

supplies on hand—anything that can be eaten.

Jack's mind flew over the possibilities of the food supply. Was there anything of which, in their modest housekeeping, they had any quantity?

'Potatoes!' he suggested breathlessly.

'That'll do. Can your mother cook us a good lot and pretty quick?'

Followed by the men, Jack rushed into the house, and laid before his mother the astonishing state of things.

She held up her hands in dismay.

'Poor souls! But what can we do for two hundred?'

'Let's hurry at it,' said Jack, who had by this time gathered his senses. 'Bill, split wood fine and make up the biggest fire you ever made in your life. Girls, run down for potatoes and wash 'em. Now, mother, let's get all the kettles on.'

Mother thought of the wash-boiler, and before long the stove was covered with a goodly show of bubbling, steaming kettles.

Then Jack struggled through the drifts to a shed in which were two or three large kettles used in making maple sugar. He gave the men a hint of what might be done, and they lent willing aid. A place was cleared of snow, a kettle swung between two large sticks, and soon, with a blazing fire underneath, potatoes were cooking with a good will which seemed to scorn the wintry surroundings.

'These are done,' called mother from the house, just as the outside kettles settled to work. 'It's something to be thankful for that potatoes don't take long to cook.'

'Get more on, please,' said the men. 'They'll be nearly done by the time we get these distributed. Your salt bag, if you please, ma'am, I'll venture to say they'll all be thankful for a taste of potatoes and salt.'

Jack went to help carry the potatoes. On setting foot in the car, the food-carriers were greeted by a bedlam of sounds from men, women and children, all alike tired and hungry. The potatoes were received with clamors of delight, and as they were passed first to the women and children, Jack and a larger force of men hurried back for the second boiling.

For hours the small house and its surroundings were a scene of stir and bustle.

'I never knew before how many potatoes folks could eat,' said Jack, as, when the winter twilight was closing in, he was still carrying his steaming kettles to the cars.

'The whole place is tramped down as if an army had been by,' said Bill.

'I guess this'll be about the last for to-night,' said Jack.

'I wonder if they'll have to be fed in the morning.'

'There's plenty of potatoes yet. But bark!'

Even as he spoke a long whistle sounded through the cold air, now clear and brightening with star-light.

'The snow ploughs have got here. Hear 'em hollering down at the train.'

'I guess they're glad,' said Bill, laughing at the sound of the shrieks and shouts which rose in answer to the whistle.

Jack and his brother hastened down. The conductor, the man who had first applied to Jack for help, was busy and bothered answering a score or a hundred inquiries and appeals in a breath, while handing around a hat. He nodded pleasantly to Jack.

'We're all right now,' he said. 'I'll get this load to the city by late bed-time. They won't be starving, either, as they would have been if we hadn't struck you. Here, my compliments and thanks to your mother.

You'd better get off, for we're starting. Good-bye.'

As he spoke he had been emptying into Jack's coat pocket, held open by two or three laughing travellers, the money he had been collecting.

'But—why?' said Jack, in bewildered surprise. 'I didn't expect—I never thought—we were glad to do it—'

'So are we glad to do it. It's only a quarter a head—'

'Too much—' persisted Jack.

'Off with you. We're moving.'

'It was only potatoes, and they are not worth it—'

'Worth it and more to us. Good-bye.'

And friendly hands hustled him to the door where, amid hearty cheers and farewells, he was picked up and dropped lightly into a drift, as with another long whistle the train pulled away.

At the Jaganath Festival.

We saw a man lying on a plank with upright nails stuck on it. He lay on the sharp points with scarcely any clothes on. He had bought a gospel and lay there reading it. It was a strange sight to see this man with the gospel in his hand reading it whilst he was going through a penance like that. (See letters from Miss Macintosh and Miss Williamson in the 'Zenana Missionary Herald,' for December.)

Far off, in the great land of India,
Where idols of wood and of stone
Are worshipped by hundreds of thousands,
And Christ and His love are scarce known;

Myriads of people have gathered
From villages near and afar,
To join in the year's celebration,
And see the great Jaganath car!

Sin-burdened and footsore and weary,
Prostrate near the temple they lie;
While some who have dropped by the way-side
Uncared for, untended, may die.

Scarce clothed, on a plank, lies a Hindu,
His bed made of sharp, piercing nails;
Self-tortured, this poor blind ascetic,
Lies there till his quivering flesh fails!

But Jaganath offers no pardon
To those who are burdened with sin;
Though penance and pain they may suffer,
No heaven his devotees win.

Yet while we are gazing in pity,
There floats on the sin-laden air
A breath as from some purer region,
The voice of a Christian in prayer!

And then a sweet song, all of mercy,
Of pardon—free pardon to men,
Till, dimly, it dawns on the heathen,
The message of love is for them!

The spike-pierced man in his torture,
Which never can bring him release,
On the bed of idolatrous suffering,
Lies reading the Gospel of Peace!

Amid the wild shouts of the heathen
To gods who but teach them to sin,
Is heard the sweet story of Jesus,
Who came these dark souls to redeem.

May Hindu ascetic, with Christians,
Soon join in the one blessed strain
Of—'Joy, joy, joy, Probhu Jesu!'
The gods of the heathen are vain!

Till up from the great land of India
This one note of triumph ascend—
'The gods of the heathen have perished,
But Jesus shall reign without end.'
—Emily Spurgeon.

*Victory, victory, victory, Lord Jesus!

Bad Books and Good Books.

(By the Very Rev. F. W. Farrar, D.D.,
Dean of Canterbury.)

There is one piece of advice which I would give with intense earnestness to all; it is: Never be tempted by curiosity to read what you know to be a bad book, or what a very little reading shows you to be a bad book. Bad books—by which I do not mean merely ignorant and misleading books, but those which are prurient and corrupt—are the most fatal emissaries of the Devil. They pollute with plague the moral atmosphere of the world. Many and many a time a good book, read by a boy, has been the direct source of all his future success; has inspired him to attain and to deserve eminence; has sent him on the paths of discovery; has been as a sheet anchor to all that was noblest in his character; has contributed the predominant element to the usefulness and happiness of his whole life. Benjamin Franklin testified that a little tattered volume of 'Essays to Do Good,' by Cotton Mather, read when he was a boy, influenced the whole course of his conduct, and that if he had been a useful citizen 'the public owes all the advantages of it to that little book.' Jeremy Betham said that the single phrase 'the greatest good of the greatest number' caught at a glance in a pamphlet, directed the current of his thoughts and studies for life. The entire career of Charles Darwin was influenced by a book of travels which he read in early years. On the other hand, it is fatally possible for any one—especially for any youth—to read himself to death in a bad book in five minutes. The well-known minister, John Angell James, narrated that, when he was at school, a boy lent him an impure book. He only read it for a few minutes, but even during those few minutes the poison flowed fatally into his soul, and became to him a source of bitterness and anguish for all his after years. The thoughts, images and pictures thus glanced at haunted him all through life like foul spectres. Let no one indulge his evil curiosity under the notion that he is safe. 'He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.'

'O, who can hold a fire in his hand
By thinking on the frosty Caucasus?'

Were we not warned two thousand years ago that 'he who touched pitch shall be defiled'? and three millenniums ago the question was asked, 'Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? or can one walk upon hot coals, and his feet not be scorched?'—N. Y. 'Independent.'

A Curious Wasp's Nest.

In the museum at South Kensington is the most curious wasp's nest you ever heard of. Some wasps were house-hunting one day, and they found an old curtain tassel fallen on the ground. 'Just the very thing for us,' said Mrs. Wasp, and she popped in at one end and came out at the other, highly pleased with herself. Then she flew away and fetched a whole colony of workers. The end of it all was, that, working day after day, first making cells for their eggs and food, then, all being snug and tight, hurrying off to get provisions to fill up the store-rooms, they so changed that old tassel, you would never have known it again.—'Children's Friend.'