

HOME CIRCLE.

THE SLAVERY OF THE JEWS.

Whatever ground the popes had left untouched, was covered by the councils of the different countries; they forbade, for example, that a Christian should let or sell a house to a Jew, or buy wine of him. In addition to all this came the oft-renewed orders to burn all copies of the Talmud and its commentaries—i.e., by far the largest part of the Jewish literature—on account of the passages hostile to Christianity that were said to be found therein. And then came again tortures, persecutions, and imprisonments in abundance. It seemed as if the mighty of the earth had only stones instead of bread for the afflicted people, and were disposed to give no answer to their entreaties and inquiries other than that which the ancestors of the Jews once gave to the tyrant Herod, viz., when he asked what, then, he should do for them, they replied, to hang himself.

The new theory of the slavery of the Jews was now adopted and elaborated by the theologians and canonical writers. Thomas of Aquinas, whose views passed as unimpeachable in the whole church, decided that the princes could dispose of the property of these men, who were condemned to perpetual bondage, just as they would of their own goods. A long series of writers on the canon law built upon the same foundation the assertion that princes and lords could forcibly dispossess the Jews of their sons and daughters and cause them to be baptized. That a baptized child of a Jew should not be allowed to remain with its father was universally taught, and still is a demand of the church. The princes, in the meantime, had greedily adopted the papal doctrine of the divinely ordained slavery of the Jews, and the Emperor Frederick II. based thereupon the claim that all Jews were his property as the emperor, according to the then prevailing logic, that the master's rights over them had been transmitted from the old Roman emperors to him as their successor. His son, Conrad IV., already used the expression, "servants of our chamber," and the Schwabenspiegel professed to know that "King Titus had given them over to be the property of the imperial chamber." King Albrecht demanded from King Philip of France, that the French Jews be handed over to him, and later the Jews themselves said, in a memorial to the Council of Ratisbon, that "they belonged to the emperor, in order that he might preserve them from entire destruction at the hands of the Christians, and keep them as a memorial of the sufferings of Christ."

After the fourteenth century, this servitude to the exchequer came to be understood and applied as a complete slavery: "You belong," says the Emperor Charles IV., in a document addressed to the Jews, "to us and the empire, with your lives and possessions: we can order, do, and act with these as we like, and as seems good to us." In fact, the Jews frequently went, like an article of merchandise, from one hand into another; the emperor declared, now here, now there, that their claims for the payment of debts were annulled, and caused a large sum of money, generally thirty per cent., to be paid by the debtors into his own treasury.—*Popular Science Monthly.*

COMETS AND THE EARTH.

Prof. Simon Newcombe, LL.D., in his "Popular Astronomy," thus speaks of the probable effect of a comet's striking the earth:

The question is frequently asked, "What would be the effect if a comet should strike the earth?" This would depend upon what sort of a comet it was, and what part of the comet came in contact with our planet. The latter might pass through the tail of the largest comet without the slightest effect being produced, the tail being so thin and airy that a million miles' thickness of it looks only like gauze in the sunlight. It is not at all unlikely that such a thing may have happened without ever being noticed. A passage through a telescopic comet would be accompanied by a brilliant meteoric shower, probably a far more brilliant one than has ever been recorded. No more serious danger would be encountered than that arising from a probable fall of meteorites. But a collision between the nucleus of a large comet and the earth might be a serious matter. If, as Prof. Pierce supposes, the nucleus is a solid body of metallic density, many miles in diameter, the effect where the comet struck would be terrible beyond conception. At the first contact in the upper regions of the atmosphere, the whole heavens would be illuminated with a resplendence beyond that of a thousand suns, the sky radiating a light which would blind every eye that beheld it, and a heat which would melt the hardest rocks. A few seconds of this, while the huge body was passing through the atmosphere, and a collision at the earth's surface would in an instant reduce everything there existing to fiery vapour, and bury it miles deep in the solid earth. Happily, the chances of such a calamity are so minute that they need not cause the slightest uneasiness. There is hardly a possible form of death which is not a thousand times more probable than this. So small is the earth in comparison with the celestial spaces that, if one should shut his eyes and fire a gun at random in the air, the chance of bringing down a bird would be better than that of a comet of any kind striking the earth.

STAND UP STRAIGHT.

God fitted the great vital organs in your bodies to an erect spine. Do your shoulders ever stoop forward? If they do, so do the lungs, heart, liver, and stomach fall down out of their natural places. Of course they can't do their work well. To show you how this is, I will tell you that when you bend forward you can only take about half as much air into the lungs as you can when you stand up straight. As I have said, God has so arranged the great organs in the body that they can't do their duty well except when the body is straight. Oh, how it distresses me to see the dear children, whom I love so much, bending over their school desks, and walking with their head and shoulders drooping!

My dear children, if you would have a strong spine and vigorous lungs, heart, liver, and stomach, you must, now while you are young, learn to walk erect.

If one of my children were about to leave this country for Japan, never to return, and were to come to me and ask for rules to preserve his health, I should say: "I am glad to see you, and will give you four rules, which, carefully observed, will be pretty sure to preserve your health." He might say to me: "Four are a good many; give me one, but the most important one, and I promise not to forget it." I should reply: "Well, my dear child, if I give you but one, it is this: Keep yourself straight, that is, sit up straight; walk up straight, and when in bed at night, don't put two or three pillows under your head as though intent on watching your toes all night;" and I believe that in this I should give the most important rule which can be given for the preservation of health and long life.—*Dr. Dio Lewis.*

SPRING FLOWERS.

We rambled through the woodlands
In the early springtide hours,
And searched the sunny places
To find the first wild flowers.

Across the emerald hillside
And newly budding trees,
The winter winds were hast'ning
To kiss the summer breeze.

Around the mossy wood-paths
The sun his glory shed,
While bluebirds and the robins
Were twitt'ring overhead.

Beside a fallen tree trunk
Where scarce had left the snow,
The pink arbutus blossoms
Were nestling sweet and low.

Anemones and violets
Swayed their dainty bells,
While saxifrage's flowerets
Whitened the woody dells.

We gathered them in garlands,
Many as we could hold,
And garnished them with blossoms
Of bright marsh-marigold.

Down by the chatt'ring brookside
In a dewy, sheltered spot,
We found the blue-eyed beauty,
The wild forget-me-not.

We saw in soft spring beauties
And their gay sister flowers,
That Nature owns her Maker
In all her childhood hours.

And through the April sunshine,
In that sweet, dreamy spot,
We heard the Saviour's whisper,
"Children, forget-me-not."

DON'T WHINE.

There is a class of people in this world, by no means small, whose prominent peculiarity is whining. They whine because they are so poor, or if rich, because they have no health with which to enjoy riches. They whine because they have no luck, and others' prosperity exceeds theirs; they whine because some friends have died and they are still living; they whine because they have aches and pains, and they have these *because* they whine so much. They whine, no one knows why. Now, a word to these whining people. First, stop whining; it is of no use complaining, fretting, fault-finding, and whining. Do you know that it is a well settled principle of physiology and common sense that these habits are more exhausting to nervous vitality than almost any other violation of physical law? And do you not know that life is pretty much as you make it? You can make it bright and sunny, or you can make it dark and shadowy. This life is meant only to discipline us—to fit us for a higher and purer state of being. For your own sake and for humanity's sake stop your whining and fretting and go on your way rejoicing.

SLEEPING-ROOMS.

One-third of all our lives is passed in our sleeping-rooms, and yet many people think that any room is good enough to sleep in. The sleeping-room should be large, airy, dry, and pleasant. An eastern exposure is the best, so that the morning sun may shine into the room. It should be well ventilated. A good arrangement for ventilation at the window is to have the upper sash dropped about six inches, and a piece of board fitted into the space at the top. The fresh air can come in between the two sashes, without making a draft upon anyone in the room. An open fire-place in a bed-room is a good aid to ventilation. Plenty of fresh air gives health, strength and elasticity to the body. Another thing: all the clothing worn during the day should be removed at night and aired, while other garments are substituted for the night.

DO YOUR BEST.

A gentleman once said to a physician. "I should think, doctor, that at night you would feel so worried over the work of the day, that you would not be able to sleep." "My head hardly touches the pillow till I fall asleep," replied the physician. "I made up my mind," he continued, "at the commencement of my professional career, to

do my best under all circumstances, and so doing, I am not troubled by any misgivings."

A good rule for us all to follow. Too many are disposed to say: "No matter how I do this work now; next time I'll do better." The practice is as bad as the reasoning: "No matter how I learn this lesson in the primary class; when I get into a higher department, then I'll study." As well might the mother in knitting stockings say: "No matter how the tip is done; even if I do drop a stitch now and then, I'll do better when I get further along." What kind of a stocking would that be?

As well might the builder say: "I don't care how I make the foundation of this house; anything will do here, wait till I get to the top, then I'll do good work."

Said Sir Joshua Reynolds once to Doctor Samuel Johnson: "Pray tell me, sir, by what means have you attained such extraordinary accuracy and flow of language in the expression of your ideas?"

"I laid it down as a fixed rule," replied the doctor, "to do my best on every occasion, and in every company to impart what I know in the most forcible language I can put it."

IMPORTANCE OF THE COMMA.

Lindley Murray laid down twenty rules to govern the use of a comma, and Wilson, in his "Treatise on Punctuation," gives nineteen. No wonder that with so many rules people get confused as to the proper use of this, the smallest grammatical division in written or printed matter. Many illustrations might be given to indicate the important character of the errors that arise from its omission or improper use; but the following will suffice:

In the Imperial Dictionary, the word "Tarn" is thus defined: "A small mountain, lake or pool." The improper use of the comma after mountain, makes tarn signify three things: first, a mountain; second, a lake; and third, a pool, instead of simply a mountain lake, or pool.

At a public dinner this toast was given: "Woman—without her, man is a brute." A reporter had it printed: "Woman without her man, is a brute."

A printer, meddling with the verdict of a coroner's jury, by inserting a comma after "drinking" instead of "apoplexy," made it read thus: "Deceased came to his death by excessive drinking, causing apoplexy in the minds of the jury."

BIRTHDAY OF ROME.

It may not be generally known that Rome keeps her birthdays, but so it is. The twenty-first of April is the day which for ages past has been held to have seen the birth of this wonderful city. Old traditions (more legendary, of course, than historical), handed down through the centuries, fix the twenty-first of April as the day on which Romulus traced out with a ploughshare the lines of the first foundations of Rome, on the Palatine Hill. The modern Romans keep the day with much festivity, and, as if to emphasize the ever-springing youth of the city which they proudly style "Eternal," they give the children a prominent place in the day's celebrations. It is the great day for public inspections of schools and distributions of prizes. In the great hall of the Collegio Romano there is always a mighty gathering of little ones, for thither come the King and Queen to note and reward in person the progress made by the pupils of the principal schools, male and female. There are recitations and vocal exercises, and marching and gymnastics, and scenes from comedies—in short, a little of everything.

DURING the month of May there arrived in New York from abroad over 90,000 immigrants, the largest number reported in any month since a record has been kept.

STRONG influence is brought to bear upon the Post Office Department at Washington to secure Sunday deliveries of mail matters in cities where the carrier system prevails.

THE disturbance in the west coast of Africa continues, and some sanguinary encounters have taken place between the natives of New Calabar and Bonny.

THE Princeton College Library contains 55,000 volumes and 12,000 pamphlets. The hall libraries number upwards of 16,000 volumes, making a total of 83,000.

A TELEGRAM from Madrid states that the revolutionary band in Catalonia, finding no sympathy in the country, dissolved within a few hours after assembling.

OF all the unlikely places for a bird's nest, the most unlikely is that selected by a robin in Fitchburg, Mass., who has built hers close by a circular saw in a mill, and has laid four eggs in it.

THE rumour is once more revived that Mr. Gladstone may be expected to resign the Chancellorship of the Exchequer shortly. The names of Mr. Goschen and Mr. Childers are mentioned as likely to succeed him in the post.

LIEUTENANT DANNENHOWER has been ordered by the Navy Department to prepare a full report of his experience in the Arctic regions after the separation from Melville. He is now in Washington, and will be permitted to rest until his sight shall have improved before commencing this work.

SERIOUS riots have occurred at Govatuno, near Vellore, between Mahomedans and Hindoos, owing to the celebration by the latter of a feast in which they adopted disguises used by Mahomedans at the Mohurram. The mosque was set on fire, and in the great disorder which prevailed some lives were lost.

IN raising the vessel "La Province," which sank in the Bosphorus, the telephone was added to the diver's dress, thus greatly facilitating the communications. One of the glasses of the helmet is replaced by a copper plate, in which a telephone is inserted, so that the diver has only to turn his head slightly in order to receive his instructions, and report what he sees. Besides, in case of danger or accident, lives may now be saved which would otherwise have been sacrificed.