

Children's Department.

Criticising a Sermon.

I was sitting before the fire, thinking of that verse we had been studying at Sunday-School, "But their eyes were holden, that they did not know Him," when I heard the outside door shut, and in a moment the three young men whom I delight to call "my boys," came trooping in, bringing a whiff of keen wintry air, and crowding each other good-naturedly around the fire in that free way which would show a stranger they were the best of friends.

"Did you have a good sermon?" I asked. "I was getting lonesome waiting for you."

"Oh, yes," Rob answered; "an egotistical one, though. The preacher was a stranger, and he began and ended his sermon with 'I.' He had only gone one sentence when I began counting his 'I's', and positively, in one story he told of his mother, he dragged that poor little pronoun in twenty-one times. I couldn't keep from smiling every time it would come out."

"It must have been disagreeable," I said, smiling. "But what did you think of it, George?"

"The sermon? Oh, I hardly know. I confess, during the time he was preaching I was so interested I didn't stop to think much about it, whether it was egotistical or logical, or anything else. It made me think of home and my dear old mother; but Rob has made me see since we left church that the sermon was pretty much foolishness, and I am inclined to laugh at myself for being so interested in such a piece of egotism."

"And you?" My eyes sought Leigh's soft brown ones. "Was the sermon a piece of egotism to you, dear?"

"To me? No; it was a beautiful leaf torn from the real life of the preacher, an exquisite glimpse into a man's own heart and soul and purpose."

He showed us his life without Christ, and that same life when Christ came into it. How barren and cold and desolate before; how full of life and joy and happiness after. Oh, no, indeed! there was no egotism in the sermon to me, only beauty and inspiration."

"I am all mixed up over the sermon, boys," I said.

"And as there's no one to untangle you, you will have to stay mixed," Rob said, laughing, though he looked a little sober. "But what have you been doing here alone since we left?"

"Oh, nothing! just a little thinking over that verse, 'But their eyes were holden that they should not know Him.' You remember it was said of the two friends of Jesus, to whom He appeared as they walked and talked with Him."

"Oh, there's a clue to your twisted sermon," George laughed. "Rob's eyes were 'holden' so he could not see, and while he was busy counting the 'I's' in the sermon to blindfold me on the way home, Leigh was gathering in the beauties to feed on afterwards."

"No, you needn't say a word, Rob. I've often found it so myself; our eyes are 'holden' so we can see nothing of the good around us; we see only the evil in everybody, and can't see a glimmer of the good."

"Until Christ opens them as He did the disciples', I suppose you may as well finish," Rob said. "Well, there is one thing sure, I am not going to criticise a sermon soon again!" — *Our Young People.*

DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY.—Kidney complaint, dropsy and similar troubles depend directly on wrong action of the kidneys and indirectly on bad blood. Burdock Blood Bitters regulates the action of the kidneys and cleanses the blood from all impurities, in this way curing kidney complaint, dropsy, etc.

Tom's Gold Dust.

"That boy knows how to take care of his gold dust," said Tom's uncle, often to himself, and sometimes aloud. Tom went to college, and every account they heard of him he was going ahead, laying a solid foundation for the future. "Certainly," said his uncle, "certainly; that boy, I tell you, knows how to take care of his gold dust."

Gold dust! Where did Tom get gold dust? He was a poor boy. He had not been to California. He never was a miner. Where did he get his gold dust? Ah, he had seconds and minutes, and these are gold dust of time—specks and particles of time which boys, girls and grown-up people are apt to waste and throw away. Tom knew their value. His father had taught him that every speck and particle of time was worth its weight in gold, and his son took care of them as if they were. Take care of your gold dust.

Sour People.

Sour people not only have a hard time in getting through the world themselves, but they make it hard for other people.

The more sour people profess to have religion, the harder they make it for the Lord to reach those who have much to do with them.

Sour people who claim to be Christians make sinners think that the Lord is opposed to anybody having a very good time in this world.

Sometimes people are sour because they have just enough religion to make them miserable, and not enough to make them happy, and sometimes they are born that way.

Sour people are very often made more so by brooding over their troubles, and thinking only of themselves and their disappointments, instead of meditating upon the goodness of God and His unfailing kindness.

Sour people ought to remember that "a merry heart doeth good like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth bones."

Nothing can so quickly take the bitterness out of the heart and put a smile on the face that will keep sweet in any climate, as to become well acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ.

An insane man turned loose with a shot-gun would not do as much harm as some people do with bitter hearts and long faces.

SEVERE COLD CURED.—Dear Sirs—My mother was attacked with a very severe cold and cough. She resolved to try Hagar's Pectoral Balsam, and, on so doing, found it did her more good than any other medicine she ever tried. Mrs. KENNEDY, Hamilton, Ont.

Eyes, Ears, and Heart.

A STORY OF THE MID-CHINA MISSION.

Here is a beautiful story from Archdeacon Moule's new book, *The Glorious Land*. We give you the story just as he tells it, except that here and there, where a word seemed too "grown-up," we have put in one that belonged to the children. Don't you think boys and girls often take only their eyes or their ears when they go to hear God's message, and leave out their heart, as Kyng-ming did at first? This is the very story to read on Sunday morning, or just before you go out to a missionary meeting.

THE STORY OF KYNG-MING.

It is a spring day thirty years ago in Mid-China. The great plain of San-po, to the north of Ning-po, shone on by the warm sun, and swept by the breezes of spring, is fair and pleasant. The beans are in flower, and the wide breadths of these make the air fragrant. Large stretches of wheat are in ear. Here and there the rice seed-beds shine like patches of emerald. The clover in flower has just been ploughed into the rice-fields for manure; and these fields are dotted over with labourers breaking up the clods of earth with their heavy hoes. Suddenly there is a shout, and every hoe is thrown down, for the rumor of the arrival of a foreigner in the plain passes from mouth to mouth.

The foreigners have left their boat near a picturesque town at the foot of lofty hills, where the C.M.S. have now a flourishing school and a small body of Christians. Then, probably for the first time in their lives, these countrymen see with their own eyes the foreigners; feared, disliked, suspected, and yet welcomed oftentimes on their journeys. Now is this foreigner, they ask, in very deed a white demon—a foreign "imp"? Is he like some imaginary being, or one with flesh and blood like us? They crowd round attracted by the Western clothing and paler faces of their visitors. Some handle inquisitively the coats and umbrellas; some shout incoherent questions; some simply stare with open-mouthed amazement. Amongst these eager gazers was a husbandman named Kyng-ming. "He took his eyes," as he said when

describing the scene to me in after years. He stared and glared; and the wonderful sight of the long-haired Western strangers rendered him deaf to their voices and inattentive to their message.

The preaching is over now. The Gospel has been proclaimed. Tracts are distributed to those who can read; and with many bows and farewells, the missionaries embark in their small boat and turn head westwards towards Yu-yiao by canal, and thence by river to Ning-po. Kyng-ming goes back to his work. He picks up his hoe; and he strikes the clods vigorously to make up for the lost time; he shouts to his fellows, in the loud voice which these sea-side San-po men have acquired, his astonishment at the sight which has so stirred the plain to-day. What did the visit mean? Are these the foreigners who brought opium to China, and who extract eyes from the dying and dead? Yet they seemed to wish to be courteous. They were not overbearing or violent. They asked for no money. They brought no wares for sale. They actually distributed good books.

Days pass by. Most of the harvest is over; the wheat is long ago gathered, and the early rice cut and carried. The pleasant days of October have come with cool breezes, though the sun still blazes fiercely above. The cotton is ripe, and the fields are full of busy labourers again. Again the word is passed that the foreigners have come. Off runs Kyng-ming to gaze once more on the sight which had so fascinated him in the spring. But now he takes his "ears as well as his eyes." He listens as that strange figure opens its lips and talks. Talks! Yes, there can be no mistake about it. He is talking, not Western gibberish, but their own Ningpo speech! That discovery once more engrosses and absorbs the man's thoughts. He understands nothing of the text, the message, the argument, the invitation, the warning. He merely hears, and is amazed to hear a foreigner talking Chinese.

The discourse comes to an end; the missionary enters his boat once more; and Kyng-ming goes home, astonished and perplexed, but wholly unenlightened and unmoved. Well was it for him, and well for the foreign workers, that they were not content with one visit or two. They must go again and seek for Christ's sheep. So in the bright days of early December they were in San-po once more, before the great cold with frost and snow had set in. Kyng-ming is at hand once more, and now with eyes fixed and ears attentive, and with his heart opened by the Spirit of God to receive the truth, he hears, not the language only, but the message of salvation, and he believes in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Many years ago after this event I was preaching myself in that same beloved plain, with Kyng-ming as my helper. We had had a day of much discouragement; doors slammed in our faces; careless, frivolous, inattentive hearers; much scoffing, and no apparent reception of our message. As day declined, weary and sad, I proposed a walk up the hills overlooking the sea and the plain. As we mounted higher and higher, I spoke to my companion of our discouraging day. "Be of good cheer," he said, "I know this plain well. I was brought to God down there. I was once as deaf and as hard as the people seemed to be to-day. But we must go again and again to the same places. I should never have

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