

The Wise and the Foolish Virgins.

MIDNIGHT comes, and slumber falling
On their eyelids, seals them fast :—
Hark ! the sound of voices calling :—
Lo, the Bridegroom comes at last !
All arise their lamps to trim,
For their light is burning dim.

Five were wise—their light now failing,
From the cruse with oil they feed ;
Five were foolish—sadly wailing,
“Oil has failed us in our need.”
Weeping at the gate they stand,
Lamps extinguished in their hand.

As they hasten in their sadness
Back into the darkened street,
They can hear the shout of gladness
Sounding welcome clear and sweet.
He has entered—closed the gate—
Now they come, but come too late !

Vainly knocking, long entreating,
There they stand in darkest night.—
At the feast, the King is greeting
All His servants robed in white—
Those who walked as friends before,
Parted now for evermore.

Faith, to Jesus simply clinging,
In His footsteps following still,
Love within the heart up-springing,
True obedience to His will—
These sweet graces must be mine,
Ere my lamp can brightly shine.

'Tis the Spirit that first gives it—
Prayer the lamp must daily trim ;
It is He whose breath revives it,
When its light is growing dim.
Jesus, let my life then be
Like a lamp kept bright by Thee.

—Rev. J. D. Burns.

The Boy Astronomer.

THE first transit of Venus ever seen by a human eye was predicted by a boy, and was observed by that boy just as he reached the age of manhood. His name was Jeremiah Horrox. We have a somewhat wonderful story to tell about this boy.

He lived in an obscure village near Liverpool, England. He was a lover of books of science, and before he reached the age of eighteen he had mastered the astronomical knowledge of the day. He studied the problem of Kepler, and he made the discovery that the table of Kepler indicated the near approach of the period of the transit of Venus across the sun's centre. This was about the year 1635.

Often, on the midsummer nights, the boy Horrox might have been seen in the fields watching the planet Venus. The desire sprung up within him to see the transit of the beautiful planet across the disk of the sun, for it was a sight that no eye had ever seen, and one that would tend to solve some of the greatest problems ever presented to the mind of an astronomer. So the boy began to examine the astronomical tables of Kepler, and by their aid endeavoured to demonstrate at what time the next transit would occur. He found an error in the tables, and then he, being the first of all astronomers to make the precise calculation, discovered the exact date when the next transit would take place. He told his secret to one intimate friend, who like himself, loved science. The young astronomer then awaited the event which he had predicted, for a number of years, never seeing the loved planet in the shaded evening sky without dreaming of the day when the transit should fulfil the beautiful vision he carried continually in his mind.

The memorable year came at last—1639. The predicted day of the transit came too, at the end of the year. It was Sunday. It found Horrox, the boy astronomer, now just past twenty years of age, intensely watching a sheet

of paper in a private room, on which lay the sun's reflected image. Over this reflection of the sun's disk on the paper, he expected moment by moment to see the planet pass like a moving spot or a shadow.

Suddenly, the church bells rung. The paper still was spotless. No shadows broke the outer edge of the sun's luminous circle.

Still the church bells rung. Should he go? A cloud might hide the sun before his return, and the expected disclosure be lost for a century.

But Horrox said to himself, “I must not neglect the worship of the Creator to see the wonderful things the Creator has made.”

So he left the reflected image of the sun on paper, and went to the sanctuary.

When he returned from the service, he hurried to the room. The sun was still shining; and there, like a shadow on the bright circle on the paper, was the image of the bright planet Venus. It crept slowly along the bright centre, like the finger of the Invisible. Then the boy astronomer knew that the great problems of astronomy were correct, and the thought filled his pure heart with religious joy.

Horrox died at the age of twenty-two. Nearly one hundred and thirty years afterward, Venus was again seen crossing the sun. The whole astronomical world was then interested in the event, and expeditions were fitted out by the principal European governments. It was observed in this country by David Rittenhouse, who fainted when he saw the vision.—*St. Nicholas.*

The Salvation Army.

Look at those fellows with their brass instruments on the platform at the Oxford circus, and those women with their tambourines, “timbrels” they are called in the Bible. How those chaps blow! How those girls make the parchment vibrate and the bells jingle, and how the music goes through you! But now suppose you go and hire some men to play on drums and trumpets, and invite some women to beat tambourines, and get up a regular Salvation army band, you will find that there is no spiritual power and possibly very little good music in it. What is the matter? I will tell you. That lad up there in the band at the Oxford circus “barracks” used to blow the cornet in her majesty's service, till he sunk so low by his vices that her majesty's army sloughed him off. Broken-hearted and ready to perish, he went down, down, till, just on the point of throwing himself into the Thames, he saw a squad of the Salvation army marching by. With the instinct of an old soldier he joined the ranks, and presently found himself at the Salvation army's barracks. They did not attempt to slough him off, he was just the sort of a recruit for them; so they showed him the way to the “fountain,” taught him the “knee drill.” God's Spirit put salvation into him, and it was not long before he could join the “hallelujah chorus,” and sometimes he felt like relieving his overcharged soul by a “salvation breakdown.” Then he began to look for work, and found it; then he began to look for usefulness, and found it in the cornet he used to play; and now he drives a van by day and blows that horn by night, for the praise and glory of God his Saviour. See how his cheeks stick out! See how his eyes shine! The man is saved. He knows

it, feels it, quivers all over with delight at the thought of it; and he blows on that brass horn accordingly. No hired musician ever played the cornet that way.

That clean, tidy girl used to play the tambourine at doors of ale-houses, singing meanwhile with a beery voice and a broken heart; but some of the “army” sisters picked her up; Christ, who is not so particular as some of his professed disciples, saved her, and now she sings with a new voice and sounds the salvation timbrel, and thus praises the Lord with all her soul and body. This is the material of which the Salvation army is largely recruited; these are the wasted and worse than wasted talents that are put to the Master's service. It is amazing what an amount and variety of ability, and even of genius, has thus been rescued and massed for the saving of lost men and women; but their music cannot be imitated by mere musicians, nor can the tactics of the “army” at large be put to proper use by common Christians. Out of the depths of sin have these souls cried unto God, and out of the depths of joy and gratitude they march and dance and sing and pray, bringing, as I verily believe, more people to a sound biblical experience of saving grace than any other body of believers in England.

ERE you left your room this morning
Did you think to pray?
In the name of Christ, our Saviour,
Did you sue for loving favour
As a shield to-day?

When you met with great temptations
Did you think to pray?
By His dying love and merit
Did you claim his Holy Spirit
As your guide and stay?

When your heart was filled with anger
Did you think to pray?
Did you plead for grace, my brother,
That you might forgive another
Who had crossed your way?

When sore trials come upon you
Did you think to pray?
When your soul was bowed with sorrow,
Balm of Gilead did you borrow
At the gates of day?

—The Presbyterian.

Fiji Missions.

Fiji is a bright star in the constellation of Wesleyan missionary triumphs. The Wesleyans sent two labourers there so early as 1834, and in 1836 they had acquired sufficient influence to prevent the massacre and eating of the crew of the ship “Active,” shipwrecked near Lakemba, and in 1857 there were 54,281 attendants upon the Methodist religious services. I well remember, in 1854-5, of reading in the English *Missionary Juvenile Offering*, the letter of James Calvert, the leading missionary, asking the prayers of English children for the blood-thirsty cannibal King Thakambau, and equally well do I remember the glad news reaching us of Thakambau's conversion, and Calvert's description of his overjoyed feelings, as one Sabbath morning the king and family presented themselves for baptism.

Thakambau is now a local preacher, and his sons and daughters are class-leaders and Sunday-school teachers. The Fiji Islands, as well as the Friendly Islands, have been completely Christianized in one generation. A year or two ago the Friendly Islanders had a Thanksgiving fund, from which they

purchased, first, an annuity for the old missionary, William Thomas, who first brought them the gospel, and then these dusky islanders set apart and sent over £100, or \$500, for the conversion of London. All this, besides sustaining their own churches and maintaining missions in adjoining islands, when within living memory they were cannibals and savages. And yet people ask the question whether “missions pay!”

John Hunt was a noble martyr in that Fijian work. He was a Lincolnshire lad, red-haired and shock-headed, fresh from the farm, when he knocked at the English Conference doors. They accepted him on trial for the mission work, and sent him to Richmond College. On his arrival there with a small trunk and a bundle tied up in a red kerchief, the servants and the more fashionable students were inclined to laugh and mock at him. At night, however, they asked him to pray, and then they soon altered their opinion. In Fiji his labours were most abundant, and he died a martyr to the good cause. Said Dr. Cocker once: “By the grave of that sainted missionary, John Hunt, I vowed that while ever I had a crust of bread to eat, or a roof to cover me, I would share it, if the occasion presented itself, with a missionary or a minister of Christ.”

Small Change.

A METHODIST, in class-meeting, said that he “had been a Christian off and on for thirty years.” All denominations, alas, have many such adherents.

“WHY did you hide, Johnny?” said one boy to another. “I hide to save my hide,” replied the other, as he hied away to a secure spot.

DR. JOSEPH PARKER finely and forcibly says: “Falsehood is in a hurry; it may be at any moment detected and punished; truth is calm, serene; its judgment is on high: its King cometh out of the chambers of eternity.”

A MAINE physician, after “years of careful study,” has come to the conclusion that a cold is not a cold, but a fever directly caused by indigestion or impure air. “Fasting, fresh air, and exercise,” he says, “are nature's triple panacea” for the disorder.

DR. MARK HOPKINS, in a recent lecture to the theological students of Princeton Seminary, is reported to have expressed his views in regard to evolution very forcibly, saying that the theory was not only “atheistic,” but entirely insufficient to explain in any way the origin of the human species.

THE ancient furnace still in use at the custom-house docks in England, is known as the “Queen's tobacco pipe.” In this gloves, lace, bandanna handkerchiefs, coffee, tea, cigars, spirits, which were smuggled, were burned formerly. Thirteen thousand pairs of French gloves were at one time cast into this furnace.

EVERY one can't be beautiful, but they can be sweet tempered; and a sweet temper gives a loveliness to the face more attractive in the long run than even beauty. Have a smile and a kind word for all, and you will be more admired—nay, loved, than any mere beauty. A sweet temper is to the household what sunshine is to the trees and flowers.