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"Last eve I paused beside a blacksmith's door,  
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime:  
Thou looking in, I saw upon the floor  
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.

"How many have you had," said I,  
"To wear and batter all those hammers so?"  
"Just one," said he; then said with twinkling eye,  
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

And so I thought, the anvil of God's Word  
For ages sceptic blows have beat upon:  
Yet though the noise of falling blows was heard,  
The anvil is unharmed—the hammers gone."

## OVER LAND AND SEA.

The Bible and Nature. —There is no book in the whole world that has such a tender affection for nature as the Bible. God loves His works. He knows they are very good, created by His dear Son, perfected, brought into living beauty by the power of the Holy Ghost. He knows what depth of thought He has put into them, that hidden thought of love, which was from all eternity; so that the heavens and earth, the trees and fields, all that we see around us, is illustrative of some eternal and heavenly truth, and therefore we are often told in Scripture to look around and above us, that we may find out the hidden depths of God's love in the works of creation.

The Society for the Promotion of Jewish Literature and Science in St. Petersburg will shortly open its new buildings, which cost over 70,000 roubles.

A telegram from Smyrna states that Baroness de Hirsch has decided to found a colony near Smyrna for the one hundred and fifty families, who some three years ago, on account of persecution in Russia, fled from their native land. The colony, at the express desire of the community, is to be called "Clara de Hir-ch." Besides building the houses, the benefactress will supply the agricultural implements and the necessary capital. A school and a synagogue are also to be erected in the center of the settlement.

The receipts during 1896 on behalf of the ordinary U. P., Foreign Fund show an increase of £12,208. 18s. 5d. over those for 1895; of which increase £3075. 13s. 7d. was due to congregational contributions and donations from societies or individuals. The working balance, which at the end of 1895 had been reduced to £7068. 11s. 3d., stood at 31st December 1896 at £13,186. 0s. 6d., the surplus of the year's income over its expenditure having amounted to £6117. 9s. 3d. The Zenana Fund also reports an increase in its income for the year. There is thus every reason to conclude that the missionary spirit is being quickened throughout our borders, and that the claims of the heathen are awakening a sympathetic response in the hearts of our membership. There can be no better testimony to the life and power of a Church than its growing interest in, and support of, the missionary cause, and the Accounts of 1896 furnish such testimony concerning our Church.

Bishop Tucker, of Central Africa, has been giving his experience of teetotalism to a representative of *The Young*

*Man*. "I have been a teetotaler for twenty years," he said. "So far from regretting it, I would commence it sooner if I had the chance again. I find that in Africa not only is a teetotaler better fitted to cope with the climate, but he is better fitted for the great physical exercise which he has to undergo. I marched some ten thousand miles in Africa and have never felt the want of anything like a stimulant. Indeed, I felt sure that if I had not been a teetotaler it would have been impossible to undergo the fatigue involved in some of the marching." The Bishop in his last pastoral visit covered about a thousand miles, entirely on foot.

New York holds an unenviable record of evictions during the year. According to figures recently published, no less than 51,000 families, making a total of 200,000 persons, were evicted from tenements in the poorer districts of the city. This is an unprecedented number of evictions in one city in the course of a year, and would put the total number of evictions in Ireland for many years in the shade.

The "Dayspring" question is still with us, says the *Australian Presbyterian*. That question is,—Shall another mission vessel be procured, or shall the work of the Mission be done through the Australasian-New Hebrides Co., trading between Sydney and the Islands? The "Dayspring" was wrecked last October, and temporary arrangements were made with the Company mentioned to do the work till the end of this year. In regard to permanent arrangements, the Churches interested and the Mission Synod will have to decide. In order to bring the question before these parties, the Victorian Foreign Mission Committee have put forth a statement professedly showing the cost for building and running the late "Dayspring." The "Dayspring" Board has also prepared a lengthy statement, giving the *pros* and *cons* of the two proposals. The chief objection to the trading service is that, in connection with it, there are alleged evils, e.g., Sunday work, rough language, and the carrying and use of drink. These evils, doubtless, exist in a measure; but in the past years they were not entirely absent in the mission vessels. Besides, such evils are not to be found on all lines of steamers, and passengers, having made their protest by word and act, are not regarded as further responsible. It is conceded that if the Mission had a vessel of its own, a greater interest would be taken in her by Sabbath-schools and congregations; but for this desirable interest, too great a price must not be paid. As the trading service is much more frequent, greatly cheaper, entails no responsibility—save to pay for work done, saves the first cost of a steamer, and helps to maintain British interests in the group as against French ascendancy, the "Dayspring" Board holds that the trading service should be used.

A street-car official in Boston says, the *Herald and Presbyterian*, testified some years ago in court that "it is impossible to get honest men, and keep them so, and make them work Sundays." He did not mean that every Sunday worker is dishonest, but that, in the long run, what breaks down one Commandment is apt to break down another.