

CHOICE LITERATURE.

GRANDMOTHER'S PSALM.

A TRUE STORY.

Ethel lived out in the country, just where a broad lane turned off from a dusty road. In the California winter the lane would be green again, but just now, in the hot summer time, the grass on either side of the way was dry and brown.

Behind Ethel's house was a barn, and down the lane a little way was another little house, where Mrs. O'Brien lived with her five children.

One day Ethel went out to play in the lane. First she climbed into an empty hay-wagon beside the barn, and had a frolic with the big dog, Bruno. Then she saw a squirrel farther down the lane, and ran down near Mrs. O'Brien's house to watch him.

Suddenly one of the windows in the house was raised, and Mrs. O'Brien thrust her head out and shouted, "Shure, an' is it blind that ye are, Ethel Perry? Go away wid ye! Don't ye see the small-pox flag?"

"What flag?" asked Ethel, looking around in alarm.

Mrs. O'Brien pointed to the roof, where swung a red cloth.

"An' shure, it's my Jimmie what was took with the small-pox yisterday mornin'," said she. "Run home to yer mother, Ethel, darlint, and don't ye be a'er comin' near the house agin," and she slammed down the window, and Ethel ran home as fast as she could.

"O, mother," she said, bursting into the kitchen, "Mrs. O'Brien told me to run home quick. Jimmie's got the small-pox!"

Mrs. Perry turned pale and dropped the plate she was washing.

"The small-pox!" said she. "O, Ethel, have you been to her house?"

"No; only playing in the lane," said Ethel; "but she called to me out of the window, and told me to run home."

"What shall I do?" cried Mrs. Perry. "Now, just as likely as not, we shall all catch that dreadful disease, and some of us will die."

"Don't worry, daughter," said grandmother, from her seat by the window. "Don't you remember what David said: 'A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.' I think that promise is just as much for us as for David."

But Mrs. Perry still looked worried that afternoon, and called in the doctor, and had all the family vaccinated.

Day after day passed, and still the O'Briens were sick, and one after another were all seized upon by the disease. Then one day a hearse went down the lane, and the Perrys learned that Jimmie O'Brien was dead.

"The wind keeps blowing directly from their house towards ours," said Mrs. Perry, as she watched the little funeral procession going by the window. "I wish that miserable family had never moved into this neighbourhood."

"I wonder," said grandmother, "if the poor creatures have enough to eat."

"If they hadn't," said Mrs. Perry, "no one would ever dare to go there with anything."

"Well," said grandma, "it seems as though the neighbours might put things down not far from the house, and call Mrs. O'Brien to come and get them. Anyway, I can't help worrying for fear they haven't enough to eat."

So next day, before Mrs. Perry knew anything about it, grandmother went out into the lane with some bread, and called Mrs. O'Brien to the window.

"Bliss ye for your kind heart," cried Mrs. O'Brien. "Shure, its hungry enough we are, an' me wid me two hands so full of worruk that I can't git time to make bread, let alone havin' no yeast nor flour. Bliss ye!"

Grandmother put the bread down in its paper bag outside Mrs. O'Brien's gate, and after she had gone Ted O'Brien came and got it. Mrs. Perry was much alarmed when she heard what was done, but grandma insisted on repeating her errand of mercy every day or two, for she could not bear to think that the sick people were suffering for lack of food.

"Grandma," said Ethel, during one of those anxious days when the disease was spreading through the neighbourhood, and no one knew who would be seized upon next, "What was that verse that you said when you first heard about the O'Briens having the small-pox?"

"A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee," repeated grandma.

"Is that true?" asked Ethel.

"Yes," said grandma; "I'll show it to you in the Bible." And so grandma took her big red-covered Bible, that was never very far away, put on her spectacles, and showed Ethel the seventh verse of the ninety-first Psalm. "Look at this next verse, too, Ethel," said she. "'Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.'"

"Why, then, it's all true," said Ethel, confidently. "We needn't worry any more about the small-pox. I know we won't get it." And so days passed, and bad news came from one and another house near by that had been visited by the dreadful disease. Ethel used to read those verses again and again, and pray that they might prove true to them. And the promise was fulfilled, for though many died during that sad summer, yet Ethel's home was excepted.

"I shall always believe that Psalm," said Ethel, afterwards, "for I've proved it, and I know it is true."—*The Watchman*.

THE TORPEDO-FISH.

Upon a sandy beach a fisherman had landed, and among the funny game was a rare fish—a torpedo. "I don't want any more of them in my net," said our informant. "I couldn't calkulate what I had. My hands got numb-like

when I was pullin' of it in, but when I took hold on't to heft it, wall! I thought I'd been struck by lightning. I've heered on 'em, but never seed one afore. Jest touch him right here." But we declined the invitation.

The torpedo is often found on Cape Cod, but rarely up in this section. It belongs to the ray family, and fishermen are often made painfully aware of its presence in their nets, the shocks passing up the lines, and even following up the splashes of water, completing a current in this way, and giving the men a violent shock. A specimen, half dead, gave shocks when handled by Dr. Atwood, and in handling others in good condition he experienced hard usage, and many shocks that threw him upon the ground as quick as if he had been knocked down by an axe. He also received shocks by taking hold of the pole of a harpoon when at the distance of eight feet from the fish, and felt numbness while holding the rope attached to the harpoon. Even when cutting the fish, the fingers were so affected that he with difficulty grasped the handle of the knife.

The largest specimens of torpedo found in our waters weigh nearly two hundred pounds. The liver of this fish yields, in the largest, about three gallons of oil, which is regarded as of superior quality for burning.

An experiment has been made in giving the torpedo a shock, which was evidently unpleasantly affected, swimming out of the way, and shaking its body with a peculiar motion, and opening its gills spasmodically, thus proving that it could be caught with its own weapon. The battery, if it can be called such, occupies a position between the skull and the pectoral fins on each side, and is the most wonderful and complicated provision of nature. It is composed of a large number of upright columns, each of which is covered and enclosed by an extremely thin membrane. These columns are again built up of flat discs, separated by a delicate membrane, which seems to contain fluid. This structure may be roughly imitated by piling a number of coins upon each other, with a bladder between each coin—in fact, a kind of voltaic pile. The length of the columns, and consequently the number of discs varies according to their position in the body. The columns extend almost through the creature, from the skin of the back to that of the abdomen, and are clearly visible on both sides, so that those at the middle are necessarily the longest, and those at either end become gradually shorter. In many large specimens more than 1,000 columns were counted, and the number of discs on an average a hundred to an inch. It seems from the best researches, that the growth of this organ is produced, not by the increase of each column, but by a continual addition to their number. A vast amount of blood-vessels pass through the electric organ, and it is permeated with nerves in every direction.

The use for this formidable weapon is obvious, as the fish is extremely slow and clumsy in its movements, and were it not for this assistance it would stand a poor chance of obtaining food. In ancient days the animal was pressed into use for medicinal purposes, and was the original electro-therapeutic medium. Dioscorides, the physician who attended Antony and Cleopatra, is said to have made use of its powers.—*N. Y. Evening Post*.

THE MIDSHIPMAN AND SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

Sir John seemed never to be happier than when speaking of his former voyages, and he encouraged me to converse freely with him as we strolled over the grounds together or rode out into the country. He had a complete and most perfect and elaborate set of charts of the Arctic regions, so far as they had then been explored, upon which his own operations and those of Captains Parry and Ross and other Arctic explorers were distinctly marked out; and it was the greatest pleasure of an evening to display these charts and point out the spots he had visited; also tracing the courses he would endeavour to pursue, if it should ever be his "good fortune," as he expressed himself, again to be employed in what was the great hobby of his life. There was not a point he had discovered, nor a spot that he had visited respecting which he had not some anecdote to tell or some narrow escape to relate. And to me it was delightful to listen to these anecdotes from the lips of a man who had bravely dared and overcome the perils of which he spoke, and who had already rendered his name famous as one of the boldest and most energetic and persevering of Arctic discoverers. Besides, I confess that it was flattering to my pride to hear a post-Captain and a Lieutenant-Governor conversing thus freely with a young midshipman and encouraging me to express my own opinions and listening to them kindly and attentively. I spent a pleasant visit at the Penns, and was sorry to return to the ship. While we lay in port an emigrant ship and a female convict ship arrived—the latter one of the last, if not the last, female convict ship that left the shores of England, and Sir John and Lady Franklin visited them both immediately on their arrival. It was her ladyship's chief pleasure, and she seemed to regard it as a duty, to exert herself to the utmost for the benefit of younger female convicts as had conducted themselves well during the voyage, and whose offences against the laws of their country were such as afforded hope that, removed from temptations of vice and poverty, they might yet redeem their characters and prove useful members of society. It must be recollected that in those days, when there was a scarcity of females in the Australian colonies, young women were often transported for offences which would nowadays be punished by a few months' or even a few weeks' imprisonment.—*Chambers's Journal*.

FRESH outbreaks against the Jews are reported from all parts of Russia.

It seems to be well sometimes to have some knowledge of two professions—especially for missionaries. Rev. J. W. Graybill, who is a missionary of the Southern Presbyterian Church in Mexico, and who studied medicine before he went to that country, went to Brownsville, Texas, where the yellow fever broke out. He himself suffered from the fever, but when he recovered went to work healing others, having had as many as two hundred patients at one time. His beneficent work has given him great influence over all classes.

BRITISH AND FOREIGN ITEMS.

GENEVA, with its death-rate of 17 per 1,000, is said to be the healthiest city of Europe.

It is exceedingly probable that the Duke and Duchess of Albany will spend the winter in Italy.

THE Emperor of Austria has subscribed 100,000 florins for the sufferers by the floods in the Tyrol.

BARRIOS, the President of Guatemala, has issued a proclamation declaring entire liberty of religious worship.

MR. SPURGEON recently pronounced drunkenness as "in itself an awful sin—one of the worst of sins—in short a dreadful crime."

A LONDON lunatic fasted twenty-one days, and then died, while food was being forced down his throat, of excitement and exhaustion.

FIVE men who were formerly Brahmin priests are now engaged in Christian work in connection with the Santhal Mission in India.

ASTRONOMERS have been intently studying the movements of a comet apparently rushing towards the sun, and that is visible by daylight.

THE cheering news from Egypt has had a marked beneficial effect upon Lady Wolseley, who had been staying at Hamburg for her health.

CETEWAYO's portrait, which has been painted for the Queen, is to be placed in the Long Gallery in the private apartments at Windsor Castle.

ALEXANDER III., Czar of Russia, has surprised his people, as well as Europe, by appearing with the Empress in Moscow, and establishing the Imperial Court in the Kremlin.

AFTER his long absence in exploring Africa, H. M. Stanley has returned to Europe. The world may now expect another valuable chapter of information about the Dark Continent.

JOHN FOWLER, who for seven years was consulting engineer to the Egyptian Government, says that the Nile in an average year conveys 65,000,000 tons of fertilizing soil to the Mediterranean.

THE fast Guion steamer "Alaska" keeps on reducing the length of her ocean trips. In her last voyage she passed Fast-net Light in 6 days, 15 hours, and 19 minutes, or four hours quicker than ever before.

DAMIETTA, the last stronghold of the Egyptians has surrendered to the British, and the latter are now the actual rulers of Egypt, though nominally they are but the protectors of the Khedive's authority.

REV. DR. SHELTON JACKSON'S valuable illustrated article on Alaska is published by the National Bureau of Education, who will send it free to any applicant. Address Hon. J. Eaton, Washington, D.C.

THE Austrian Government has granted permission to nine Protestant Christian Bohemians to form a "Verein," or close corporation, with authority to buy or build in Prague a house for Bible Lecturers. The world moves.

COL. JUDD, the Chamberlain and Secretary of King Kalakaua, arrived in New York last week, with six promising young Hawaiians who are to be educated in the United States and in Scotland at the expense of their government.

LADY FLORENCE DIXIE is doing more than merely talking and writing in behalf of the poverty-stricken inhabitants of the west coast of Ireland. She is soliciting contributions for their relief, and has received as much as \$25,000 in a single week.

THE Dowager Countess of Rosebery, who is dead in London, was in the eighty-sixth year of her age. She was married to the fourth Earl of Rosebery, the grandfather of the present Earl, in 1819, and was his second wife. By her he had two daughters, both of whom are now dead. The Earl himself died in 1868.

MADAGASCAR is in trouble. Queen Emma prohibited the export of ebony, rosewood, and other valuable products to the United States. Some of her chiefs refused to obey, and the Queen sent a large force to compel obedience. Several skirmishes have taken place. Emma's troops are dying by hundreds of fever.

AT Rotherham station the other day a porter promptly offered the Bishop of Sodor and Man all possible assistance with his luggage. "How many articles, your lordship?" "Thirty-nine," said the Bishop, with a sly twinkle in his eye. "That's too many, I'm afraid," replied the man in good faith. "Ah," said the Bishop, "I perceive you are a Dissenter."

THE British Ambassador has communicated to the British Foreign Secretary a note from the Porte thanking Great Britain for re-establishing order in Egypt, and expressing the hope that the bonds of friendship at present subsisting between Turkey and England will be drawn still closer. The Secretary replied expressing satisfaction at the sentiments of the Ottoman Government.

THERE died at Pau, last week, the Baroness Lejeune, aged 102 years. Her husband, whom she had survived for thirty-four years, was one of Napoleon I.'s most trusted officers, and assisted his master to escape across the Danube after his defeat at the battle of Esling. The old lady retained her faculties to the last, and possessed the most varied recollections of events that happened under the First Empire.

THE farmers in Nairnshire, in Scotland, have been greatly annoyed by rooks and wild pigeons, and early in the season formed an association for their destruction. In order to pay the cost of killing these birds they assessed themselves 2s. 6d. per plough, and then offered rewards of a penny per head for rooks and three farthings for pigeons. It is estimated that some 4,000 rooks and 1,000 pigeons have in consequence been killed by the gamekeepers of Nairnshire.