

Moth-Eaten.

I HAD a beautiful garment,
And I laid it by with care;
I folded it close with lavender leaves,
In a napkin fine and fair,
"It's far too costly a robe
For one like me to wear."

So never at morn or evening
I put my garment on;
It lay by itself under clasp and key
In the perfumed dusk alone,
Its wonderful broidery hidden
Till many a day had gone.

There were guests who came to my portal,
There were friends who sat with me,
And, clad in soberest raiment,
I bore them company;
I knew I owned the beautiful robe,
Though its splendour none might see.

There were poor who stood at my portal,
There were orphaned sought my care;
I gave them tenderest pity,
But I had nothing besides to spare;
I had only the beautiful garment,
And the raiment for daily wear.

At last, on a feast-day's coming,
I thought in my dress to shine;
I would please myself the lustre
Of its shifting colours fine;
I would walk with pride in the marvel
Of its rarely rich design.

So out of the dust I bore it—
The lavender-fell away—
And fold on fold I held it up
To the searching light of day.
Alas! the glory had perished
While there in its place it lay.

Who seeks for the fadeless beauty
Must seek for the use that seals
To the grace of a constant blessing
The beauty that use reveals;
For into the folded robe alone
The moth with its blighting steals.

—Margaret E. Sangster.

S. S. Convention, Carleton Co., N.B.

THE Rev. J. C. Berrie kindly sends us report of Missionary Convention. From the Secretary's report we take the following. We hope that similar action will result in similar improvement in every County.

From the formation of our Convention until the present time, there have been three objects before us, which we have sought earnestly to accomplish, and the reports year by year have shown more clearly their importance and necessity:—

First—To increase the number of Sunday-schools in the County. We found deplorable destitution in the way of privileges. Whole settlements, many school districts, and even villages with no school; while scores of church buildings and school houses where Sunday schools ought to be held were empty, and a host of professed Christians idly waiting for some one to make a move in this work. This state of things has largely been changed. The Convention workers, aided by local helpers, by visits, by public meetings, and in various ways have aided in the opening of many new schools, until, at the present, we have over 90 Sunday-schools in our County.

In 1881 we had 53 schools; to-day we have 90; gain, 37. The total membership then was 3,064; the total is now 4,685; gain, 1,621. For the increase in the number of Sunday-schools we are thankful.

Second—To largely increase the number of months the schools should be kept open. Years ago we found it the common practice to close nearly all of the schools for six months or more each year. By holding public meetings in the fall, when the subject could be discussed; by letters of appeal to the schools; by personal visits; by arguments, appeal and entreaty, and more

by the blessing of God, a great change in this respect has taken place.

Third—Our third object was to improve the character of existing schools. Three years ago, 45 schools had adopted the International lessons; now there are 77 who use them. In 1881 the average attendance was 2,142; this year it is 3,119. Then 506 church members attended school; now 1,059 take part in S. S. work. Then 10,000 papers were distributed; this year, 23,512 were given to the schools to read. I notice a falling off of 321 volumes in libraries, and presume the great increase of papers used is the cause. But the most gratifying increase is the number of conversions, which in 1881 were 58; in 1883, 150; and this year 158. For this increase of interest and evidence of spiritual progress we are devoutly thankful. Can we not best show our gratitude to our heavenly Father by our increased diligence and zeal in the Sunday-school work?

One thing more before I close. I must express my hearty appreciation of the uniform kindness and brotherly co-operation of every minister of the Gospel with whom I have come in contact, and I cannot but admire their unselfish and kindly efforts to assist me in every way. Many of them I have learned to love as dear friends, and shall never forget their loving, brotherly actions. What I have said of the ministers is also true of the S. S. officers. They have never failed to give me a most cordial welcome to their schools, and also to their hospitable homes, and many of the acquaintances I have made on these visits will ever be among the pleasantest of my life.

Fellow-workers, be encouraged; be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Do faithfully what the Master has committed to our charge, that when He returns we may hail His coming with joy and enter into the rest prepared for His people.

Bro. Berrie adds: Some friends from the United States said our S. S. papers were the best and cheapest they had seen, and will order them for their Sunday-schools.

Pigmy Trees and Miniature Landscapes.

In some ways Chinese and Japanese gardeners are the most successful of any in the world. They can control and direct the growth of plants to a degree that seems really marvellous until the principle upon which it is done is known, when, as in many other matters, it becomes quite simple.

The Chinese have such a strong liking for the grotesque and unnatural, that the handiwork of their gardeners is not as pleasing as that of the Japanese gardeners. The Chinese understand the dwarfing of trees; but their best work is in so directing the growth of a tree or plant that it will resemble some hideous animal which is only fit to exist in nightmare.

The Japanese, on the contrary, are remarkable for their love of what is beautiful and graceful, and, consequently, ugly forms find no favour with them. Every Japanese has a garden if it be possible; but, as space is valuable in Japan, only the very rich can have large grounds, and the family in moderate circumstances must be content with a garden often smaller in area than the floor of one of our hall bedrooms in a narrow, city house.

Nevertheless, that small garden must contain as many objects as a large

garden, and, of course, the only way of accomplishing the desired result is to have everything in miniature. It is no uncommon thing to see a whole landscape contained in a space no greater than the top of your dining-table. There will be a mountain, a stream, a lake, rocky grottoes, winding paths, bridges, lawns, fruit trees, shrubs, and flowers; all so artistically laid out as to resemble nature itself. In the lake will swim wonderful, filmy-finned gold and silver fish, and not unfrequently the tall form of a crane will be seen moving majestically about the tiny landscape.

This seems wonderful enough; but what will you think when I say that almost the same landscape is reproduced on so small a scale that the two pages of *St. Nicholas*, as it lies open before you, can cover it! In this case a tiny house is added; delicate green moss takes the place of grass, and glass covers the lake where the water should be. Counterfeit fish swim in the glass lake, and a false crane overlooks the whole scene, just as the real crane does the larger landscape. The mountain, winding walks, bridges, and rocky grottoes are in the little landscape; and real trees, bearing fruit, or covered with dainty blossoms, are in their proper places.

These trees are of the right proportions to fit the landscape, and they are, consequently, so tiny that one is tempted to doubt their reality; and more than one stranger has slyly taken the leaves or fruit between the fingers, in order to make sure that the dwarfs do truly live, and are not like the fish and crane, mere counterfeits. These miniature landscapes have been successfully brought to this country; and on one occasion a lady of San Francisco used one of them as a centre-piece on the table at a dinner party, greatly to the wonder and admiration of her guests, who could scarcely be convinced that the almost microscopic apples on the trees were genuine fruit.

And now comes the question—how is the dwarfing done? The principle is simple. The gardener merely thwarts nature. He knows that, to grow properly, a tree requires sunlight, heat, and nourishment from the soil. He takes measures to let the tree have only just enough of these to enable it to keep alive.

To begin, he takes a little seedling or cutting, about two inches high, and cuts off its main root. He then puts the plant in a shallow dish, with the cut end of the root resting against a stone, to retard its growth by preventing nourishment entering that way. Bits of clay the size of a bean are put in the dish, and are so regulated in kind and quantity as to afford the least possible food for the little rootlets which have been left on the poor little tree. Water, heat, and light are furnished the struggling plant in just sufficient quantities to hold life in it without giving it enough to thrive on. In addition, any ambitious attempt to thrive, in spite of these drawbacks, is checked by clipping with a sharp knife or searing with a red-hot iron.

After from five to fifteen years of such treatment, the only wonder is that the abused tree will consent even to live, to say nothing of bearing fruit. —*John R. Coryell, in St. Nicholas.*

NEARLY a million lottery tickets were sold last year in Italy. No wonder such a people remain in poverty.

Fathers and Sons.

I MUST look to the sheep in the fold,
See the cattle are fed and warm;
So Jack, tell your mother to wrap you well,
You may go with me over the farm,
Though the snow is deep and the weather cold,
You are not a baby at six years old.

Two feet of snow on the hill-side lay,
But the sky was as blue as June;
And father and son came laughing home
When dinner was ready at noon—
Knocking the snow from their weary feet,
Rosy and hungry and longing to eat.

"The snow was so deep," the farmer said,
"That I feared I should scarce get through."
The mother turned with a pleasant smile:
"Then what could a little lad do?"
"I trod in my father's steps," said Jack;
"Wherever he went, I kept his track."

The mother looked in the father's face,
And a solemn thought was there;
The words had gone like a lightning flash
To the seat of a nobler care:
"If he tread in my steps," then day by day
How carefully I must choose my way!

"For the child will do as the father does,
And the track that I leave behind,
If it be firm, and clear and straight,
The feet of my son will find.
He will tread in his father's steps, and say:
'I am right, for this was my father's way.'"

Oh! fathers leading in Life's hard road,
Be sure of the steps you take;
Then the sons you love, when gray-haired men,
Will tread in them still for your sake.
When gray-haired men to their sons will say:
"We tread in our father's steps to-day."

—LILLIE E. BARR, in *N. Y. Ledger.*

I Wish I Had Known It Before.

A BEAUTIFUL woman lay on a bed of sickness in an elegant residence on one of the finest and most fashionable of Boston's broad avenues. She was surrounded by every luxury, and attended by kind friends anxious to anticipate every wish, and to relieve the monotony of her weary, painful days in every possible manner. One afternoon she opened her eyes and said, in a low, weak voice:

"Read to me, please. Oh dear, how I wish there was something new in matter and manner in the literary world! I am so tired of everything!"

Her sister went to the next room for a book of poems, and while she was gone, the professional nurse, who sat beside her bed, took from the pocket of her plain drab wrapper a small Bible, opened it, and began to read in a subdued voice:

"And seeing the multitude, He went up into the mountain; and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him, and He opened His mouth and taught them, saying."

The sick woman listened attentively until the nurse paused with the words, "And the people were astonished at His doctrine, for He taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

"That is beautiful," she said; "that will create a sensation! Who wrote it? Where did you get it?"

"Why," said the nurse, in astonishment, looking with surprise at her patient, and thinking at first she was wandering in her mind; "it's the Bible! Christ's Sermon on the Mount, you know."

"That in the Bible! Anything so beautiful and so good as that in the Bible?"

"What did you suppose was in the Bible, if not something good?" asked the nurse, seriously, yet smiling, in spite of herself, at her patient's tone of surprise and incredulity.