

THE CORAL REEF.

AND ITS LESSONS.

A missionary in the New Hebrides sent the picture on the front page for your Record. Look at it.

The coral rock seems in some ways like a plant. In its shape it looks more like a cactus plant than a rock. Then it is sometimes beautifully colored, and it grows as a plant does.

But a plant grows of itself, because it has life, while the growth of a coral rock is like that of a building. It is the beautiful masonry of the little coral insect.

Under the water not very far from shore, where the water is not too deep, millions of these little insects began long ago to build. They gathered particles of lime from the water and builded it around them, perhaps adding material from their own bodies.

At their work they died and other millions built on until at length the top of the water was reached, and to-day there is many a beautiful island in the Southern Seas that has a ring of coral rock all around it some distance from the shore, with a strip of always calm water between it and the land, while outside the reef the ocean smiles or storms.

In most of these coral reefs there are openings through which boats or vessels can pass to reach the shore.

The reefs make sailing among the islands very dangerous. A branch of coral may reach far above the surrounding rock and a boat or ship may run against it and be wrecked. Then again they are growing, and where once was deep water they may be coming near the surface and yet give no sign of their presence.

The new steamer "Dayspring" was wrecked in this way a few weeks ago. The sea was smooth. The vessel was steaming along. There was no thought of danger, when Crash! she had struck a coral rock, which broke a great hole in her, and then as she filled she fell off the rock on which she

had struck and sank in deep water to be seen no more, while the crew escaped in the boats.

Perhaps the coral insects will build upon her, and if in after ages the ocean could be emptied one might find a hole in the coral rock, the shape of a ship, where the salt water had rusted away the iron ship leaving the coral rock standing around where she once had been.

Two Lessons from the Coral Rock

1. These rocks quietly grow unnoticed, giving no warning of danger until perhaps they wreck some ship.

So bad habits grow, giving, it may be, no sign of danger until they wreck a life.

Young people may think there is no danger in many things that look safe and innocent and pleasant, such as playing marbles for keeps, staking five cents in a raffle, eating brandied sweetie drops, or taking a glass of beer, and they go merrily on until perhaps habits and tastes are formed which they cannot break.

Many a ruined gambler has begun by playing marbles for keeps, or taking part in a five cents raffle or wheel of fortune or a five cent lottery; and many a drunkard has begun the habit that ended in a drunkard's grave by sipping beer.

2. The second lesson is a more cheerful one. It is this. What great work little workers can do. The coral insect is so tiny that it can scarce be seen but it builds a reef that keeps the ocean back.

Boys and girls cannot do much but each one can do more than a coral insect, and if all do what they can in making the world better by trusting and following Jesus themselves and telling of Him to others the world will come to be good and beautiful by and by.

Little deeds of kindness
Little words of love,
Make this world a Paradise,
Like to Heaven above.