

Trees in Winter.

LEVERNE ALDEN MARSH, A.B.

Majestically unadorned they stand
In solemn outline 'gainst the cloudless sky,
And in their silence dignified and grand,
A benediction give to passers-by.

But faithless eyes, with vision yet unbound,
Will see alone the bareness of the trees,
And mourn the leaves now sleeping on the ground,
Or sigh for summer shade or vernal breeze.

But beautiful to him who loves them now
Becomes the thought—and 'tis a happy thing—
That in the bare and unpretentious bough,
There lies the beauty of another spring.

Mid joyous songs and in a world of love
The leaves burst forth—and then, in due time fall;
But he who knows a guiding hand above,
Can see but good and beauty in it all.

—Pittsburg Christian Advocate.

The Spirit of Prayer.

THERE is a valuable lesson for adult Christians in the following incident related in *Wellspring*:

"F I should die 'fore I wake," said Donny, kneeling at grandmother's knee, "f I should die 'fore I wake—"

"I pray"—prompted the gentle voice. "Go on, Donny."

"Wait a minute," interposed the small boy, scrambling to his feet and hurrying away down-stairs. In a brief space he was back again and, dropping down in his place, took up his petition where he had left it. But when the little white-gowned form was safely tucked in bed, the grandmother questioned with loving rebuke concerning the interruption.

"But I did think what I was sayin', grandmother; that's why I had to stop. You see, I'd upset Ted's menagerie and stood all his wooden soldiers on their heads, just to see how he'd tear round in the mornin'. But 'f—I should die 'fore I wake, why—I didn't want him to find 'em that way, so I had to go down and fix 'em right. There's lots of things that seem funny if you're goin' to keep on livin', but you don't want 'em that way if you should die 'fore you wake."

How many people pray without being in this spirit of prayer! They are angry with a brother or sister or have made no effort to right a wrong which they have committed. Such persons should follow the example of Donny, who suspended his prayer while he put his playmate's menagerie in order. They should first be reconciled to the brother or sister with whom they are angry or whom they have wronged, if that be possible, and then offer their prayer.

On Going to Church.

WE go to the house of God for thoughtful, holy and loving worship, and not for entertainment or to gratify curiosity. Every moment spent there should be spent in true worship.

We should listen carefully to the reading of the Holy Scriptures; join in the responses where this order is appointed; follow with eager and believing hearts the words of prayer; sing heartily "as unto the Lord," and give devout and self-appropriating heed to the sermon. From the first note of the organ voluntary to the "Amen" of the benediction we should be alert, ardent and sincere worshippers. There are moments of waiting before the service, and sometimes while people are entering the church and when the appointed officers are taking the collection, which are too often made occasions of idle reverie, vagrant glances, wandering thoughts and unprofitable conversation. At such times the mind is distracted, the good effect of prayer and preaching neutralized, and the soul turned into a secular and hardened wayside, where the seeds of truth are scattered to be picked up or to be blown away. Now these moments of waiting should form a season and a service of holy waiting before the Lord, and of preparation for attention and worship.

To keep idle thoughts out, we must crowd good thoughts in. To restrain frivolity, we must weigh our souls down with

truth—God's truth. To prevent wandering eyes, we must fix our eyes upon words of wisdom on the printed page, and then close them in secret prayer.

That the services of the church may be most profitable, we should carefully prepare at home to make the best use of the public opportunity. We should meditate and pray before going and while we are on our way. We should frequently during the week think of the church and the Sabbath, and, by reading, thoughtfulness and fervent prayer, make the day and the service the more helpful when Sabbath comes.—

Bishop J. H. Vincent.

A Joke With a Pleasant Ending.

NOT a few clergymen would be glad to be the victims of such a practical joke as was recently played upon Rev. Mr. Hageman, the story of which appears in the *Oxford, Michigan, Leader*. At the annual meeting of the Congregational Church the question of hiring a preacher comes up for discussion.

At the last meeting of this society, when the subject was brought up, a good deacon arose, and said:

"All those in favor of retaining Brother Hageman for another year—at the same salary—will please rise."

Not a person rose, and the minister, who was present, felt as uncomfortable as possible, and heartily wished himself anywhere else. Then the good deacon who had put the question arose again, and said, with a twinkle of the eye:

"I see no one favors that motion, so I will put it again in this way: All those in favor of keeping the Rev. Mr. Hageman at an increase of salary will please rise."

Everyone got upon his feet. Then it dawned upon Mr. Hageman that he had been the victim of a joke, and a smile lighted his eyes and the color returned to his cheeks. Some of his best friends had planned the surprise, and the little scheme had worked to perfection.

Looking His Best.

A CERTAIN boy of about sixteen years, whom I know, is very careful about his personal appearance, and yet I do not believe he has a trace of vanity in his make-up. He is not the least "dudish." He does not affect startling neckties, nor fancy waistcoats, nor canes with great, bulging heads on them, nor anything at all striking in appearance, but he sees to it that his clothes are free from dust or soil of any kind. His boots are always carefully polished, his hair neatly combed, his linen clean, his nails in the same condition. Moreover, his mother does not have to beg and implore him to wash the back of his neck and his ears. He always has an appearance of freshness and neatness that is good to look upon.

One day, when he was getting ready to go some place with another boy, this other boy said: "What makes you so fussy, Ted?"

"I don't think that I'm fussy," replied Ted. "I simply want to look my best. Every fellow ought to want to look that."

I think myself that this is a laudable ambition, and one that will meet with the hearty approval of almost every one. A boy can want to "look his best," and at the same time be entirely free from vanity and "fussiness." He will find that it always pays for him to look his best. Untidiness has often counted against a boy when he has been applying for a position. I once heard a business man say that he would no more hire a slovenly, dirty boy than he would hire one known to be dishonest.—*Morning Star*.

What a Visitor Did.

RECENTLY a young student, taking a vacation trip in Scotland, saw in the country, near Glasgow, a man of thirty who had been blind all his life. The blind man had never been educated. He worked a little in the fields or in his own home as best he could, but his life, in the main, was sad and helpless. The young student had some small knowledge of medicine, though not enough to do anything for the man's relief. He went to see him, and determined to do what he could to give the man a chance. When he returned to Glasgow, he interested a specialist in the case, and the result was that the man was operated on, and fully