

forward seen on a Sunday, wending their way together to the house of God, and there were reasons to hope that they were not "hearers only," but "doers" of God's Word.—*Tract Magazine.*

NEW WAY OF CATCHING A THIEF.

A man had been in the habit of stealing corn from his neighbour, who was a member of the Society of Friends. Every night he would go softly to the crib, and fill his bag with the ears which the good old Friend's toil had placed there. Every morning the old gentleman observed a diminution of his corn pile. This was very annoying, and must be stopped—but how? One said, "Take a gun, conceal yourself, wait till he comes, and fire." Others said, "Catch the villain, and have him sent to jail."

But the Friend was not prepared to enter into such measures. He wanted to punish the offender, and at the same time to bring about his reformation, if possible, so he fixed a trap close to the hole through which the man would thrust his arm in getting the corn.

The neighbour proceeded on his thieving mission at the hour of midnight, bag in hand. Unsuspectingly he thrust his hand into the crib to seize some corn, when lo! he found himself unable to withdraw it. In vain he tugged, and pulled, and sweated, and alternately cried and cursed. His hands were fast, and every effort to release it only made it more secure. After a time the tumult in his breast measurably subsided. He gave over his useless struggles, and began to look around him. All was silence and repose. Good men were sleeping comfortably in their beds, while he was compelled to keep a dreary, disagreeable watch through the remainder of that long and tedious night, his hand in constant pain from the pressure of the clamp which held it. His tired limbs, compelled to sustain his weary body, would fain have sunk beneath him, and his heavy eyes would have closed in slumber, but lo! there was no rest, no sleep for him. There he must stand and watch the progress of night, and at once desire and dread the return of morning. Morning came at last, and the Friend looked out of his window and found he had "caught his man."

What was to be done! Some would say, "Go out and give him a good horse-whipping, just as he stands, and then release him; that will cure him." But not so said the Friend. Such a course would have sent the man away embittered, and muttering curses of revenge. The good old man hurried on his clothes, and started to the relief and punishment of his prisoner.

"How does thou do?" said he, as he came within speaking distance. The poor culprit made no answer, but burst into tears.

"O, friend!" said the friend, as he proceeded to release him, "I am sorry that thou hast got thy hand fast. Thou hast

put it into the wrong place or it would not have been so."

The man looked crest-fallen, and begging forgiveness, hastily turned to make retreat.

"Stay, friend, thy bag is not filled.—Thou needs corn, or thou would not have taken so much pains to get it. Come let me fill it," said the Friend.

The poor fellow was obliged to stand and hold the bag, while the old man filled it, interspersing the exercise with the pleasantest conversation imaginable, all of which was like duggers in the heart of his mortified victim.

The bag was filled, the string tied, and the sufferer hoped to be soon out of the presence of his tormentor. But again his purpose was thwarted.

"Stay!" said the Friend, as the man was about to hurry off, having uttered once more his apologies and his thanks. "Stay, Ruth has breakfast ready ere this; thou must not think of going without breakfast. Come, Ruth is calling."

This was almost unendurable. This was "hooping coals," with a vengeance! In vain the mortified neighbour begged to be excused, in vain he pleaded to be released from this so great a punishment. The Friend was immoveable, and he was obliged to yield.

Breakfast being over, "Now," said the old farmer, as he helped the victim to shoulder the bag, "if thou needs any more corn come in the daytime and thou shalt have it."

With what shame and remorse did the guilty man turn from the dwelling of the Friend! He never again troubled the Friend's corn crib. He at once repented and became a reformed man. He was afterwards heard to relate, in a meeting, the substance of this story, and he attributed his conversion, under God's blessing, to the course the Friend had so mercifully pursued to arrest him in his downward career.

[We saw a gentleman who had tried a somewhat similar plan with several convicted thieves, who are now respectable members of Society.]—*British Workman*

The Importance of a Right Selection of Branches of Study.

From the limited powers of the human mind, and the restricted time which is usually devoted to intellectual culture, it is important that a selection of objects should be judiciously made from the numerous pursuits of literature and of science. That such a selection should be made with a distinct reference to the engagements of future life, it is readily conceded; but with a view to ultimate success, those engagements should be, in the order of time, a secondary, and by no means a primary, object of attention. In a liberal education there is much which is preliminary. No superstructure should be attempted till the basis be rendered broad and firm. The first object of solicitude should be to give vigour and expansion to the faculties of the mind; and whatever pursuits are

best adapted to secure this end should be selected by the instructor, and by the learner should be regarded with interest and prosecuted with ardour. Let him not imagine they are of inferior importance because he cannot discern any direct connexion with the leading object of his professional career. Let him rather inquire into their tendency to subject his mind to a salutary discipline, and to form those habits of thought and study, by which his future progress may be directed and facilitated. The student in theology, for example, may perhaps entertain doubts with regard to the utility of studies in mathematics, or in the philosophy of the human mind; yet it is not difficult to exhibit the direct and powerful tendency of these pursuits to generate habits of incalculable value to those who, in the discharge of their professional engagements, will find occasion for the exercise of accurate discrimination, and the power of conclusive reasoning.— Could it even be shown that the researches of mathematical science, and of mental philosophy, would impart but little information of real value, still it might be contended, that the advantages accruing from the very efforts of intellectual energy which they call forth, must secure to the student an ample remuneration for his expenditure of time, and to the tutor a full justification of the course prescribed.

Such was the importance attached to mathematical studies by that able reasoner, the late Bishop Watson, that he regarded an initiation into the processes of geometrical demonstration as indispensably advantageous in promoting mental discipline. He stated it to be his deliberate opinion, that were the attention restricted even to the first book of Euclid's Elements, a familiar acquaintance with its reasoning could not fail to render substantial benefit to the mind of the learner.

In recommending a vigorous application of the mind to the solution of a question of difficulty in intellectual philosophy, the late distinguished professor of moral philosophy in the university of Edinburgh thus urged and encouraged the efforts of the students:—

"In some former *scenæ* discussions like the present, I endeavoured to extract for you some little consolation from that very torturing attention which the discussion required, pointing out to you the advantage of questions of this kind, in training the mind to those habits of serious thought and patient investigation, which, considered in their primary relation to the intellectual character, are of infinitely greater importance than the instruction which the question itself affords. *Generosus animus labor nutrit.* In the discipline of reason, as in the training of the Athlete, it is not for a single victory which it may give to the youthful champion that the combat is to be valued, but for that knitting of the joints, and hardening of the muscles, that quickness of eyes and collectedness of effort, which it is forwaging for the struggles of more illustrious fields."—*Burder's Mental Discipline.*