

CUR HOME CIRCLE.

IN THE DARK.

Ah, whither leads the way? The light is left the ear; the night falls fast; Out of far spaces where no bellid ray Pierces the darkness comes the morning blast.

Cumbered with rocks and weeds The pathway is, and up a heavy slope; Wounded and bruised my spirit aches and bleeds, My only cheer my little torch of Hope.

I do not toil alone On this dread journey; here and there a friend, Bearing some burden heavy as my own, Walks by my side to reach the uncertain end.

O Father, now my need Is urgent, lest I stumble utterly— Lest some grim horror which I did not heed May in the dark have turned my steps from Thee.

Reach down thy tender hand And guide me. Here the blackness compasseth; These devious ways, I may not understand, Seem leading always toward the vale of death.

But if I feel Thy touch, And know Thy pitying eye hath noted me Throughout this night, it will not matter much Whether or not I see, since Thou dost see.

Nor will I question more Why far I go? Nor, whither must I go? Nor, what new grief or dangers are in store? If Thou but know'st, I do not need to know.—Congregationalist.

THAT SKATING RINK.

One of our associate editors has recently written an article for a student's journal upon the skating rink, and the craze, which we give to our readers. Rev. J. B. Albright is an earnest and successful educator, and has the best interests and welfare of the young at heart. He writes because he feels the truth as he states it. He informed the writer that every physician in Dubuque, except two, would indorse what the doctor says in the article. "What do you think of the roller skating rink?" is a question which has frequently been put to me. The manner in which it is asked implies a doubt with regard to its utility, if not more. We confess to having looked upon this amusement with a degree of favor on its first introduction, yet with open eyes. Now, being convinced that it is doing much harm, we deprecate its existence. The following are some of our reasons: 1. It is injurious to physical health. Of over a dozen prominent physicians, in different towns, whom I have consulted, not one has given a favorable opinion. Dr. Skinner, of Cedar Rapids, testifies: "I have over twenty cases of injury to young ladies alone, and not one has fully recovered. It is a very dangerous exercise, without a redeeming feature." Dr. Crawford says: "As a means of exercise it is utterly vicious. Unnatural constraint of the muscular system, bad air, chalk dust, movement in a circle, and feverish excitement must inevitably produce evil effects—many of which will manifest themselves in after years." "The great strain upon the pelvic bones will ruin a woman's health," is the verdict of an Independence physician. Dr. Bliss, of Belle Plaine, thinks "doctors ought not to complain, for the rink will insure plenty of practice to the profession." These are specimens. One of Iowa's champion skaters informed a clerical friend of mine that he had been engaged in a variety of employments, including professional base-ball, and skating was by far the most trying to the nerve. I have personally known of six broken limbs, one miscarriage, and two deaths during the past six months. In the same territory the railroad has not injured so many people in years. 2. Roller skating has done vast injury to our schools. Teachers of Cedar Rapids, Marion, Vinton, Ames, Mt. Vernon, Dubuque, and many other cities I have visited concur in the opinion that school work has been greatly hindered by the skating craze. A rink is a calamity to a college town. How much time it takes from reading among those over school age is a matter of conjecture, but it is not inconsiderable. 3. It is a moral evil. It wastes time, squanders money and calls attention and interest from better things (revivals have been broken up by the skating rink). It often leads to dancing. It encourages too great a freedom of the sexes (non-Christians say it is worse than round dances). It often produces ridiculous, and sometimes indecent, exposure of the person of young ladies. "It empties the saloons" say its defenders. Yes, and our pure young ladies become accustomed

to free and easy association of saloon bums. The conditions cannot improve the bummer but must inevitably demoralize our girls. Lewd men and women often mingle freely in skating with the best classes. I have known young ladies to ask for the partnership of men they would not recognize on the street. I might say more, but the above is enough for the present. I have spoken plainly because honesty and interest in the young people impel me thereto.—Prohibitor.

A SERMON STOPPED.

A remarkable episode in a public religious service once occurred while the clergyman was preaching from the text: "Is it well with thee?" It was at a little church in Yorkshire, England, in the year 1831. The minister was a good man, with no little gospel power in his heart and manner, and he made it solemnly plain to the auditory that the Saviour was present, looking into their thoughts with kind inquiry, and testing the spirit of every one. "Is it well with thee?" "Is it well with thee?" "Is it well with thee?" Suddenly an exclamation was heard from one of the pews, and a boy, twelve years old, who had been intently listening, fell on his knees, and began to weep and pray. A strange thrill ran through the congregation, and many rose to their feet. The minister paused in his sermon, and all attention was riveted on the kneeling boy. Everybody knew little Tommy, for he belonged to one of the oldest Yorkshire families, and his ancestors of Barnsley had won the arms of a baronet. He was a bright, gifted boy, now six years motherless, but crying in his heart the indelible impression of his mother's early religious teachings. The honest Yorkshire people felt too deeply the effect of the sermon to misunderstand Tommy's emotion. They did not think he was crazy. The minister did not. "Let us pray," he said, for he saw more need of prayer than preaching at a moment when before men and angels a young soul spoke its wants. The whole congregation at once assumed the attitude of devotion. Many strong and loving petitions went up to God for the young boy of whom, like Samuel, he had called in his own tabernacle. The scene was a strange one—that sudden prayer-meeting in the middle of sermon time. The prayers were answered, too. Tommy rose from his knees with a radiant face. Thenceforth the zeal of a divine anointing was on him. For the next eight years he continued to give increasing proof of a Christian spirit and Christian zeal, and rare and happy fitness for winning souls. When very young he was licensed to preach. At the age of twenty he left his native land and came to the United States. Since then he has not neglected the gift that is within him. The voice that so long ago said to him, on the other side of the sea, "Is it well with thee?" has ever been gladly recognized, and he has "followed Jesus all the way." It led him to Long Island; it led him to Albany; it led him down the Hudson again—and very many whom his words first taught the heavenly lesson, now know "it is well" with them. To-day few stand higher among the American clergy, or more honored of the Great Master, than Tommy the Yorkshire boy—the Rev. Dr. Thomas Armitage, of New York.

ANIMAL SUICIDE.

It is said that one of the Newfoundland dogs brought from the north on the relief ship Bear committed suicide by drowning, after having shown great depression for some days. A similar story is told concerning two or three of the Esquimaux dogs belonging to the relief expedition, and in all these cases the impelling motive seems to have been either nostalgia or intense dissatisfaction with the new climatic conditions to which the animals had been introduced. That animals do commit suicide, and from motives analogous to those which lead men to "shuffle off this mortal coil," is a well-established fact. Dr. Lander Lindsay in his comprehensive work, "Mind in the Lower Animals," gives a long list of illustrations, from which it is impossible to escape the conclusion that many, if not most, animals have a clear idea of death, and are liable to become weary of living very much as the higher

creation does. Among dogs especially suicide has often been resorted to as a refuge from the pangs of wounded love or pride; as when an old Newfoundland dog, being refused permission to take an accustomed outing with the child, and being playfully whipped with a handkerchief, took it so deeply to heart that he went off and drowned himself by deliberately holding his head under water in a shallow ditch. Horses, birds, and even fish have been known to commit suicide also, but it is among dogs and horses that the reasoning faculty appears most strongly in relation to such actions.

It is difficult to make any theory of instinct cover many of these cases, because the processes of reasoning possessed by the animal appear to be not merely like, but identical with, the processes of reasoning pursued by man under similar circumstances. The dog on the Bear, for example, was naturally a strong swimmer and at home in the water. Such an animal could not drown unless he put a strong repression upon the instinct which would have kept him afloat. And this he did. He stiffened his legs and held them still, thus plainly putting away the means of preserving his life, and as plainly choosing to die. But how should an animal not gifted with reason arrive at the complex and subtle conclusions involved in this course of action? How should he know that if he did not swim he would drown, and that drowning meant death, and that death meant, at all events, relief or change from conditions of existence which had become intolerable? Animal suicide indeed is perhaps more suggestive of reason than almost any other class of facts which has been observed in connection with the low creation, and it is not to be wondered at that naturalists like the Rev. J. G. Wood should have been convinced that animals do possess reason, or that analysts as acute as Mr. Romanes should have found it increasingly difficult to point out the line of demarcation which separates instinct from reason.

OX-EYE DAISIES.

The hills are tint in cloudy blue, The loveliest self who's sky bends over, The wild is sweet by the orchard at the foot, And winding a grave through the knee-deep clover.

The air is sweet, with a strange perfume, The roses from the depths of the wood land places, The fields are hid in a wealth of bloom, And white with the sweep of the ox-eye daisies.

And farther down where the brook runs hurrying, Where the ferns are cool in the prisoned shadow, We still may see, through the morning dew, The swell and the dip of the prisoned meadow.

And then when the wind across it blows, And the waving lines of silver follow, We catch the gleam of the heart of gold, While over her skirts the first-winged swallows.

Clear and lime, in white and gold, A slow bloom of sunlight spaces, The field is all as it well can hold, And white with the drit of the ox-eye daisies.

—Dora Goodale.

WITHOUT NOTE OR COMMENT.

A little more than twenty-five years ago Robert J. M. Goodwin was one of the two or three most promising men in Asbury University, at Greenville, Indiana. His habits were good, his industry untiring, his ambition high, and his ability considerably above that of most men in his class and college. He was a man full of combativeness and abounding energy. Courageous, high spirited, witty and generous, there was no man more generally loved by his fellows than he. He came of a family of high character, the habit of whose members it was to win distinction in life, and his promise in that way was greater than that of any other Goodwin of them all.

When the war came he entered the service, and although neither his training nor his taste was military, he quickly distinguished himself, rising to the rank of colonel, with the brevet rank of brigadier general, conferred for meritorious service. When the fighting was done he returned to Indianapolis, and entered again upon the practice of his profession, quickly distinguished himself at the bar. All the fair promise of his youth and early manhood seemed about to be fulfilled abundantly, and the brilliancy shown in his college career had obviously ripened into intellectual vigor of an uncommon sort.

But the good habits of his youth had given place to intemperance. His thirst for alcohol had become uncontrollable. In a little time his intellect, was in ruins. The man was a sot. His friends sought to save him, and sent him for a time to a hospital for the insane, to be treated for chronic alcoholism. He was discharged thence as a patient who had recovered; but, as is usually the case, the habit returned as soon as the restraint was removed, and in his drunken resentment the poor fellow shot and killed his brother who had placed him in the hospital.

For this murder he was sentenced to imprisonment for life, and a few days ago he committed suicide in his cell. The sad story of his downfall seems one worth telling in this plain way for purposes of admonition.—New York Commercial.

WHERE TO WORK.

A good work is going on among the police force in Birmingham. There are a large number of Christian men among them, and the head of the detective department is an earnest Christian worker. This man served his time first as an ordinary policeman, and was so greatly troubled by the sights and sounds of sin among which he worked that for a long time the constant burden of his own and his wife's prayers was, "Lord, take me out of the police! Give me some other work." Still no answer came, and no other way was opened for him. At last, one evening he came home, looked very thoughtful, and said to his wife, "Wife, do you know I think we have been making a great mistake. We have been praying God to take me out of the force, and I begin to think He has just me out to work for Him. Now I am just going to pray that He will help me to serve Him where I am." That was the beginning of a new life, and he began to watch for opportunities of service. He soon became very useful and was promoted, so that he now is at the head of the detectives. He has a wonderful memory for faces, and hardly fails to recognize a person whom he has seen. Not long ago a man asked to see him, and was shown into his private office. Looking at the detective, the visitor said, "Don't you know me?" The detective replied, "Wait a minute and I'll tell you; yes, I recognize you. Fourteen years ago I arrested you, and you were tried at the Warwickshire assizes, and got fourteen years' penal servitude. Your name is so and so." "A right," replied the man, "but that is not all. After my sentence, when you had conducted me to the cell you waited a minute, and said to me, 'This is a bad job for you, man. You've been serving a bad master, and now you're in for the wages. You will have plenty of time to think now; will you not come to the Lord and ask His help to give you a new life? Read your Bible and pray; give your heart to Christ. It is not too late for a change; only turn now, and you'll come out a changed man to lead an honest life.'" Then you shook hands with me and pleaded so earnestly that I made up my mind, and I have done it. The Lord has forgiven me; my time is up, and I come to you the first thing to thank you for speaking to me and to tell you." Perhaps this little incident will help to show us that, wherever we are placed we can find work to do for God, and if we will only take up the work nearest our hand in God's strength, He will not fail to bless it.—Evangelistic Record.

AN ANSWER TO PRAYER.

Bishop Bowman gives the following instance of answer to prayer from his own experience: "In the fall of 1853, while visiting Indiana, I was at an annual conference where Bishop James presided. We received a telegram that Bishop Simpson was dying. Said Bishop James, 'Let us spend a few moments in earnest prayer for the recovery of Bishop Simpson.' We knelt to pray. William Taylor, the great Californian street preacher, was called to pray, and such a prayer I have never heard since. The impression seized upon me irresistibly, Bishop Simpson will not die. I rose from my knees perfectly quiet. Said I, 'Bishop Simpson will not die.' Why do you think so?' Because I have had an irresistible impression made upon my mind during this prayer. Another said, 'I have had the same impression.' We passed it along

from bench to bench until we found that a large proportion of the conference had the same impression. I made a minute of the time of day, and when I next saw Bishop Simpson he was attending to his daily labor. I inquired of the Bishop, 'How did you recover from your sickness?' He replied, 'I cannot tell.' 'What did your physician say?' He said it was a miracle. I then said to the Bishop, 'Give me the time and circumstances under which the change occurred.' He fixed the day and the very hour, making allowance for the distance—a thousand miles away—that the preachers were engaged in prayer at this conference. The physician left the room and said to his wife, 'It is useless to do anything further; the Bishop must die.' In about an hour he returned and started back, inquiring, 'What have you done?' 'Nothing,' was the reply. 'He is recovering rapidly,' said the physician; 'a change has occurred in the disease within the last hour beyond anything I have ever seen; the crisis is passed, and the Bishop will recover.' And he did.—H. T. Williams.

GOOD LANGUAGE.

As soon as a child begins to lisn its first broken sentences its education should begin. Habits are formed which will exist to a greater or less degree through life. Such being the case, the conversation of the older members of the family should be carefully guarded, lest the little ones learn ungrammatical expressions and slang, which sad to say, is so rife among our young people. The servants, with whom the children spend much of their time, should be chosen with reference to this matter. A mother should feel her duty to point out any grammatical mistakes made by them, and insist upon their language being correct, respectful, and void of slang at all times. It is exceedingly difficult to break children of habits once formed, and care in this direction will save much trouble and annoyance. One way to cultivate the use of language, and at the same time to learn of the occupations and companions of her children, is for the mother to encourage the daily narration of what they have seen, heard, and enjoyed, and the telling of their little experiences. The study of pictures, in which every child delights, may be used. Children love to look at pictures, and an always be induced to talk about them; this teaches them observation, and how to describe what they see. When stories are read to children they should be obliged to reproduce them, using, as far as possible, the language of the book. The memory is strengthened in this way, a habit of attention is formed, and the power of expression increased. If such plans as these are systematically carried out, they will prove a wonderful help in the thorough education of a child.

Knowledge does not necessarily imply either an upright heart or a benevolent character; and it is unfortunately too common to see the best gifts of genius united to the most deplorable selfishness, and the grossest depravity.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

CHILD'S HYMN.
God, make my life a little light
Within the world to glow—
A little flame that burneth bright
Wherever I may go.

God, make my life a little flower
That giveth joy to all
That cometh forth the sad—
That helpeth others to be strong,
And makes the sinner glad.

God, make my life a little staff
Where on the weak may rest,
That so, what health and strength I have
May serve my neighbors best.

God, make my life a little hymn
Of tenderness and praise—
Of faith that never waxes dim
In all His wondrous ways.

—Good Words.

PLAYTHINGS IN JAPAN.

Japan has been called the "Paradise of Babies," for not only do the children have a great number of toys but many persons get their living by amusing them. Men go about the streets and blow soap bubbles for them with pipes that have nobowls as ours have. These

young Japs have tops, pop-guns, blow-guns, magic lanterns, kaleidoscopes, wax figures, terra cotta animals, flying fish and dragons, masks, puzzles and games; turtles that move their legs and pop out their heads; birds that go about and peck the fingers and whistle; pasteboard targets that when hit, burst open and let a winged figure fly out; and, most wonderful of all, perhaps—little balls looking like elder pith, which thrown into balls of warm water, slowly expand into the shape of a boat, or a fisherman, a tree, flower, crab or bird.

The girls of Japan have dolls, furniture and dishes, and, of course, dolls. They have dolls that walk and dance; dolls that put on a mask when a string is pulled; dolls dressed to represent nobles, ladies, minstrels, mythological and historical personages. Dolls are handed down for generations, and in some families are hundreds of them. They never seem to get broken or worn out, as yours do; and, in fact, they can hardly be the dear playmates that yours are. They are kept as a sort of show, and, though the little owners play with them, they do not dress and undress them and take them to bed as you do. A good deal of the time they are rolled up in silk paper and packed away in a trunk. On the great festival day of the Japanese girls—the Feast of Dolls—there is a great show of dolls and toys, and it is the event of the year for the blackeyed maidens. The Feast of Dolls is the boys' great day, and they have banners, flags, figures of warriors and great men, swords and other toys for boys.

But the finest toy of Japan—as no doubt you youngsters will agree—is carried about the streets by a man or woman, for any child to play with who is the owner of a hundredth part of a cent, or one "cash."

There is a small charcoal stove, a copper griddle, spoons and cups; and above all ready-made baiter, and sauce. The happy child who hires this outfit, can sit down on the floor and eat "griddle cakes" to his heart's content. Can anything be nicer?—The Gospel in Many Lands.

THE LITTLE LAMBS.

During a powerful revival, the pastor announced that a meeting would be held that evening for the reception of members. On hearing this, little eleven year-old Frank went home and asked the permission of his grandmother, under whose charge he was, to present himself for membership. She was astonished, and said: "My dear child, you are too young. You must wait till you get older."

This was more than little Frank could endure. He instantly burst into tears, and hid his head in her lap. It was some time before he regained composure. He then said: "Grandma, if you had a flock of sheep and lambs, and it was winter time, would you put all the big sheep in stables and leave the little lambs outside to perish in the snow and cold?"

The little boy's faith and earnestness triumphed. His grandmother consented. He was examined as to his faith in Christ, and received into the Church. He became a physician, and the head of a public institution of the State of Kentucky, and is still an earnest and devoted follower of Christ.—Crown of Glory.

LEARNING TO SPELL.

Arthur is a bright little fellow, just beginning his education. A short time since, in the presence of visitors, he came running to his uncle exclaiming: "O, uncle, I can spell sun!" "Very well, let us hear," answered the uncle. "S-u-n, sun." "That is right. Now let us hear you spell another kind of sun?" Arthur's face wore a puzzled expression for a time, but soon brightened with an inspiration as he sang out: "M-u-n, moon." This was greeted with applauding laughter. The uncle then said: "Are you your papa's son?" "Yes sir." "Very well; spell that kind of a son?" "M-e-m-e," triumphantly shouted the little chap, to the confusion of his uncle and the glee of the others.—Dew Drop.

OUR CHILDREN.

They are heirs of the Gospel of the warm place in its Parents of long ago the onest Jesus the them. He did not the hopes of mother disciples. Touching fy Him. He took arms and blessed h was an example, Christ must imitate must be the gentle the young. Christ care for child ample care. Of the world, Christ over infants with ism frowns on child them as spee of organization and ciation sacriloch. Mode n and, many of the Chinese are not Hindus have left perish in the Gan of heathendom f childen, unloved been left to perish the heathen heart where the heart sweetness of Christ mothers can nee kill their children correct that. Not of a parental a natural; but not human beings t mals. So long a and helpless, the have the earnest, sicing guardashi In the early days there was a fire in hall. A cat ru to a place of dat out two of her turned for the th powered by the he could not carry it ad died by its could a man have tianity teaches them to not because they are because they are them to care for while they are on them off and ceas in later life. The between parents a and brue when t up; but "our marked object of time only, not for Christianity makes ions for the care o one sense they m many ways this is deny the claims of the supremacy of a Son of God, do selves to every nee for children of care of. One loc contributions of t philanthropic o hospitals, no homes of shelter in modern times defiantly rejected Perhaps it is best so. Earth has there are many it is a blessing ab on their the Orphan Home, House for the ree Children. Such enough to make a piece would be would lie buried, was best in the little were ske dark than on su Christianity ren," not mere their youth as w kind to boys and maidens of all t every grade of never asks res come. It is esp pender, to be ful to such as are wishful to the mean-spirite the Christian na thetic with the give no honor to no interest in the coin for a child; in their books, little presents the dance. It would his character a part of a church of interest in the to prosper. In a wonderfully of all classes, Our childr maturity. The we pass on. tized into the and of the Soc, They were pra company when God is pleat prayers, not strai fond of the thurst them of may knock so m not said the they are grow and ask to be at down at our ta tend them, sl them, keep the would God. I the first as His