

HOW SORROW MAKES HAPPY.

A state of happiness is not always the state of highest blessedness. Our really best days, when we learn the most and grow the most, are not always nor usually our gladdest days. It was our Lord himself who said, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." The beauty is not for those who laugh, but for those who weep. The meaning must be that God has blessings which he can give only when the heart is in sorrow or pain; and that God's comfort, which makes the beatitude, is such a precious and enriching experience that it is quite worth while to mourn that we may gain that beatitude. The comfort far more than compensates for the grief, and we cannot get the comfort unless we have the grief. One might dread the coming of night; but he would never know of the glory of the heavens, with their starry splendors, if night did not come. And we should never see the glorious divine promises, nor realize the precious joys and hopes of Christian faith, if the shadow of sorrow never deepened about us. The child never fully understands the sweetness and gentleness of the mother's love, until the child is sick or suffering; and we can never experience the blessedness of being drawn close to God's heart and comforted by him, "as one whom his mother comforteth," if we do not have pain or grief. So it is a blessed thing to mourn, just to have God comfort us.— *S. S. Times*.

A FORMOSAN EXECUTION.

Dr. MacKay our missionary in Formosa, thus describes a Chinese execution:

On the 26th ult., I wrote to you about a man who was stabbed here in Tamsui. A few days afterwards he died, and the military Mandarin seized the murderer, imprisoned him, and ordered five hundred blows on the hips with a bamboo stick. After one night three hundred more were administered, and he was condemned to death. I went to see the miserable criminal. It was painful to see his indifference. To any question asked he simply replied, "In sixteen years more I will be as large as I am now." Here is the Buddhistic idea of the transmigration of souls. On the morning of his execution opium was given him to smoke, also vericelli to eat. Then his hands were tied behind his back and the procession was formed—soldiers in front, then the criminal with

three executioners close to him, then the Mandarin on horseback, and behind a great crowd. I went to the spot and waited. The procession walked about a mile. Soon guns were fired and quickly the criminal appeared. In the midst of groans, etc., he was pushed off the road; in a moment he was on his knees. The next moment one executioner wielded a long sword and with one blow severed the head from the body. Then all ran away groaning, being afraid of his soul, which at once became a devil. I went to see purposely, to know for my self the ins and outs of Chinese life. I don't believe in sentimentalism. Poor Formosa converts are true and faithful.

HOW DID YOU LIKE THE SERMON?

Let us, if only for the sake of variety, change this trite commentary on our Sabbath engagements. How did you enjoy the prayers? How did the reading of God's Word affect you? How much reality did you feel in confessing your sins? How many of your sick, weary, sorrowful and sinful friends did you remember on your knees? How much did your thoughts go with the hymns you sung? How much did you pray that the servant of God might be blessed in His Word, and that your own soul might be humbled and assured in the love of Christ? And how far has the prayer been answered? Oh, but you say, these are really private questions. Then put them to yourself, dear friend.— *Christian Commonwealth*.

NO TIME FOR RELIGIOUS DUTIES.

It is just fifty years since a large dry-goods firm was in active business in this city, when one day the head of the firm said to his partners: "We must restrict our operations. I find that the demands upon my time are such that I have not the requisite leisure for my religious duties, and I cannot go on this way." The other members of the firm consented, and the reduction was made. Just two years from that time there came a great financial storm which engulfed nearly all the business houses of the city. But the firm in question safely rode out the storm, and found that what they had done out of their religious convictions was really a matter of the soundest policy, though they were not aware of it at the time.— *Intelligencer*.