

### YOUTH'S DEPARTMENT.

#### GOOD READING IN THE HOLIDAYS.

##### TURN RIGHT AT THE TURNING POINT.

It was at the beginning of the holidays when Mr. Davis, a friend of my father, came to see us, and he asked my parents to let me go home with him. They consented, and I was much pleased with the thought of going out of town. The journey was delightful, and when we reached Mr. Davis's house, everything looked as if I was going to have a fine time. Fred, Davis, a boy about my own age, took me cordially by the hand, and all the family soon seemed like old friends. "This is going to be a holiday worth having," I said to myself several times during the evening, as we all played games, told riddles, and laughed and chatted as merrily as could be.

At last Mrs. Davis said it was bed-time. Then I expected family prayers; but we were very soon directed to our rooms. How strange it seemed to me! for I had never before been in a household without the family altar. "Come," said Fred, "Mother says you and I are going to be bed-fellows;" and I followed him up two pair of stairs to a nice little chamber, which he called his room; and he opened a drawer and showed me a box, and a book, and a knife, and powder-horn, and all his treasure, and told me of a world of new things about what the boys did there. He undressed first, and jumped into bed. I was much longer about it, for a new set of thoughts began to rise in my mind.

When my mother put my portmanteau into my hand, just before the coach started, she said tenderly and in a low tone, "Remember, Robert, that you are a Christian boy." I know very well what that meant, and I now had just come to a point of time when her words were to be heeded. At home I was taught the duties of a Christian child; abroad I must not neglect them; and one of these was evening prayer. From a very little boy I had been in the habit of kneeling down and asking forgiveness of God, for Jesus' sake, acknowledging his mercies, and seeking his protection and blessing.

"Why don't you come to bed, Robert?" cried Fred. "What are you sitting there for? Can't you undress?" Yes, yes, I could undress; but ah! boys, I was afraid to pray and afraid not to pray. It seemed to me that I could not kneel down and pray before Fred. What would he say? Would he not laugh? The fear of Fred made me a coward. Yet I could not lay down on a prayerless bed. If I needed the protection of my heavenly Father at home, how much more abroad! I wished a thousand wishes: that I had slept alone, that Fred would go to sleep, or something else, I hardly knew what. But Fred would not go to sleep.

Perhaps struggles like these take place in the bosom of every one when he leaves home and begins to act for himself, and on his decision may depend his character for time and eternity. With me the struggle was severe. At last to Fred's cry, "Come boy, come to bed," I mustered courage to say, "I will kneel down and pray first; that is always my habit." "Pray," said Fred, turning himself over on his pillow and saying no more. His propriety of conduct made me ashamed. Here had I so long been ashamed of him, and yet when he knew my wishes he was quiet and left me to myself. How thankful I was that duty and conscience triumphed!

That settled my future course. It gave me strength for time to come. I believe the decision of the "Christian boy," by God's blessing, made the Christian man; for in after years I was thrown amid trials and temptations which must have drawn me away from God and from virtue, had it not been for my settled habit of secret prayer.

Let every boy who has pious parents read and think about this. You have been trained in Christian duties and principles. When you go from home, do not leave them behind you. Carry them with you and stand by them, and then, in weakness and temptation, by God's help, they will stand by you. Take a manly stand on the side of your God and Saviour, of your mother's God and Saviour, or your Father's God. It is by abandoning his Christian birthright that so many boys go astray, and grow up to be young men, dishonouring their parents, without hope and without God in the world.

Nov. A PASTOR.—The *Puritan Recorder* makes the remark that "an everlasting candidate, with one foot on the ground of his labours, and the other in the stirrup for a new journey to a more inviting field, is not a pastor."

### SELECTIONS.

#### INVOLUNTARY IRRELIGION: A GUILT BEFORE GOD.

"My act," says the man, who, under the influence of mania-potu, commits a crime, "was as to myself entirely involuntary. I was not capable of knowing what I did. Would you punish a man who is, after all, either unconscious, or is acting under an irresponsible impulse, or in discharge of his best judgement as at the time existing?" But the law answers, "he who drags himself, whether yesterday, or ten days back, whether with poison in the shape of a drink, voluntarily taken into the mouth, or in the shape of wicked thoughts, voluntarily taken into the heart, is guilty of all the consequences when he puts himself under influences by which those consequences will be produced. The world is a world of moral law, which would be violated if a man could secure irresponsibility by stimulating himself beforehand into a condition of which crime is natural, though it may be, at the moment, an involuntary result. No man, by getting drunk, can entitle himself to commit a murder; and, to prevent this, the laws ordain that drunkenness shall be no defence. It is the first act of voluntary error which casts criminality on the last act of involuntary crime." And so it is that the involuntary irreligion of the sceptic—irreligion and even sincere as it may seem to him now in the present constitution of his mind—relates back, and draws its guilt from those early rebuffs of God's Holy Spirit, to which even now, remote as they are, his memory bears record. The quick and angry smotherings of the appeal to pray before going to bed, or on getting up—the determined pushing aside of the Bible—the bitter and almost fierce extinguishment of the embers left in the heart by some earnest sermon or tender remonstrance—the intelligent selection of a certain class of sceptical books to back up an infidelity and a licence which as yet is immature, and against which the conscience still continues to protest—what sceptic but will bear witness to these? Voluntary or involuntary may the overt act at last be, the state of mind which induced it was deliberately and designedly assumed. And that act which even our imperfect human law relates back to the moral perversion by which it was produced, can we expect the divine law to pass unnoticed?—*Episcopal Recorder*.

#### DEPTH OF THE NIAGARA RIVER.

"The depth of the Niagara river, under the Suspension Bridge, is estimated by the engineers to be 700 feet. This, we believe, is deeper than any other rapidly-running stream in the world." Such are the present dimensions of a story which has been going the rounds of the press, with gradually increasing proportions, for months. It seems a pity to deprive the public organ of wonder of food so congenial to its appetite, yet we think it best to say what we can to stop the deepening of this great chasm, lest it should endanger the unity of our planet, and separate New York and Canada by and by into two different hemispheres.

We do not believe that there is any great depth of water under the Suspension Bridge, probably not over twenty-five or thirty feet. The sudden change from smooth to rough water is irreconcilable with the idea of a uniform deep river, which would produce a nearly equable current from the Falls to the Whirlpool. Such a sudden break from a nearly level current to a foaming rapid, with a conspicuous declivity in its surface, could no more exist in a river hundreds of feet deep, than a belt of surf could form across the Gulf Stream.

The whole appearance of the place indicates that the comparatively quiet water above is held back by an obstacle near the bridge, over which the stream breaks and rolls in a huge rapid or 'rist.' It is like the flow of any river over a bar, or over a deeply submerged dam; and in this case, the dam is formed by rocky ledges crossing the river at this point, which have prevented its waters from wearing its channel as deeply here as above. And so says the best authority on the subject, Professor Hall, in his report on the western geological district of the State, page 388:

"At a place about a mile below the Falls, and where the channel is narrower, the stream glides with comparative stillness, while below, where the channel is broader, it is driven with great velocity. Those appearances have their causes in the geological structure of the place. Below the whirlpool there are no hard strata in the bed of the river, consequently the channel is deeper and the water more tranquil than where such rocks exist. At the whirlpool, and above that place, the hard sandstone layer is at or near the level of the river, and consequently the channel is not worn so deep. Again, after this hard mass has dipped

the surface, the bed of the river is excavated in softer rocks, hence the narrow channel and smooth water a mile below the Falls. Near the Falls, the higher beds of sandstone and the limestone of the Clinton group approach the level of the river, and thus causes a wider shallow channel and more tumultuous water.

This is certainly a perfectly simple explanation of these features of the river, supported by facts plainly visible to the eye of any practical observer.

The hard sandstone which forms the rifts about the whirlpool and bridge dips deeper and deeper until, when nearly at the Falls, it is perhaps 75 or 100 feet below the surface of the river, of which it probably forms the floor. This part of the river, characterized by its boiling and eddying yet nearly level floor, may therefore be 70, 80 or 90 feet deep. Immediately below the Falls and Clinton limestone and adjacent sandstone, 30 or 40 feet thick, and very hard and massive, forms a still stronger floor to receive the pouring torrent, which runs off swiftly and roughly.

We know it is said that line and plummet show a far greater depth for this part of the river, but they are very unreliable in rapid water; the lead is carried away more or less, and the line swept out into long loops and bows. Moreover, we may allow for the universal propensity to exaggeration and mysticism which makes all deep lakes, rivers and seas bottomless. We have sounded ponds so reported, and have found but five or ten fathoms, and we believe the Niagara, above the whirlpool, could its current be stilled, would not require a very much longer line to find the bottom.

#### A GOLDEN SHROUD.

In a recent communication to the *National Intelligencer*, Mr. Thomas Ewbank, late Commissioner of Patents, gives some important information in regard to the discoveries made in Peruvian tombs and tumuli. The information is derived from W. W. Evans, Esq., a gentleman of strong antiquarian predilections, and now engineer of the Arica and Tacna Railroad in Peru. Mr. Evans states that in making excavations for the railroad in Arica, hundreds of graves are demolished in all directions, in which are numerous Indian relics. The excavations are seventy feet deep, and the soil is loose sand, as the work proceeds, everything from the top comes sliding down—dead Indians, pots, kettles, arrow heads, &c. Among other interesting mortuary Indian relics, an Indian was started out of his resting place, rolled up in a shroud of gold. Before Mr. Evans had knowledge of the incident, the workmen had cut up this magnificent winding sheet and divided it among themselves. With some difficulty Mr. Evans obtained a fragment, and despatched it to Mr. Ewbank. Mr. Evans notices a remarkable fact, that in hundreds of Indian skulls which he has examined, not one has contained a decayed tooth. Mr. Ewbank thinks the weight of the entire shroud must have been eight or nine pounds, and had it been preserved would have been the finest specimen of sheet gold that we have heard of since the time of the Spanish conquest. In some eloquent remarks upon the preservation of souvenirs of the departed, and the futility of attempting to secure the great dead from contact with their native earth, Mr. Ewbank says, it is the form or features, and not the body or substance of the dead, that should be preserved, and add:

"The mummies of Egypt are quarried for fuel, and whether their wives, their priests, or their slaves, they are split open and chopped up with the same indifference as so many pine logs. The gums and balsams used in embalming; they have made them a good substitute for bituminous coal, and thus the very means employed to preserve them have become the active agents of their dissipation. So it is when the materials of coffins have a high market value; they are then seized as concealed treasure, and their contents cast out as rubbish. Like herces in the Eastern hemisphere, the descendants of Manco and Capac were sometimes, if not always, entombed in such, and with considerable treasure besides in vessels of gold and silver; hence we learn how the Spanish conquerors sought for, often found, and as often plundered rich sepulchres."

#### A GREAT CITY IN CENTRAL AFRICA.

Mr. Bowen, a Baptist Missionary, sent out from Florida, in his journal mentions a visit made last April to Horrín, the capital of the kingdom of Yoruba. He speaks of it as "about the largest town with the exception of London," that he has ever seen. He describes the inhabitants as a peculiar people, with whom he was much pleased—mostly black, but some nearly white, hair between that of a negro and a white man's beard; good European features—some of their noses