

During the short period that nature smiles on them, there is not a more active race on the face of the globe;—in winter it would be difficult to find their parallel for indolence. Shut up in tents, rudely constructed in the icy but sheltered clefts of hills, they engage in little other employment than eating, drinking, and sleeping; the rein-deer, herds of which constitute their chief property, giving them little care save to preserve them from straying. Their habitations are formed by six branches of wood rising in the form of a cone, and not meeting at the top, to leave a hole for the escape of smoke. These poles are covered with a thick coarse cloth; a flap of which left loose between two of them, constitutes the door. The floor strewn with rein-deer skins, which serve the triple purpose of carpet, chairs, and beds. The early missionaries found the people involved in a universal idolatry, in which every object in nature was changed into a god; yet, despite the progress of truth, which was rapid in the minds of this misguided nation, much still remains to be done among them. Our engraving presents the best means to be employed for accomplishing the “much more,” which the religious state of the Laplanders requires. We there see the missionaries bringing the gospel to their very doors, rousing them from their lethargy and mental indolence to a knowledge of divine truth, and shedding the blessings of civilization and religion over their homes, forcing it, by constant visitation, and untiring exhortation, into their hearts.

YOUR OWN CHAPTER.

I have heard of a good man who was very poor, a sort of second Lazarus; and when a good lady one day told him how sorry she was that he was so poor,—“I poor!” he answered, “I am rich, and have all I want, for I have a golden key that unlocks my Saviour’s treasury, and supplies me with all I wish.” The poor man’s golden key was *prayer*: and I am going to tell you a little about

it, that you too may have it for yourselves, and so be as rich as he; and,

I. WHAT IS PRAYER?

1. It is not saying pretty verses, or beautiful sentences to God. Many children think, that to say a few verses every night or morning is to pray: but they are quite mistaken. The Pharisees said fine things enough; but God declared it was in vain they worshipped, and that they only drew near with their lips.

2. It is not putting ourselves in some peculiar postures. No: Mahommedans throw themselves down on the ground and lie flat on their faces pretending thus to pray. Many monks kneel for hours, and some have knelt till their knees were horny. Numbers of people stand up when the minister stands, kneel down when he kneels down, and put on all the appearances of prayer. All this may be done and they pray not.

3. True prayer is something more than this. *It is the desire of the heart.* To show it, I will tell you a little story. One day a lady went into a deaf and dumb school in which there were a great many little girls all deaf and dumb; and as she looked at them and saw how readily they wrote their answers to different questions put to them, she thought within herself, “I wonder what these girls would say prayer was!” and taking a slate she wrote upon it, “*What is Prayer?*” and gave it to one of the little girls. Now this little girl of course had never *said* a prayer, for she could not speak, and she had never *heard* a prayer, for she could not hear; what then could she answer? She took her pencil, and at once wrote underneath,—“*Prayer is the wish of the heart.*” And so it is, dear reader, and nothing less. For whatever you may say, however sweet in language, or beautiful in thought, unless accompanied with the wish of the heart, is not prayer. But that *wish* rising up to God is prayer, though nothing were said, and you were walking along the crowded street. Learn these pretty lines:—