

Christian Endeavor.

TOPIC OF WEEK.

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FIG. 12.—How to pray. Nehemiah's example. Neh. 1; 4-8. James 5; 16-18.

The prayer of Nehemiah is in almost every respect a model one. Dr. Hodge says that prayer to be acceptable to God must be offered in sincerity, in humility, with importunity, in submission to God's will, in faith, and in the name of Christ. All these conditions with the exception of the last were fulfilled in this prayer, and the omission may be accounted for by the fact that Nehemiah lived before the time of Christ. Several features of this prayer are deserving of notice but we can deal with only three.

I. His reverence for God. He addressed Him as God, the Lord of heaven, the great, the terrible and the covenant-keeping God. He thus recognized God's power, authority and faithfulness. How strikingly this spirit of reverence appears in the prayers of Jacob, Ezra and Daniel, (Gen. xxxii, 9-10; Ezra, ix, 5-8; Dan., ix, 3-4). Jesus taught His disciples to approach God with reverence, (Matt. vi 9). When we pray, therefore, we should try to realise the true character of God. We should remember that He is great and greatly to be praised. If the sinless angels adore His majesty, His power, and His love, surely it becomes us to be suitably impressed when we come into His presence.

II. His confession of sin. "I and my father's house have sinned and we have dealt very corruptly." There are some who do not confess their sins in prayer because they foolishly imagine that they have not transgressed any of God's commandments. But if we say that we have not sinned we deceive ourselves. In looking over the Word of God we find that the greatest saints as well as the greatest sinners confessed their iniquities. The publican confessed that he was "the sinner." Job, who was called a perfect man, said to God, "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." David said, "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned." It may be discouraging to feel that we daily break God's commandments in thought, word and deed, but over against this there is the comforting assurance that if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive.

III. His earnestness and importunity in presenting his petitions. "Let Thine ear now be attentive, and Thine eyes open, that Thou mayst hear the prayer of Thy servant which I pray before Thee now, day and night." Possibly he recalled the words of the Psalmist, "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and His ears are open to their cry." At all events, he believed that God would hear his prayer, and that thought made him earnest in presenting it.

How often are we taught to pray with fervency and importunity? While God's promises are always conditional yet He has encouraged us to be earnest in our supplications. In the parable of "The Friend at midnight" Jesus taught that importunity would prevail, and in the parable of "The unrighteous judge" He set forth the same truth, (Luke II, 8; Luke xviii, 1-8) "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." How often have such prayers been answered? Jacob said to the angel, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me," and he received a blessing then and there. God gave Jabez that which he requested. Elijah's prayer for rain was answered as his former one for drought had been. Dr. Judson once said, "I never asked God for anything but it always came. Perhaps it did not come in the way that I expected or at the time that I looked for it, nevertheless it always came." Well may we heed the advice of Luther, "pray; pray, pray."

Longing desire prayeth always, though the tongue be silent. If thou art ever longing, thou art ever praying. When stayeth prayer? When desire groweth cold.—St. Augustine.

Here, unfortunately, the manuscript breaks off abruptly just where one is most keen on knowing what followed. But enough is given to prove that the above is St. Peter's Gospel, and to endorse what St. Paul wrote—that that apostle was the first to see our Lord after His resurrection from the dead.

As to the real authorship of the alleged Gospel, Harnack submits that Justin Martyr "knew of it, utilized it, and quoted it as from St. Peter." He thinks that it cannot have been written subsequent to 125 after Christ, and he attributes it to the beginning of the second century, but that it came out of use in the Catholic Churches of Syria between the years 180 and 260 anno.

VILLAGE LIFE IN THE HARZ MOUNTAINS.

A. A. McDONALD in The Week.

It is a great charm in travelling to find ourselves among an honest and simple people, whose manners have not been corrupted by a cosmopolitan flood of tourists. Such an ideal place is the Harz Mountains in Germany. True, the German people flock there every summer, but they travel with true German economy, in a manner quite different from the prodigal American. And thus we have all the facilities of modern travel while spared the evil effects that it often produces. We see the German people here in a truly representative way, and have a good chance of studying their character. To one who has lived in a great city there is something delightfully attractive about a Harz village. The red-tiled houses built in a quaint old style, often with curious inscriptions carved above the doors, showing that the original inhabitant lived there some five hundred years ago, combined with the Conservative element on all sides give the suggestion of perfect rest and peace for the weary traveller. We notice at once how clearly defined the limits of the village are: all the houses are compressed into a small space, and we see no straggling houses warning us that a village is near; for the farmers do not live upon their farms as in America. The streets are very narrow and as the houses are built high on each side, are sometimes unpleasantly damp. It is a very rare thing to see an all brick house, for this is contrary to principles of frugality. Instead of this a framework is first built of beams interlacing in a peculiar way, which is then filled up with poor bricks, thus making a cheap, but patched-looking house. Many of the tiny cottages are covered with grape vines and the old cobbler working at his open window has only to reach out his hand to pluck the great bunches of grapes. Generally there are a few large, fine houses, sometimes the country places of rich Germans, and often we find living here old pensioned officers who have come hither to spend the quiet evening of life. An air of peace pervades everything, and the great busy world seems no longer to exist. The lovely gardens blooming with Mareschal Niel and Gloire de Dijon roses, and all kinds of sweetest flowers, have the magic power of the lotus and make us feel we would wish to remain here forever. And what are the people like? The men are generally fair-haired and blue-eyed, which combination harmonizes delightfully with their large light-blue smocks. The women are all bare-headed, many with their shapely arms bare, and all wearing very short dresses. Everyone knows everyone else and on every side one hears the cheerful "Guten Tag!" The postman, the butcher boy and the sewing machine agent all receive the same cordial greeting at each house. This excessive, and, as we may say, democratic cordiality is a feature of daily life. When a man enters a shop he removes his hat, and at once enters into conversation with the salesman. To go out without buying anything is an unpardonable breach of etiquette. The Greek idea that the tradesman is a public servant has not yet penetrated thus far. And this same hospitality they extend to strangers. In fact, the unusual interest they take in a foreigner is at times trying. When one is questioned minutely by a complete stranger regarding one's age, family antecedents and other private matters, it is apt to become just a trifle tedious, however kindly meant these questions may be. But this, I suppose, is to

be attributed to the charming simplicity of the people, whose life revolves with ever the same unchanging flow, so that even a conversation with a stranger, being somewhat of a rarity, is greatly enjoyed. Especially if a stranger comes from America is he a great treat, for unfortunately the ideas concerning our country have been to a large extent obtained from wildly exaggerated sources, and to the German peasant America is yet practically undiscovered. A guileless boy requested me to send him a piece of bear's meat from Toronto; he thought they existed there in their primitive strength. The same simplicity is shown in the way they cling to old superstitious beliefs. The Harz Mountains are notably a stronghold of legend, and the peasants sturdily maintain the truth of the fantastic stories, such as the dance of the witches and all the infernal powers on the Brocken, on the night of May the first. One of the loveliest spots in the Harz is called the "Rosstrapper," a great gorge which the peasants say a princess, pursued by giants, leapt over with her horse; and in proof of this, they point out the shape of a horseshoe in the rock, whence the name of the spot.

Let us now glance at the life of one of these Harz villagers. Setting aside the few grandees and men in authority we will watch how the ordinary people live. At once we notice the extreme economy that pervades every detail of life. And although the wife does not hold a very high position, nevertheless her part in the management of the house is very considerable. For housekeeping is here a veritable science and everything moves under fixed rules and with great precision. Every penny is used to the best advantage. And among many of the best educated Germans we hear the cry, "Let our wives be good housekeepers, this is enough." It is certainly strange that when the part of the house-wife is so important, she should occupy such a subordinate position as she does. The wife ever gladly looks on her husband as lord and master, and is most happy when she obeys. Hand in hand with economy goes moderation in pleasure, and the Harz villagers' recreation is most modest. Women and men alike work from dawn till dark and so of necessity, pleasure must be a secondary thought. Sunday is only to a certain extent observed, as regards rest from labour. The man who takes a holiday on Sunday afternoon wends his way to his favorite beer-garden, perhaps a walk of half an hour from his house. Here he is sure to find some of his friends with whom he sits, and calling for his glass of beer spends the rest of the afternoon there in lazy and contented bliss. There may be a dance going on, but the hard-working man is only an onlooker. Rather strange for Sunday, of course, but we must take into consideration what German ideas are on such a subject, and that pleasure which they regard as innocent they hold, on all days alike. And besides the German religion is so excessively humanitarian. One of the great events of the year takes place on a Sunday, that is the so-called "Fest." It practically corresponds to a country fair and has all the essentials such as gingerbread stalls, shooting galleries and so on. It is a general re-union of old and young, and all take part in the dancing which, continuing all Sunday afternoon and night, breaks up at six o'clock on Monday morning; then the maidens go home and attend to domestic duties till twelve o'clock, when they all return to the dance. But Sunday is the "first night," so to speak, and one sees then the middle-aged woman persuading her little child by means of a piece of gingerbread to stand still for a few moments and hold her parasol and her husband's hat while they join the merry dance and their thoughts fly back to a happy "Fest" on a memorable Sunday twenty years ago. Mingling with the people is often to be seen the old pastor of the village, who is as a father to his flock. Rather strange for Sunday, of course. "But," says the old pastor, "the pleasure in itself is innocent, and my children must work all week, so Sunday is their only day for recreation." As the German cannot exist without music, there is a good supply at the "Fest," as on every other great occasion, notably at the "Jahrmart" another species of Country Fair, which differs from the "Fest" in that the latter takes place generally

all on one spot on the village green, while a "Jahrmart" is stretched out on all sides. We are made aware of its presence by the music of some dozen organ-grinders who break loose upon the village at 5 o'clock in the morning. The next striking feature is the occupation of all available space by travelling tradesmen, who go the round of all these fairs. Every imaginable article is for sale, and the country people flock in to invest in clothing, confectionery and jewellery. It lasts about a week and then the confectioner packs up his cakes that have seen so many fairs that they are quite *blasé*, and moves on to the next village Fair to parade the merits of cake "baked especially for the occasion." Accompanying all this there are on the public green the stock amusements, such as the merry-go-round, so arranged that in its revolutions it produces strange and wonderful melodies, so that during the week there is a carnival of music. All is carried on in a very orderly way, showing the power these people have of entering into simple pleasure with their whole hearts, yet preserving order and moderation. Their everyday pleasures are naturally slight and by no means varied. A great event is an open air concert when the family indulges in a little dissipation, the older children accompanying the father and mother as a great treat. Such a concert takes place generally in the garden of a hotel. The little party go early and choose a good table, numbers of which are scattered through the garden, order some refreshments, the parents beer for themselves and perhaps one cup of coffee for the children. There they sit for two or three hours listening to the music, and watching the different scenes about them, here a noisy party of students, here two veterans, each content with a single glass of beer, but thinking as they watch the students of the palmy days gone by when the twentieth glass was a trifle.

There may be a hall used as a theatre, but only in the more important places, and performances are few and far between, and naturally looked forward to. There is always a certain amount of "Upper Ten" in these villages, generally headed by the military, if there be any, if not, by the faculty of the "gymnasium." But such a set is naturally small, and all the rest are much like a large family. And thus life rolls quietly along for these people, who live apart from the world, devoted to their fatherland and Emperor, and not concerning themselves much about anything else.

A BEAUTIFUL MEMORIAL.

The large east window in the Central Presbyterian church, corner of Grosvenor and St. Vincent streets, is now occupied by one of the handsomest designs in stained glass to be found in Toronto. It is in the shape of an elegant window, and has been put in to the memory of the late Rev. John Jennings, D. D., by the members of his family. The window consists of three large panels. The central opening contains a figure of the "Good shepherd," surmounted by a canopy, richly treated, and a representation of a descending dove. The base has the text, "I am the true vine," on a scroll, through which is entwined a grape-vine, surrounded by an architectural design. The inscription at the base reads:—"In memory of John Jennings, D. D., born 8th October, 1814, died 25th February, 1876." In the side openings are two panels containing conventional designs of the rose vine, with the texts, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life," and "I am the resurrection and the life." These panels are surrounded by rich diaper work and are surmounted by ornamental canopies. Dr. McTavish, minister of the church, made the following brief but appropriate reference to the window. He said:—"I cannot allow this service to pass without at least a brief reference to the memorial window, which most of you have the pleasure of seeing for the first time to-day. It is the crowning part of the work of renovation which has been completed with such satisfaction. As a work of art the window is a thing of real beauty. But it has to most of us even a more important value. It is a tribute to the late Rev. John Jennings, D. D., for many years pastor of the Bay street church, from which this congregation originated, and thus helps to perpetuate the memory of one who was beloved by his people as a pastor and a minister of the gospel, and very highly esteemed by the intelligent people of Toronto. On my own behalf—and I am quite sure I can say on behalf of the session and congregation—I beg to express our most hearty thanks to the greatly beloved widow of the late Dr. Jennings and to the family, to whom we are indebted for this beautiful and valuable gift."