotten be the slight,—repaired the wrong.
The heart still breathes, "Peace to our absent friends!"

Yes, peace to them wherever they sojourn. May our covenant God have them under his especial care; may the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, accompany them in their pilgrimage,—and should it be that we are privileged to behold them no more on the shores of time, may we meet in that happier land where friendship, refined from earthly dross, finds its perfect fruition.

But the hour of evening has passed, and the quiet night enwraps us with her mantle.

Farewell, ye Sabbath seasons of peace and sweet delight, farewell! We bless you for the counsel and encouragement we have received during your sacred hours; for each high and holy thought,—for each hallowed resolution,—for the opportunities afforded for preparation for an eternal Sabbath, sweet is the memory of your sojourn with us,—and we bless you for it, nay, rather, praise Him, "whose ye are and whom ye serve."

Thankful for the mercies that have been our portion in the past, Father, afresh we place our hand in thine, beseeching thee to "choose our inheritance for us;" to "lead us by the right way unto a city of habitation," rejoicing while we remember that "This God is our God, He will be our guide even unto death."

Halifax, Dec. 27, 1863.

Reminiscences of Captain Webb.

About February, 1767, the little assembly at Embury's house, New York, were surprised, if not alarmed, by the appearance among them of a stranger in military costume, girt with his sword. He was an officer of the royal army. "All eyes were upon him; he had come to persecute them, to interrupt their religious services, or prohibit them from worshipping?" He soon relieved their apprehensions by his devout participation in their devotions. When they sung he rose with them, when they prayed he knelt. At the conclusion of the service he introduced himself to the preacher and his leading brethren as Captain Thomas Webb, of the king's service, but also "a soldier of the cross, and spiritual son of John Wesley;" they were overjoyed, and hailed him as a "brother beloved." He had been authorized by Wesley to preach; they offered him their humble desk, and thenceforward Captain Thomas Webb was to be one of the chief founders of American Methodism.

A very interesting character is this "good soldier of the Lord Jesus." "The brave are generous," says the old maxim. Thos. Webb's benignant face showed that he had both qualities. It presented the lineaments of a singularly tender, and fatherly soul, and there was no little "fire" end pathos in his elocution. He wore a shade over one of his eyes, a badge of his courage; for he had fought at the siege of Louisburg, and had scaled with Wolf the Heights of Abraham, and fought in the battle at Quebec, the most important military event before the Revolution in the history of the continent; for by it the Papal domination of France was overthrown in the North, and the country, from Hudson's Bay to the Gulf of Mexico, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, placed under Protestant control, and opened for its great career in Christian civilisation.

Captain Webb lost his right eye at Louisburg and was wounded in his right arm at Quebec. About eight years after the battle of the Plains of Abraham he heard John Wesley preach in Bristol; he then became a decidedly religious man, and in 1765 joined a Methodist society. Entering a Methodist congregation at Bath, which was disappointed by its circuit preacher, he advanced to the altar, in his regimentals, and addressed them with great effect, chiefly narrating his own Christian experience. Wesley, ever vigilant for "helpers," licensed him to preach, and through the remainder of his life he was indefatigable in Christian labors, both in the New World and in the Old, preaching, giving his money, founding societies, and attending Conferences. Asbury characterized him as "an Israelite indeed." Wesley, who delighted in the disciplinary regularity, the obedience and courage of military men, not a few of whom entered his itinerant ranks, evidently loved the good captain. "He is a man of fire," wrote the great founder, "and the power of God constantly accompanies his word." He heard Webb in the Old Foundry, London, in 1773, and writes: "I admire the wisdom of God in still raising up various preachers, according to the various tastes of men. The captain is all life; therefore, although he is not deep or regular, yet many, who would not hear a better preacher, flock to hear him, and many are convinced under his preaching." He records, again, that the captain had "kindled a flame," in Bath, "and it has not yet gone out." "I found his preaching in the street in Winchester had been blessed greatly. Many were more or less convinced of sin, and several had found peace with God. I never saw the house before so crowded with serious and attentive hearers." The brave captain's word "in the street in Winchester," was to stand further than Wesley supposed when he made this entry in his *Journal*. There were soldiers in the town, and Webb always drew such to his congregations; some of them were converted; their regiment was afterwards sent to the Norman Isles in the Channel. They wrote back for a Methodist preacher; if one were sent who could speak both French and English, they predicted that "the gospel would shine over the islands." The sainted Robert Carr Brackenbury, "gentleman" "local preacher," Alexander Kilham, (founder of the New Connexion Methodists), and, later, Adam Clarke, were sent, and Methodism was founded in the beautiful Channel Islands, where it has ever since flourished, and whence it sent forth at last the evangelists who have founded it in France.

For eleven or twelve years we catch glimpses of the military evangelist in the *Journal* of Wesley. The last of them is in 1785, when, being at Salisbury where the captain had recently preached, he endeavored to avail himself of the fire which that veteran seldom fails to kindle. Fletcher of Madeley appreciated him, and tried hard, with him, to induce Benson, the commentator, to throw himself into the Methodistic movement in America. Fletcher himself, doubtless by the influence of Webb, had strong thoughts of doing so, but his health forbade it.

The allusion to Webb in the contemporary publications of Methodism show that he was a man of profound piety. "He experienced much of the power of religion in his own soul," says an itinerant who usually lodged at his home in Bath. "He wrestled day and night with God for that degree of grace which he stood in need of, that he might stand firm as the beaten anvil to the stroke; and he was favored with those communications from above which made him bold to declare the whole counsel of God. His evidence of the favor of God was so bright that he never lost a sense of that blessed truth, "the blood of Jesus Christ cleaneth us from all sin." "For him to live was Christ, to die was gain."

There must have been an eminent power of natural eloquence in the preaching of the zealous man. John Adams, the statesman of the American Revolution and president of the republic, heard him with admiration, and describes him as "the old soldier—one of the most eloquent men I ever heard; he reaches the imagination and touches the passions very well, and expresses himself with great propriety." By another hearer he is spoken of as "a perfect Whitefield in declamation." His discourses were very affective, as has been remarked, with military men. They admired his noble mien and commanding voice. One of them, John Parsons, heard him in the open air at Salisbury, and has left us a brief representation of his manner. "With all that deference," says the account, "which he had been wont to pay to his superiors, he stood before the preacher, (whose piercing eye he thought scrutinized every individual present), prepared to listen with deep attention. The service commenced by the singing of a hymn, with which, we are told, the military hearer was highly delighted; an earnest prayer was then offered up in behalf of the assembled multitude; and, another hymn having been sung, the preacher read his text from his pocket Bible, and addressed the people in an extemporaneous discourse of considerable length, during which "the admiration of Parsons was excited to the highest pitch; not indeed by the preacher's sermon, but by the earnestness of his manner and his powerful voice, which so wrought upon the military feelings of Parsons that he thought the word of command, by such an excellent officer, would distinctly be heard throughout the line from right to left." The sermon being ended another hymn was sung, and a short prayer concluded the meeting. John Parson's favorable opinion was won for the Methodists by this sermon. He afterwards himself became a powerful local preacher, and, having done much good in various parts of England, during forty-five years, he departed to the hosts above, in his seventieth year, shouting as he went, "When I get to glory I will make heaven ring with my voice, and wave my palm over the saint, crying Victory! victory in the blood of the Lamb!"—*Methodist.*

Religious Intelligence.

Labrador Mission.

REPORT OF REV. J. GOODISON, 1863.

Being again appointed to this important Mission, I obtained a passage from this place to the coast of Labrador in the good ship *Eclipse*, Capt. R. H. Taylor. We sailed on the 15th of June; but owing to the Straits of Belle Isle being filled with very large ice, in which we were jammed six or seven days, we did not arrive at our destination until the 27th. On that date we dropped anchor in Matthews Cove, Battle Harbor, where on the following Sabbath I preached in a fisherman's house, which was crowded with attentive hearers. On Monday we arrived at Cape Charles, where the Mission boat is laid up. This week was spent in making the necessary preparations for the summer's cruise. On Sunday July 5th, I preached twice in the largest store in this place, formed the class and appointed the leader; I also looked after the welfare of the young. The Sabbath School is all that could be desired. I held a prayer meeting at night in a large house, it was good to be there, for Christ our Lord was present.

Tues. 7th. Yesterday being stormy I could not go out. To-day however I visited several families; with each family I read and prayed, asked their state and directed them to the Lamb of God. Wed. 8th. Visiting the people of Antles Cove, I gave some medicine to a sick woman, and at night preached in Mr. G. Taylor's house.

Friday, July 10th. Very rough yesterday, I was not out, as we can only go about in this Harbour by boat. I spent the whole of this day in visiting from house to house, met with a sick man, prescribed for his body, and spoke earnestly to him about his soul's eternal welfare. Sunday, July 12. Preached twice to large and very attentive congregations. Much of God's presence and power was felt during the afternoon service; it was a time long to be remembered. After service I again arranged the classes both male and female. The Sabbath school was duly cared for and all seemed in good working order for the season. May God abundantly bless these means of grace. A prayer meeting was held at night.

Monday, July 13. Being all ready for sea, we set sail at 9 a. m., for Red Bay, where we arrived at 6 p. m. When half way and near Henly Harbour, we accidentally struck a piece of ice, providentally it was struck by the stem of the boat, or we should have found a watery grave, as we were then some distance from the shore; the whales too were very numerous oftentimes coming up within gunshot of our frail craft; but the Lord preserved us. We sailed over fifty miles to-day along this dangerous coast. Friday, July 17. This day I finished visiting every family here. Death during the late severe winter has thinned the residents of this place, two heads of families, one young man, and two children have died, the testimonies left behind by some were very cheering—for them to die was gain. Finding some sick, I gave them medicine, which the Lord blessed to their recovery. Sunday, July 19. This day I preached twice, organized the class and Sabbath School and held a prayer meeting at night. In the afternoon I endeavored to improve the death of one of our young men from this place, (Carbonear) who unfortunately shot away part of his hand, and which caused his death. On his death bed he sought and found the Saviour; and died resting on the atonement. I trust his death will be sanctified to the good of the young men belonging to our Society here. Monday, July 21. Sailed to East St. Modest, where after visiting the people, I preached. The next day we rowed to Red Bay a distance of nine miles. The rest of the week was very rough. Sunday, July 26. A blessed, holy Sabbath. I preached twice, met the class, and held a prayer meeting. At the class meeting, I had the great pleasure of directing two young persons to the Lamb of God, and I have reason to believe they found the Saviour.

Wed., July 29. In a dense fog, but with a fair wind, we set sail for Chateaux, where arrived at night. The next day I visited twelve families, gave medicine to some that were sick, and preached in a large store crowded with devout worshippers. Friday. Went to Henly Harbour, preached and returned. Sat. Visited several other families and a sick woman. Sunday, Aug. 2. In the morning I preached at Chateaux and baptised three children, the store was crowded with attentive hearers, oh that they may be doers of the word. After dinner we rowed to Henly Harbour, where upon the rocks of this barren coast I besought the people to be reconciled to God. I trust some were persuaded so to do. At night I held a class meeting, ten were present, like St. Peter on Tabor's mount, we felt it good to be there. Monday I spent in visiting, reading and writing. The three following days I was very ill, having caught a severe cold. On Friday found myself much better, I again paid another visit to Chateaux.

Sat. We sailed to Cape Charles, where on the following Sabbath I preached twice and held a prayer meeting. I was pleased to find all things going on prosperously. To God be all the praise. Wed., Aug. 12. Sailed for Merchant. Man's Harbour, we arrived at night. Thursday. Again at my work of pastoral visitation; in one of the houses I found a Roman Catholic who joined us in the worship of the virgin's Son. The next day was spent in house to house visitation, in the afternoon I gave an exhortation to a few who gathered to spend an hour in God's service.

Sunday, Aug. 16. I this day preached twice, and held a prayer meeting. These services were well attended and God was manifestly present. Wed. We set sail for Square Island, where we arrived at night. The next day we sailed to Triangle, where at night I preached to as many as the largest house would contain. It was a gracious season. Having seen all the people here, the next day we came to Square Island, where I preached at night and visited the people the next day. Sunday, Aug. 23. I preached to two large attentive congregations in a store. The afternoon service was especially owned of God, I trust good was done. Too wet at night to hold any service. Mon. We sailed to Venison Tickle where we stayed that night; the next day we came to Stoyles' Harbour, found the people out fishing, I visited their families. Wed., Aug. 26. We sailed to Indian Tickle, where we arrived at night, I spent the rest of the week visiting &c. Here the late Henry Warren, Esq., of Teignmouth, England; had before his departure from earth erected a neat commodious little church for the use of the planters in this place, and in which I on the following Sabbath preached twice and held a prayer meeting, the Master's presence filling the place. During the afternoon service I baptized the infant daughter of a native Esquimaux woman, and I trust in answer to prayer she will be found among the number of God's elect. Monday. Set sail at 9 a. m. for Seal Islands, we arrived with our boat very leaky. It was a day of great toil. Tuesday morning. Pastoral visitations, at night I preached to as many people as the largest house would contain, I spent the next day like this, viz., in visiting and preaching.

Thurs. We set sail for Square Islands, where we arrived at 10 o'clock at night. Friday. Beating all day, we reached Merchant-Man's Harbour at night. I was very much tired in, but not of the work of this mission. The Lord still helps, glory be to His holy name. Sun., Sept. 6. Again preached twice and held a prayer meeting. The whole of the day's services were seasons of great spiritual profit. Monday. Sailed to Murray's Harbour, walked to Spear Harbour, where I received my letters and Conference news, I afterward walked to Murray's Harbour and then sailed to Little Harbour. Tues. Put out to go to Cape Charles, but had to put back again. I preached here to a few who were desirous of hearing the word of life. Wed., Sept. 9. Sailed to Murray's Harbour and walked to Petty Harbour. The road was very hilly and very marshy, I was very tired when I got in; the next day I visited every family in this place and invited them to hear the word of God read and expounded, a goodly number came. It was a very solemn time, God assisted me greatly whilst speaking of the great day of account. I trust good was done. Sat. I walked to Murray's Harbour and afterward sailed to Little Harbour, where on the following Sabbath I preached twice gave an exhortation, and held a prayer meeting. God was present to bless and save.

On Wed., Sept. 26, I sailed to Battle Harbour and from thence came to Cape Charles, where I spent the two following days about my Master's business. On Saturday I came to Battle Harbour amidst a gale of wind from the North West, and on Sabbath, Sept. 20th, I finished my labors on this Coast for the present, by preaching in the same house in which I opened my commission in Matthews Cove, Battle Harbour.

Having obtained a passage home in the *Centaur*, Captain Moses Clarke, of Brigus, we weighed anchor at 9 a. m., on Monday, the 21st, and amidst a gale of wind from the eastward, we dropped anchor in Brigus harbour, on Saturday the 27th of Sept. I arrived at Carbonear on Monday the 29th, thankful to God for His many mercies.

SUMMARY.—We have sailed over 400 miles of this barren coast, preached about 70 times, visited some hundreds of families, to whom were read and explained the word of God, organized the regular services of the Lord's day wherever it could be done, appointed leaders and organized classes wherever practicable, watched over and cared for the interests of the young, sold and distributed five dozen copies of the Holy Scriptures, gave away some hundreds of tracts, and medicine to many suffering ones. Some have been converted to God, others restored to His favour. The members in general have stood fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free. To God be all the praise. Amen.

JOHN GOODISON.

Carbonear, Oct. 8, 1863.

Educational.

Religious Culture and Early Training.

BY THE REV. J. R. NARRAWAY, A.M.

No. III.

Seeing how important it is that the work of mental improvement should be continuously carried on in the bosom of every family in the land, it is most desirable that needful books and suitable periodicals should be both plentiful and cheap. Now in these particulars no previous age can be compared favorably with our own. For works of the most sterling value, the most entraneing interest, in almost every department of literature and science, many of which are numbered among the classics of our tongue, and which at no very distant day were procurable only for the comparatively wealthy, are now to be obtained for a very insignificant sum. And then the current literature of the day in Reviews and Magazines, quarterly and monthly, in journals of a lighter order, weekly, bi-weekly, tri-weekly, and daily, is so abundant and so cheap, that every interest finds itself represented, and every necessity may be supplied.

Moreover, we are happily situated, in that large classes of our population are not compelled to devote their children to early, long-continued and exhausting toil, as is the case in older countries. The agricultural class is peculiarly well-placed in this respect. The tolerably light engagements of winter, and the long evenings of this season, spent far away from the vain and distracting excitements of large towns and cities, put at the disposal of farmers a large amount of precious time that might and ought to be consecrated to the mental culture of their families. No portion of the people, not professedly a learned class, should be able to equal our farmers in general intelligence, and intellectual cultivation. No occupation is nobler than agriculture. None brings one into closer contact with all that is suggestive, instructive and poetic in the various aspects of many-sided nature—none would better repay the skilful application of the resources of a well-cultured mind.

A winter evening fireside scene, illustrative of our idea of the manner in which self-improvement might be largely secured in the quiet homes of the country, could easily be imagined. At the close of some day, during the season of frost and snow, we would suppose the evening meal to be over, and household and other duties for the time to be carefully discharged. The members of the family are gathered together in the large and comfortable kitchen of a commodious farm house. The ruddy embers of the cheerful fire, shed their golden glow on the clean hearth. The curling flame and the starry sparks gleam in vivid contrast to the velvety blackness of the chimney back. The spotless floor has on it neither chairs without backs and seats, nor stools without legs. Not a window pane is broken, to be stuffed, and decorated with ragged flannel or a battered hat. The wide window sills are ornamented with graceful house plants, gently, thoughtfully tended, for they are healthy and shining. Around the walls are hung a series of maps, representing all the well known countries of the globe. In one corner remote from the fire is fixed a convenient and well-fixed bookcase, beneath which in roomy spaces, protected by doors, may be found large piles of carefully filled journals; one pile containing the back numbers of the weekly religious paper taken, the other, miscellaneous gatherings from the newspaper press.

On one side of the cosy fire-side, sits the benignant, slippered *pater familias*, with his faithful four-footed friend, Nero, stretched out by his chair, nose between paws, partly dozing, partly meditative upon the emblematic shapes dancing in the wavy flame and circling smoke. On the other side, sits the smiling, mellow matron, plying the time-beguiling knitting needles, with tabby softly purring, wrapped in the spreading folds of its mistress's gown. Around the fire-place and the table, are grouped the olive branches of the family stem, save that tender one that lies nestling in the cradle, and the two slightly older ones that are away snugly tucked round in their little cot. The shining lamp throws its silvery glitter all over the room. The book for the night is opened by the reader for the house; while the much thumbed dictionary is placed within easy reach, that no unusual word may pass with its meaning in doubt. The reading proceeds. But pauses are soon demanded; questions are presented, reflections are made, fine passages repeated, doubtful ones reconsidered, maps, if needful, are consulted, to trace the movements of armies, the wandering of travellers, or the perils of mariners. Events are located in their proper time and place. When one young reader tires another promptly relieves him, till it is time to prepare for the nightly slumber. Lessons from the Sacred Volume, and prayer at the foot of the family altar for the mercy and protection of the Guardian of the solemn hours, fittingly close the exercises of an evening well-spent.

Night after night this scene shall be reproduced, with slight alterations. Sometimes the subject for study is History; sometimes, Biography; sometimes, Voyages and Travels. Now it is a choice volume of Sermons that is read, now it is a collection of senatorial masterpieces that is admired. The voice of some wise expounder popularizing science is alternated by the thrilling vibrations of some classic poetic harp reciting the deeds, and re-echoing the fame of some much-daring, much-enduring hero. The progress of Christianity abroad is eagerly watched; the movement of Churches at home noted, and understood. Thus rolls the winter away; each week augmenting the mental strength of a happy, self-improving family. Nor is this good work wholly intermitted during less opportune seasons.

How unlike the reality existing in the many mentally stagnant homes of our country is the picture sketched. Walls without maps, shelves without books, minds without knowlege, weary winter nights without improvement, is the abounding reality. Upon many parlour tables you may see the same flashy History of the North American Indians or the same pretentious History of the World, illustrated with dowdy, staring pictures, vile daubs in brick-red and chrome yellow. Diligent exploration may also find itself rewarded in the discovery of a few loose sheets of Debates of the House of Assembly, and of that unromantic repertory of disjointed facts called an Almanic. With such a library what is to be done? Night may come early, opportunity be abundant, need of culture be pressing but Pa will smoke his pipe and snore in one corner, while Mamma nods or frets in the other. For the chronicles of the barnyard are meagre—the spavin on dobbin's leg, the plumpness of brindle's ribs, the gathering lard on grunter's interiors and the frostbitten appendages of the rooster's head are no doubt interesting facts; but then they are soon recited, and they do not greatly expand the mind. There is of course the small gossip of the settlement to fall back upon, and it is fallen back upon with great frequency. Yet it seems to be more exciting than improving—more provocative of envy and uncharitableness than conducive to intellectual culture and brotherly kindness.

Why, when there is so much to be learned, so much time in which to learn, so much pleasure in the work of learning, and so much lasting profit resulting from judicious mental training, is there so much indifference, if not positive distaste, to the necessary yet pleasant task of self-improvement? One head of a family tells you he never had much learning. By all means let him endeavour to place his children in a better position. Another affirms that he cannot send his children to school as he would wish to do. If this be really true, let him do his utmost to forward their mental improvement at home. Yet another ignoramus asserts that he has got on very well without book-learning, and that his children will be able to do as he did. That remains to be proved. And it is open to question whether any man can be said to have got on well whose untutored mind is dormant and dark with undisciplined ignorance. An ignorant man will come to be more and more regarded as a mere hewer of wood and drawer of water. Besides, parents are bound by an authority not to be slighted with impunity to *train* up their children in the way in which they should go. Ignorance is not that way.

Again, some plead that time cannot be found for family reading—duties are to numerous and urgent. That there are periods of the year during which leisure for mental improvement is scanty, indeed, none will deny; but that through the lengthened season of winter careful arrangement and persevering economy will secure much space for the performance of this most desirable duty, by our farming population especially, may be most strongly affirmed. The will can find the way. Some sleepy soul declares that after his hard daily work he is too weary and drowsy to trouble himself with reading. Occasionally this objection may be sound. But the drowsiness of early eventide is more a habit than a necessity, for when one finds nothing interesting to do, he is glad to seek refuge in sleep. But were this objection always just, as applicable to hard-working parents it would be futile when applied to the state of children, on whose behalf the case is pleaded.

Some say their children are such bad readers that there is neither pleasure nor profit in listening to them. But it is careful practice alone that makes perfect. The more poorly educated these children may be, the more need there is that extra pains should be taken with them at home. It is altogether amazing what a fund of useful knowledge it is possible to acquire in the home circle by the systematic improvement of leisure hours. It is by some confidently affirmed that they are unable to buy books and to pay for periodicals to conduct the work of fireside mental culture. Now a few very poor families may be in this distressing predicament. Let these borrow from the benevolent as extensively as possible. Others may be unable to buy many books in any one year; but let them have a care when they replenish their small libraries to increase their little store by the edition of real worth only, that will bear reading a hundred times. One good book thoroughly mastered is of more value in mental training than a dozen hastily skimmed, or than a whole cartload of useless stuff greedily devoured.

But if a number of families, unable individually to purchase many books, were to combine their means in this matter, and then regularly interchange among themselves their literary treasures, this difficulty of narrow pecuniary resources would be obviated. This objection, however, is frequently presented on untenable grounds. For there are many families whose habitations are void of the cheerful presence of books, that spend many pounds a year in intoxicating drinks. Besides, there are others, not impoverished by wasteful liquor expenditures, who yet throw away considerable sums yearly in the purchase of tobacco, while at the same time, in their poverty, they are bookless and newspaperless.

But, again, there are many who appear to think that the last thing to be bought is food for the mind, garniture for the soul—every other want, real or artificial, is first to be supplied. The richest furniture, the costliest clothing, the newest fashions *must* be procured, it is thought. But neither rich furniture nor fine clothes nor rare fashions render a home intelligently happy. The adornment, the culture of the mind, the enrichment of the heart, these are the most tasteful embellishments of life, the most delicious luxuries of the soul, the most imperious necessities of human destiny. Wise is that parent who in every possible way shall seek to enrich the soul of his child with endowments like these, as imperishable as they are beyond all price.

General Miscellany.

Dirge for 1863.

On the precipice of life,
Midst the whirl of human strife;
From the present, down we gaze,
Through the mist and through the haze,
On the rapid, rushing river
Bounding madly
To the realm of the Great Giver,—
To Eternity.
Tell me! rolling torrent, tell!
Bound by what alchemic spell,
Are foolish mortals,
When they take no note of thee?
Why the grave's portals,
From whose cold clasp none may flee,
Open and close
For friends and foes;
Holding in their dark damp fold,
Infancy, childhood, young, and old
While we sit camly by.
Old year, thou art sear and hoary.
But thou still canst tell the story,
Of the scenes of battle and strife,
Of the havoc of human life,
Of deadly sickness, pain, and woe,
Chrushing joy from out the heart;
Of the onward march of sorrow,
Bringing humanity under the smart
Of its terrible lash,
That like lightning's flash,
Severs the soul.
Old year, there were joys with thee,
Childhood with its gambols free,
Youth and manhood with their pleasures,
And thy gifts of earthy treasures;
While for some, the spirits' hope
Lightened sorrow of its rod,
Binding with a silken cord
Lowly mortals to their God,
Their only good.
Old year, thy last day has fled,
Thy last hours have by us sped,
Onward, and onward still they flee,
Mixed with sorrow, mingled with glee,
To the fathomless depths
Of the shoreless sea,
Sadly we sing thy funeral dirge,
Full in sound of the boiling surge,
Watching the rapid-rolling tide,
As safely we stand on the hither side,
While the mad waves leap,
And the spray dashes high,
To fall on the sand,
And retreat with a sigh,
For the dead old year.
The chill north wind howls and groans,
Mingles its rough notes with our tones,
Passes by the rich man's door,
Lifts the latch of the humble poor,
Searches out the hidden places,
Where the wanderers toil and pant,
Whisks the snow wreath in their faces,
As it sings its wild, sad chant
For sixty three!

J. G. ANGWIN.

Dartmouth, Dec. 31st, 1863.

Fires in Bedrooms.

Most people, even many intelligent reformers, have an idea that to sleep in a cold [illegible] ...od —essential to health. It is a [illegible] ...r to have an open fire in your bedroom. The atmosphere is not only by this means constantly changed, but with the fire you will keep the window open, which will add greatly to the needed