

will ere long be abolished. The people, and the "kings" too, are becoming more and more inclined to break with the traditions of the fathers.

Archdeacon Johnson believes the death-knell of the system has been already struck. Last December a king died, and his son was expected to send three slaves to wait on him in the next world. This he was very loth to do. He went to Onitsha ostensibly to secure the slaves, but returned without them. He was reproached for his filial ingratitude by the relatives; but he declared he would not observe the horrid custom. If they wished to, they could. At last accounts the body remained unburied. There are at Asaba eighteen candidates for the Lord's Supper and twenty nine for baptism. The next station, Alenso, is not at present occupied. The people are wholly given to idolatry. Osmare, the lowest station of the Middle Niger Mission, forms quite a contrast to Alenso. It was occupied in 1872. The chiefs are sublimely indifferent. An impression was made on one when he was quite sick. The missionary attended him faithfully and obtained from him a promise to attend Church when he got well. After he recovered, he was reminded of his pledge, but refused to fulfil it unless the missionary would give him three barrels of rum. There are three stations on the Upper Niger, Lokoja, Gbebe, and Kipo Hill. The first named, Lokoja, though not the oldest, is the most important of this group of stations. It occupies a commanding geographical position. Its population, though comparatively small, is much mixed. On its streets may be heard no less than fifteen distinct languages, representing populations both near and far. These linguistic differences make the station all the more important, because through the sojourners the Gospel is carried to other tribes; but they give rise to almost endless difficulties in the town congregation.

A HOLY life is made up of a number of small things. Little words, not eloquent speeches or sermons; little deeds, not miracles or battles, nor one great heroic act of mighty martyrdom, make up the true Christian life. The little, constant sunbeam, not the lightning; the waters of Siloam, "that go softly" in the meek mission of refreshment, not the "waters of the rivers great and many," rushing down torrents in noise and force, are the true symbols of a holy life. The avoidance of little evils, little sins, little inconsistencies, little weaknesses, little follies, indiscretions and imprudences, little foibles and little indulgences of the flesh; the avoidance of such little things as these goes far to make up, at least, the negative beauty of a holy life.—*Bonar.*

#### READING ALOUD IN THE FAMILY.

Books and periodicals should be angels in every household. They are urns to bring us the golden fruit of thought and experience from other lands and other lands. As the fruits of the trees of the earth's soil are most enjoyed around the family board, so should those that grow upon mental and moral boughs be gathered around by the entire household. No home exercise could be more appropriate and pleasing than for one member to read aloud for the benefit of all. If parents would introduce this exercise into their families they would soon see the levity and giddiness that make up the conversation of too many circles giving way to refinement and dignity.

#### CONSCIENCE.

Not long since we saw in one of the papers that a burglar entered and rifled the contents of an unoccupied building. He ransacked the rooms from attic to cellar, and heaped his plunder together in the parlor. There were evidences that he had sat down to rest, perhaps to think. On a bracket in the corner stood a marble bust of Guido's "Ecce Homo"—Christ crowned with thorns. The guilty man had taken it in his hands and examined it. It bore the marks of his fingers. But he had replaced it, and turned its face to the wall, as if he would not have even the cold, sightless eyes of the marble Saviour look upon his deed of infamy.

Be it so or not, there is in every human soul an

instinct of concealment of sin, of which that act is a truthful emblem. The instinct of hiding clutches at every act of wrong doing, and would bury it forever from the vision of pure eyes. Human nature thus anticipates all through this life the last prayer of sin in the day of judgment, "Rocks and mountains, hide us from the face of Him who sitteth on the throne."—*Southern Churchman.*

#### A TEMPERANCE LUMP.

"Hallo, Jack! Hallo! Won't you have a drink this cold morning?" cried a bloated-looking tavern-keeper to a jolly Jack Tar who was smartly stepping along the street.

Jack had formerly been a hard drinker, and had spent many a dollar in the tavern he was now passing, but a month ago he had signed the temperance pledge.

"No, landlord, no; I can't drink; I've got a hard lump at my side." As the witty sailor said these words he pressed his side, adding, "Oh! this hard lump."

"It's all through leaving off drinking," replied the tavern-keeper, "some good drink will take your lump away. If you are fool enough to keep from taking a little liquor, your lump will get bigger, and very likely you'll be a having a hard lump at your other side."

"True! true! old boy," with a hearty laugh, responded the merry tar, as he briskly drew out a well filled pocket-book from his pocket, and held it up to the tavern-keeper's gaze. "This is my hard lump, you are right in saying that if I drink my lump will go away, and if I stick to temperance I shall have a bigger lump. Good-by to you, landlord. By God's help I'll keep out of your nest, and try to get a lump on both sides."

#### GOOD WORK OR NONE.

It is a rule that a workman must follow his employer's orders, but no one has a right to make him do work discreditable to himself. Judge M—, a well-known jurist, living near Cincinnati, loved to tell this anecdote of a young man who understood the risk of doing a shabby job even when directed to. He had once occasion to send to the village after a carpenter, and a sturdy young fellow appeared with his tools.

"I want this fence mended to keep out the cattle. There are some unplanned boards—use them. It is out of sight from the house, so you need not take time to make it a neat job. I will pay you a dollar and a half."

The judge then went to dinner, and coming out found the man carefully planing each board. Supposing that he was trying to make a costly job of it, he ordered him to nail them on at once just as they were, and continued his walk. When he returned the boards were all planed and numbered ready for nailing.

"I told you this fence was to be covered with vines," he said angrily. "I do not want your looks."

"I do," said the carpenter gruffly, carefully measuring his work. When it was finished there was no part of the fence as thorough in finish.

"How much do you charge?" asked the judge.

"A dollar and a half," said the man, shouldering his tools.

The judge stared. "Why do you spend all that labor on the job, if not for money?"

"For the job, sir."

"Nobody would have seen the poor work on it." "But I should have known that it was there. No, I'll take only a dollar and a half." And he took it and went away.

Ten years afterwards the judge had the contract to give for the building of several magnificent public buildings. There were many applicants among master builders, but the face of one caught his eye. "It was my man of the fence," he said. "I knew we should have only good, genuine work from him. I gave him the contract, and it made a rich man of him."

It is a pity that boys were not taught in their earliest years that the highest success belongs only to the man, be he a carpenter, farmer, author, or artist, whose work is most sincerely and thoroughly done.

#### THE MISSIONARY POTATO.

It wasn't a very large church, and it wasn't nicely furnished. No carpet on the floor, no frescoing on the walls; just a plain, square, bare, frame building, away out in Illinois. To this church came James and Stephen Holt every Sunday of their lives.

On this particular Sunday they stood together over by the square box-stove waiting for Sunday School to commence and talking about the missionary collection that was to be taken up. It was something new for the poor church; they were used to having collections taken up for them. However, they were coming up in the world, and wanted to begin to give. Not a cent had the Holt boys to give that day.

"Pennies are as scarce at our house as hen's teeth," said Stephen, showing a row of white, even teeth as he spoke. James looked doleful. It was hard on them, he thought, to be the only ones in the class who had nothing to give. He looked grimly around on the old church. What should he spy lying in one corner under a seat but a potato!

"How in the world did that potato get to church?" he said, nodding his head toward it. "Somebody must have dropped it that day we brought the things here for the poor folks. I say, Stennie, we might give that potato. I suppose it belongs to us as much as to anybody."

Stephen turned and gave a long, thoughtful look at the potato.

"That's an idea!" he said eagerly. "Let's do it!"

James expected to see a roguish look on his face, but his eyes and mouth said, "I'm in earnest!"

"Honor bright?" asked James.

"Yes, honor bright."

"How? Split it in two and each put a half on the plate?"

"No," said Stephen, laughing; "we can't get it ready to give to-day, I guess; but suppose we carry it home and plant it in the nicest spot we can find, and take extra care of it, and give every potato it raises to the missionary cause? There'll be another chance: this isn't the only collection the church will ever take up, and we can sell the potatoes to somebody."

Full of this new plan they went into the class looking less sober than before; and though their faces were rather red when the box was passed to them and they had to shake their heads, they thought of the potato, and looked at each other and laughed.

Somebody must have whispered to the earth and the dew and the sunshine about that potato. You never saw anything like it! "Beats all," said farmer Holt, who was let into the secret. "If I had a twenty-acre lot that would grow potatoes in that fashion, I should make my fortune."

When harvesting came, would you believe that there were forty-one good, sound, splendid potatoes in that hill? Another thing: While the boys were picking them up, they talked over the grand mass-meeting for missions that was to be held in the church next Thursday—an all-day meeting. The little Church had had a taste of the joy of giving, and was prospering as she had not before. Now for a big meeting, to which speakers from Chicago were coming. James and Stephen had their plans made. They washed the forty one potatoes carefully; they wrote out in their very best hand this sentence forty-one times:—

"This is a missionary potato; its price is ten cents; it is from the best stock known. It will be sold only to one who is willing to take a pledge that he will plant it in the spring, and give every one of its children to missions. Signed by James Holt and Stephen Holt."

Each shining potato had one of these slips smoothly pasted to its plump side.

Didn't those potatoes go off, though! By three o'clock on Thursday afternoon not one was left, though a gentleman from Chicago offered to give a gold dollar for one of them. Just imagine, if you can, the pleasure with which James and Stephen Holt put each two dollars and five cents into the collection that afternoon. I'm sure I can't describe it to you. But I can assure you of one thing. They each have a missionary garden, and it thrives.—*The Pansy.*