

Mouth's Corner.

THE Gnarled Oak.

If you do not know what is meant by a gnarled oak, I will tell you. It means an oak tree that is rough, knotty, and very crooked.

I am going to speak of a very remarkable gnarled oak, which stands by the side of the footpath in the field road from Lesmington to Gay's Cliff; it is worth while walking half a dozen miles any day to see that tree.

When I first saw it, a friend who was walking with me pointed it out to me. "Do you not think," said he, "that the oak tree yonder is a very fine one?" I thought it was.

Though the oak was fair to the eye on one side, and put forth goodly branches and abundance of foliage, yet on the other it was altogether decayed away. It was not merely hollow, but the whole side of the tree was gone, bark and stem, and even the inside of the part that looked well like touchwood, with thousands of small round holes made by insects and worms, so that it seemed as if it had been pierced with shot in all directions.

We stood looking at the tree for some time, as it seemed to set forth a useful lesson. There it was, with its best side towards the footpath. It looked fresh and green; it put forth its leaves; it bore acorns and oak balls, and yet it had no heart: it was rotten at the core.

The disappointment is something to find a tree without a heart, but how much more so to find a human being in the same situation! and yet this is very possible.

You may well tell me that you have a heart, and that every body else has one too; but unless your heart is right towards God, you are no better than the gnarled oak.

Like the oak, you may appear to flourish; you may put forth green leaves of promise, acorns of outward good conduct, and oak balls of seeming usefulness, but for all this you may be a deceiver, and have no heart to love God; for all this you may be rotten at the core.

I wish you had seen the gnarled oak, for then you would have more clearly understood how deceitful appearances sometimes are; but though oak trees now and then deceive us, there is something still more deceitful than they are: the word of God says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"

Now I want you to try and search your heart, for whether you do so or not, God will be sure to do it. "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." Jer. xvii. 10.—Children's Friend.

PERILS OF THE ALPS.

An event which occurred near Briançon, says Gilley in his 'Waldensian Researches,' will give some notion of the incidents which enliven the mountain life and field sports in the regions of the Alps.

A peasant with his wife and three children had taken up his summer quarters in a chalet, and was depasturing his flocks on one of the rich Alps which overhang the Durance. The oldest boy was an idiot, about eight years of age; the second was five years old, and dumb, and the youngest was an infant. It so happened that the infant was left one morning in charge of his brothers; and the three had rambled some distance from the chalet before they were missed. When the mother went in search of the little wanderers, she found the two older, but could discover no traces of the baby. The idiot boy seemed to be in a transport of joy, while the dumb child displayed every symptom of alarm and terror.

On the morning on which the accident happened, an Alpine yager had been watching near an eagle's seat, under the hope of shooting the bird upon her return to her nest. The yager, waiting in all the anxious perseverance of a true sportsman, beheld the monster slowly winging her way towards the rock behind which he was concealed. Imagine his horror, when, upon her near approach, he heard the cries and distinguished the figure of an infant in her talons. In an instant his resolution was formed—to fire at the bird at all hazards, the moment she should alight upon her nest—

and rather kill the child than to leave it to be torn in pieces by the horrid devourer. With a silent prayer and a steady aim, the mountaineer poised his rifle. The ball went directly through the head or heart of the eagle, and in a minute after, this gallant hunter of the Alps, had the unutterable delight of snatching the child from the nest, and bearing it away in triumph. It was dreadfully wounded in one of its arms and sides, but not mortally, and within twenty-four hours after it was first missed, he had the satisfaction of restoring it to its mother's arms.

EASTERN PARABLE.

"A man was travelling in Syria, leading his camel by the bridle. Suddenly the animal is seized with a panic of fear—he raises himself with impetuosity, foams and bounds in a manner so horrible that his master abandons him in anguish and tries to save himself. He perceived at some distance from the road a deep stream, and as he still heard the fearful neighings of the camel, he sought a refuge there, and fell over the precipice. But a shrub held him up. He clung to it with both hands, and cast on every side his anxious eyes. Above him is the terrible camel, of which he does not lose sight for a moment. In the abyss below is a dragon who opens his monstrous jaws, and seems waiting to devour him. At the side of him he perceives two mice, one white and the other black, who gnaw in turn at the root of the shrub, which serves him for a support. The unfortunate man remains there, frozen with terror, and seeing no retreat, no means of safety. Suddenly, on a little branch of a shrub, he discovers some fruit. At that moment he ceases to observe the rage of the camel, the jaws of the dragon, the frightful activity of the mice. He reaches out his hand towards the fruit, he gathers it and, in the sweet taste, forgets his fears and his dangers."

Do you ask who is this madman, who can forget so quickly a mortal peril? That man is himself. The dragon of the stream, is the ever open abyss of death. The camel represents the sorrows of life. The two mice who are gnawing at the roots of the shrub, are day and night; and in this situation the fruit of pleasure attracts you. You forget the anxieties of life, the threatenings of death, the rapid succession of day and night, to seek the plant of voluptuousness, on the borders of the tomb.

A MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE.

In the days of the French revolution, about the beginning of this century, a number of suspected persons had been thrown into the prison of the city of Bordeaux, to wait for the decision of the cruel men who had usurped the chief authority over the nation, and from whom little else than the sentence of death or transportation was to be expected. The physician of the prison was one day struck by the attentive manner in which one of the captives was contemplating some object on the wall, and asked what it was that so engaged his notice. The prisoner replied, "It is a very rare insect." The physician had a young friend in Bordeaux who was fond of the study of insects, and who was forming at the time a collection; knowing that this young man would highly prize a rare specimen, he asked for the insect, and obtained it. The young man desired to see the prisoner who seemed to have so observant a mind and so correct a knowledge of insects, and was permitted to have an interview with him. To his astonishment he found in him a devoted student of natural history of the name of Latreille, who had been educated for the priesthood, but had turned his attention to science, and had actually published a work on insects which had made him favourably known to naturalists. He had committed no crime, but had fallen under suspicion like thousands of others in those days, and was in imminent danger of death or banishment, in common with other innocent victims of the atrocious despotism at that time reigning in France under the fair name of liberty. The young man immediately exerted all the influence he had, to procure the imprisoned naturalist's liberation. He succeeded; Latreille was released.

A very short time after, his fellow-captives were shipped as convicts for Cayenne, the ship which contained them foundered in the Bay of Biscay, and every soul on board perished. How obscure the means God frequently employs, and to us short-sighted mortals, how often apparently insignificant are the instruments he uses, to work his wondrously incomprehensible will! This little beetle on the wall was as truly made the means of saving the life of Latreille, as the tall mast on the waves has often become the means of delivering the shipwrecked mariner from destruction. Latreille never forgot the circumstance. When he was an old man, and had pupils around him, no mark of his favour was so appreciated by them as a specimen of this little blue red-shouldered beetle bestowed on them as a gift from their master. In a work entitled "Genera Crustaceorum et Insectorum" which he published several years after his deliverance, he describes the beetle called "Neerobia ruficollis," adding the following affectionate remark: "An insect very dear to me; for in those disastrous times when France groaned tremulously under the weight of endless calamities, this little animal became, with the kind intervention of Bory de St. Vincent and D'Argelas, but principally the latter, the means of my miraculous deliverance and safety."

It remains now to be hoped that the man of science, so ready to acknowledge his obligation to the insect and to his fellow-man, rose in silent meditation to think upon the wisdom and goodness of Him who made the insect—who sent it to attract his notice on the prison-wall—who directed to him the physician's attention—who, in short, did the "miracle" which Latreille owns to have been wrought in his deliverance. And the opportunity here presents itself to express a wish that, whenever events are described as "miraculous," the import of the term may be distinctly felt as acknowledging the guidance

of the Supreme Ruler without whom the crawling of the insect and the mental operations of the man of science could not have met together to commence the train of circumstances which gave liberty to the captive, and filled him with admiration and gratitude.

BREAD CAST UPON THE WATERS. A Fragment from the Memoir of the Reverend Henry Venn.

In the year 1763, Mr. Venn published "The Complete Duty of Man." Of this work above twenty editions have been sold. It has had great usefulness. Of this, several remarkable instances came under the author's observation. "A year or two after its publication, travelling in the West of England, he observed, while sitting at the window of an inn, the waiter endeavouring to assist a man who was driving some pigs on the road, while the rest of the servants amused themselves only with the difficulties which the man experienced from their forwardness. This benevolent trait in the waiter's character induced Mr. Venn to call him in, and to express to him the pleasure which he felt in seeing him perform this act of kindness. After shewing him how pleasing to the Almighty every instance of good-will to our fellow creatures was, he expatiated upon the love of God, in sending His Son, from the purest benevolence, to save mankind. He exhorted him to seek for that salvation which God, in His infinite mercy, had given as the most inestimable gift to man. He promised to send him a book, which he had himself published; and taking down the direction of the waiter which he was very anxious to give, he sent him, upon his return to London, a copy of "The Complete Duty of Man." Many years after this, a friend, travelling to see him, brought him a letter from this very person, who then kept a large inn, in the West of England; having married his former master's daughter. His friend told him, that coming to that inn on Saturday night, and proposing to stay there till Monday, he had inquired of the servants whether any of them went on a Sunday to a place of worship. To his surprise, he found that they were all required to go, at least one part of the day; and that the master, with his wife and family, never failed to attend public worship; that they had family prayers, at which all the servants, who were not particularly engaged, were required to be present. Surprised by this uncommon appearance of religion, in a situation where he little expected to find it, he inquired of the landlord by what means he possessed such a sense of the importance of religion. He was told, that it was owing to a work which a gentleman had sent him several years ago, after speaking to him in a manner which deeply interested him, of the goodness of God, in giving His Son to die for our sins. On desiring to see the book, he found it to be "The Complete Duty of Man." Rejoiced to find that his guest was going to pay a visit to Mr. Venn, he immediately wrote a letter to him, expressing, in the fulness of his heart, the obligations which he owed him, and the happiness which himself, his wife, and many of his children and domestics, enjoyed daily in consequence of that conversation which Mr. Venn had with him, and the book which he had sent him, which he had read again and again, with increased comfort and advantage.

CHRISTIAN RESIGNATION.

A True Narrative, from the Friendly Visitor. Mrs. C. was a person of natural good sense and reflection, and had a pleasing address. Though very poor when I knew her, and I believe through her whole life, hers was a dignified and respectable poverty.

Under the first reflection of religious thoughts, she set out upon the plan of seeking to please God in every thing. But she soon found that she could not even please herself. This startled her. She considered, "I am certainly partial enough in my own favour, and if I cannot please myself, how can I expect to please the holy and heart-searching God, who sees me as I really am and, doubtless, notices much more evil in me than I am able to perceive." This reflection threw her into great distress. But that excellent work, Theron and Aspasio, came into her way, and afforded her a key to the Bible.

A relation offered to settle ten pounds a year upon her during life. She said, if he could settle it for her own life, she would accept it; but such an addition, for a time, would probably add to the number of her wants; and then, if he died first, she would be worse off than before. Upon this principle she declined his offer.

She kept a little school. The parents of the children were mostly as poor as herself; and not being able or willing to pay longer, took the children away. She went round to them; and said, "I shall be glad if you can pay me, because I am poor; but whether you pay or not, do let your children come to me; perhaps something I say, may be useful to them when I am dead." One morning I found her at breakfast, upon dry bread and a little tea. I said to her, do not you like butter? She answered, "yes, I like butter; but it is very dear, and I cannot afford it: but my Lord" (so she usually spoke of our Saviour) "takes care that I should have bread; it is enough, and I thank him for it."

Once when I called, she had a good many fowls and chickens about her. I said to her, are all these yours? "Not one of them, Sir; they belong to my neighbours, but I save my crumbs and scraps for them, and they come to my door; I love to feed them for the sake of him who made them." I asked her, are you not uneasy at being alone, now you are so old; suppose you should be taken ill in the night, you have nobody to help you? She replied, "Do you think my Lord does not know that I am an old woman, and live by myself? I am not uneasy, because I believe he will take care of me." She once said to me, "I believe my Lord will not permit me to die for want of food; but if such should be his pleasure; I

hope I am willing: perhaps I should not find that so painful a death, as many rich people feel, who live in great plenty; I am in his hands, and he will do right." These were her words, or to the same purport.

There were several rich families near, and they often sent her a plate of food. At last two ladies called on her, and said that they and some friends had agreed to make her as easy as possible for her few remaining days, and asked her how much a year she would have. She said, "I am old and live quite by myself; but I believe I can get a room in a house not far off: if you will pay the rent of the room, and allow me five pounds a year, it will be enough." They offered to double it, but she declined. I knew both the ladies; and have no doubt but that if she had asked for thirty pounds a year, she might have had it.

She did not live long after she went to her new lodging. She went to bed one night as well as usual, and was found dead in the morning. She seemed to have died in her sleep, for there was no sign of any struggle, nor was any feature in her face ruffled. Thus she died alone at last; for though there were several people in the house willing and ready to assist her, she needed no help from them—the Lord cared for her.

How little they need who can say, "the Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge." The Prophet could rejoice in the God of his salvation, though fig tree and vine, though olives and fields, though flocks and herds all failed. We should be able to sit down on a melancholy heap of the ruin of all creature comforts, and even then sing to the praise and glory of our God, whose mercy alike in distress and in abundance endureth for ever and ever. When we are full, we should enjoy God in all; that when we are empty, we may enjoy all in God.

POPULARITY OF THE EMPEROR FRANCIS.

The late Emperor, walking through the streets of Schonbrunn, attended by an Ail, during the cholera, met a coffin which was being conveyed to the cemetery, without any accompanying mourners. "Why is this coffin thus abandoned?" inquired the Emperor. "It is doubtless," the Ail replied, "some poor person, who has no relatives." "Well then," said the Emperor, "if you please, we will follow it ourselves, as mourners." And uncovering his head, he reverently followed the corpse to the grave, and then, throwing upon it the first spadeful of earth, retired. Allowing the uncharitable construction that this was done merely for effect, it was, undeniably, in an absolute monarch, a graceful act, and showed in a touching manner his at least temporary recognition of the true brotherhood of man. Such traits of character, frequently manifested, have greatly endeared the imperial family to the people of Austria.—J. S. C. Abbott.

THE INFLUENCE OF MOTHERS.

There was a pious mother near Philadelphia in America, who had the happiness of seeing her children in very early life brought to the knowledge of the truth; walking in the fear of the Lord; and ornaments in the Christian church. A Clergyman who was travelling, heard this circumstance respecting this mother, and wished very much to see her, thinking that there might be something in her mode of giving religious instruction which had met with such success. He went to visit her, and inquired into the manner of teaching her children. The woman replied, that she did not know that she had been more faithful than any Christian mother would be, in the religious instruction of her children. After a little conversation, she said, "while my children were infants on my lap, as I washed them, I raised my heart to God, that he would wash them in that blood which cleanseth from all sin";—as I clothed them in the morning, I asked my heavenly Father to clothe them with the robe of Christ's righteousness;—as I provided them food, I prayed that God would feed their souls with the bread of heaven, and give them to drink the water of life. When I have prepared them for the house of God, I have prayed that their bodies might be fit temples for the Holy Ghost to dwell in,—when they left me for the week-day school, I followed their infant footsteps with a prayer, that their path through life might be like that of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day; and as I committed them to the rest of the night, the silent breathing of my soul has been, that their heavenly Father would take them to his embrace, and fold them in his arms."

Here is the influence of the silent, unseen exertions of a mother; an influence which will be felt, when those fleeting enjoyments, which many labour to give their children, shall be forgotten, or remembered only as the means of smoothing a rapid descent to the world of sorrow. In this little story two things strike our attention,—that these efforts were made early, and with a reliance on the divine blessing. This mother felt that she received her children from God, and was accountable to him for the manner in which she trained them up. She knew that her labours would be in vain, unless God should in mercy grant her the aid of his Spirit to sanctify and save the soul; therefore, through all the duties of the day, and all the period of childhood, she looked up to a God, who is ever near to those who will call upon him, and who will listen to their cries. How happy must be that household, whose God is the Lord! What heavenly joy beams from every countenance, and with what glorious hopes do they look beyond the grave, to that mansion provided for them in their Father's house! and how happy must be that mother, who, in the fear of God, and in the prospect of eternity, has thus performed her duty.—Rev. Simeon E. Dwight.

PROMPT OBEEDIENCE; THE WAY TO SECURE IT. A mother overheard the following remarkable and instructive conversation, between her boy and girl, the former of whom was the oldest. They were making a disturbance in the entry,

while she was conversing with a lady in an adjoining room. In her ordinary tone of voice she requested them to be still. "Mother said we must be still," said the little girl. "O, well," said the little boy, "she don't care; she won't punish us,—and they began to play again. "Be still, children," said the mother again, in the same tone of voice. "This time the little girl stopped; but the little boy commenced again by saying, 'don't be afraid—she never punishes us without she speaks louder.' It was a very good lesson for the mother. Upon consideration she found, that the observation of the little fellow was true, that when she really meant what she said, she elevated the pitch of her voice.

It is on this account that the parent is often obliged to repeat the command several times before the child obeys; the child is waiting to learn from the countenance or tone, whether it may be evaded.

Let the request be clearly stated, but in the usual tone of voice, and without repetition. This course, if habitually followed, will secure the immediate obedience of the child; save the parents unnecessary and aggravating repetitions; teach the child to be calm and soft in his manners, rather than boisterous and passionate—and convince the child the command is reasonable and not the result of caprice or anger.—Christian Witness.

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