

The Challenge of Thor.

"I am the God Thor!
I am the War God!
I am the Thunderer!
Here in my Northland,
My fastness and fortress,
Reign I forever!"

Such is the nature of man that some form of belief relating to his being and future state are essential to him.

The Christian doctrines prevailed in the south of Europe about the year fifty, and spread into Britain about the middle of the second century; from thence they extended over the north of Europe from the fifth to the twelfth century. Thor and Odin were the principle gods of the Norseman, who were a wild and quarrelsome race of warriors. In 826 Lewis the Pious, Emperor of Germany, sent "Ausgar," called the "Apostle of the North," to Denmark to preach the Gospel, and confirm and promote the faith there and spread it more widely. Ausgar obtained great influence over Horick, King of Denmark, from whom he obtained a letter of introduction to Olaf, King of Sweden. Horick wrote to the effect that "He had never in his life seen so good a man; that he never found one so trustworthy; and since he had found so much goodness in him, he had permitted him to undertake what he wished in reference to Christianity in his own land, and he hoped that King Olaf would also permit him to publish the Gospel in his kingdom." When Ausgar arrived in Sweden he found the Pagans greatly opposed to him. He invited the King to an entertainment, and made him a great many presents, and so won him over to the cause that he was ready to do anything to promote it.

The following lines by Longfellow describe the incident portrayed in the illustration:—

"There in the temple, carved
in wood,
The image of great Odin
stood,
And other gods, Thor supreme among them!
King Olaf smote them with the blade
Of his huge war-axe, gold inlaid,
And downward shattered to the pavement flung
them.
King Olaf from the doorway spoke:
'Choose ye between two things, my folk;
To be baptized or given up to slaughter.'
In their temples Thor and Odin
Lay in dust and ashes trodden,
As King Olaf onward sweeping
Preached the Gospel with his sword."

Christianity is the grandest and most deeply interesting subject that can engage our atten-

tion. Recollections of its antiquity go back to the creation of the world. It has dispelled the dark shades of heathenism, and is the most humane, the most favorable to liberty, and to the arts and sciences that ever existed. Wherever Christianity has gone she has carried civilization with her, and elevated the people to refinement, intelligence and happiness.

A relic of the old paganism still remains with us in the names of the days of the week—

"Over the whole earth
Still is it Thor's-day."



THE CHALLENGE OF THOR.

Odds and Ends.

Venezuela has 56 holidays. On these occasions the people clean out their stores, indulge in chicken fights and other amusements of tropical climates.

An average hive of bees will contain 30,000 workers, all of the female sex.

A stick of celery rubbed on the hands after peeling onions will take away the odor.

A doctor says that one person in nine is left-handed, but the left hand can be trained to iron, bake, whip eggs, in fact do anything that the right hand can.

The Brotherless Girl.

The girl without a brother is especially to be pitied, writes Ruth Ashmore in the December Ladies' Home Journal. She is the girl who is never certain of getting the pleasures of life unless she is very attractive. Of course, she has no brother who she is certain will take her everywhere; she is apt to get a little bit vain, for she has no brother to tell her, as only a brother will, of her faults and mistakes. It is only the somewhat doubtful tact of a brother that announces "I wouldn't walk up street with you in that frock," and the girl whose brother says this to her may be certain that he is only

expressing the opinion of other girls' brothers. He may do it in the most gentle way, but he does tell the truth, and if you ask him why paying a visit to another girl is more desirable than to one you know, he will sit down and look at you, and then he will say: "Well, you see, it is just this way: From the time you get there she is a nice girl who gives you a pleasant welcome and yet doesn't gush over you. She is entertaining, and yet she has a fashion of putting down nasty gossip or silly talk among whoever is there. She is a restful sort of a girl, she is not always wanting to do something that tires you half to death, and where the game isn't worth the candle, and when she says good-bye to you, you feel certain that she is pretty glad you came, and that she will be glad to see you another time, but that she doesn't look upon you as the one and only man in the world;" that is the kind of a description that the brotherless girl can't get. Then she doesn't hear of men that a fellow would rather not have his sister go with. Probably the wisest course for her to pursue is for her to choose as her most intimate friend a girl who has a wise brother; then she can reap the benefit of his counsel.

AMOUNT OF SLEEP REQUIRED.—Dr. Cold, a German specialist, gives us his opinions concerning the amount of sleep required at different periods of life as follows:—"A new-born child finds its want of sleep completely satisfied; when in good health it sleeps almost during the whole of the first weeks of its life, and it wakes up only for the purpose of nursing. In the first years people are very much disposed to let children sleep as much as they like; the time being that of tranquility for the parents.

But from six or seven years, which is the time for going to school, things are reversed. When ten or twelve years old, the child has no more than eight or nine hours' sleep, while it needs at least ten to eleven hours, and the more the child progresses in age the more its resting time is curtailed. The author is convinced that an adolescent up to twenty years of age requires nine hours of sleep, and that even an adult still needs eight or nine hours. If the time devoted to sleep is insufficient, the brain has not a sufficient repose, ceases to perform its functions in a normal way. Exhaustion, excitability, intellectual troubles take gradually the place of the love of work, of general ease and of the spirit of initiative."