

"Tear of the Clouds." The splendid suspension bridge at Niagara first went over that profound chasm as a tiny kite-string. Let no one despise the day of small things. The noblest Christian lives often have their origin in some faithful word spoken in love, or in the reading of a tract, or in some small occurrence, or in a single resolution to break with some besetting sin. One sentence seems to have brought the ardent Peter and the beloved John to their decision of discipleship. One sentence converted the jailor of Philippi. The outcome of those few words has been felt in the spiritual history of thousands of others since that day; Paul little knew how many souls, in all time, he was addressing when he said to the frightened jailor, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." In fact, nobody ever knows how much good he is doing when he does just one good thing.

A word of praise from his mother made Benjamin West a painter, and president of the Royal Academy. A kind sentence or two of commendation bestowed on a short talk in a prayer-meeting led me to my decision to enter the sacred ministry. From that incident I learned never to underrate the influence of a few words spoken at a critical moment. All the most important events of my own life have hinged on a very small pivot; this is probably true with most people; and how it magnifies the power of the littles!

That noble Boanerges of the Western New York pulpit, Dr. William Wisner, of Ithaca, said that he stopped, on a hot summer day, at a farm-house for a glass of water. The farmer's daughter handed him the refreshing draught, and he repaid by a kind, tender word about Jesus as the water of life. Several years afterwards a middle-aged woman recognized him on the deck of a steam-boat, and thanked him for the few, plain, faithful words which led her to Christ. It is a sin and a shame that we Christians let slip so many opportunities to drop a word of truth through an open ear into an open soul. Grant that many a truth thus dropped has not sprouted; neither has every sermon preached been the means of converting a soul. But the awakening power of a discourse has often laid in a single point pressed home. It is the tip of the arrow that penetrates the "joints of the harness."

The great lesson in the saving of souls is never "to despise the day of small things," never to lose an opportunity, and never to underrate the power of a single truth spoken in love. Revivals in a church commonly start in one or two hearts. The first revival in the little church among whom my own ministry was spent, began in the heart of a little girl. Her few words awakened one woman, and that woman at once came to me, and proposed special meetings; out of those meetings flowed fifty conversions; they were worth more to me than any year in a theological seminary.

There is another side to the influence of the littles. If the usefulness of a Christian depends on small acts well done, so the mischief wrought by inconsistent Christians arises from the indulgence of what seem to be small sins. We are often great sinners in little things. Little meannesses of conduct, little irritations of temper, little fibs and small spite, and small affronts, are the "foxes" that will spoil a very promising grape vine. A snow-flake is a tiny thing, but enough of them may be heaped up on a wintry day to blockade a locomotive and its train. So the aggregate amount of inconsistent acts and neglects of duty destroy many a Christian influence; the snow banks block up revivals, and impede the progress of a church. What mischief a handful of fire once wrought in Chicago! What wide-spread evil has been done in a church by a single scandal or a single quarrel! God emphasizes our *personal responsibility* by such facts; our Master bids us be careful to "keep the *least* of his commandments." A whole ship is often at the mercy of a single leak, or a single coal fire.

No sin is a trifle. No sin can be safely allowed to get headway. "Let that worm alone, and it will kill your tree," said a man once to a gardener

in his park. Sure enough; the gardener neglected the little borer, and the next year yellow leaves showed that the tree had been assassinated by the worm. Facts prove that most of the spiritual declension and the most lamentable bankruptcies of character began with the indulgence of single sins.

Everything, however minute in appearance, that affects character is *great*. In God's sight no truth and no sin is a trifle. His crops of grace all grow out of tiny seeds; his retributions of righteous wrath are kindled by sparks. The day of judgment will apply the microscope. May God help you and me to be "faithful in that which is *least*," may every moment of our lives be so spent as to yield "compound interest" for Christ in eternity.

Missionary.

U-GANDA, CENTRAL AFRICA.

(Continued.)

It is pleasant to near of Christian worship in this heathen land, the sounds of prayer and praise arising to Him whose ear is ever open to listen to our cry:—

"We have morning service every morning in the chapel between 6 and 7 a.m., conducted in Swahili by Rev. R. P. Ashe, Henry Wright Duta reading the lessons. It would delight you to hear the singing, as good and as varied as the majority of our congregations at home—long, short, and peculiar measure.

"I ask you to join with us to praise Almighty God for His mercy and love.

"We have two regular Sunday services to crowded audiences; indeed, our chapel is full to overflowing of males and females. I preach regularly two sermons every Sunday, which are listened to with much interest and attention. I seek to be concise, connected, clear, and vivid—feeding babes with milk and men with a little wholesome food fitted for them. I speak extempore and freely; it seems marvellous to me. Of course I prepare accurately."

The missionaries are anxious to promote marriages, in order to form a nursery-ground in which family and social relationships, which are the basis of Christianity and civilization may be properly cultivated. We are given an account of one marriage:—

"There is another young couple also married and living here; their names are Albert Kibega and Doti. He is brother to Edward Hutchinson, who was one of our first converts. He left the service of the king's mother some eight months ago, and came to 'serve us,' that he might learn Christianity. He has shown much perseverance, and is a quiet, unassuming, and faithful young man. His conduct testifies that he loves the Saviour.

"Doti, a young, sprightly creature, came to serve us some six months since. She was sent here by a friend, now in the province of Budou. She said, 'I claim your protection, and wish to work and learn like—' Having liked her, she joined the ladies' class. Although not yet baptized, having postponed it for a season, Albert expressed a desire to marry her; so after a time I consented to do so. I, being the 'bride's father,' gave her away. Gave her my own ring with which I married her; and we killed a fat ox, and invited our friends to the marriage feast, and I improved the occasion. Her husband teaches her regularly, and she wishes to be baptized also. They both work for us."

But the work is not carried on without many difficulties. The people are fickle, and while one day they praise the missionaries and look upon them as Gods, the next they are ready to call them the cause of all the evils that come to them. We quote an instance of this:—

"The Mohammedans were very bitter against

us in Ramazan. They were terribly fierce, and they said we were teaching the whole country, and this was why God was punishing the people with the plague. They said, 'Did we not tell you the English were perfidious? They never got a hen's race in a country but they conquered and enslaved it, as they have now enslaved Egypt. That scoundrel there,' pointing to me, 'is a Kafir, not worthy of credence; he is worthy of death. We only ask your permission to have his life.'

"Taking advantage of my unavoidable absence, partly from illness and partly from much labour here, the Arabs have all with one mouth represented to the king that the cause of the plague was the giving up the Islamitic services in the mosque; so that they got the king to order the Katikiro, to whom they have given much goods, to lead those services. But however force may prevail, and however the chiefs and the venerated cliques varnished over with Islamism may show front, I am perfectly persuaded that the bulk of the people will never accept it. I am certain also that sooner or later a tempest will break upon us, which will baptize us in blood; and I feel that the beginning is not far distant, except the good hand of God prevent it."

The heathen worship which has to be combated seems to be a very degraded one:—

"There is another 'ism' far more dangerous, and that is lubariism. Lubari is not that bald, bare-boned system of devil-worship which it has been represented to be, but an attractive service calculated to fill the heart of the simple-minded black man with awe and wonder, and to captivate him with its charms. It is a system having its symbols and sacrifices, its temples and trophies, priests and priestesses, its doctors of divinity, or rather satanity, and its doctors of medicine. It is strengthened by history and tradition, and backed up with power. It is a mixture of Alexandrian gnosticism and ancient Egyptianism, in which Lubari incarnate takes the place of Christ, and the whole of the system the place of a corrupted Christianity, or rather I would call it Satan's masterpiece, invented to suit the negro mind."

Sometimes the favors of the savages are as embarrassing as their enmity; of this we give an instance, with which we close our account for the present, trusting we have given enough to claim from our readers a hearty and practical interest in this mission:

"Several victorious expeditions have arrived here flushed with victory. The number of cattle, women, and slaves is enormous, and the Arab camp is crowded with slaves, and the slave-chains and stocks are in full requisition. Oh, the homes decimated, the districts decimated, the populous places pillaged and fired, the bloodshed, the misery produced, the ravishments by a savage soldiery! Mtesa, in his kindness, gave me a present of five cows in his distribution. My soul shuddered within me, and I politely refused, saying they were robbed. He did not like the allusion; the chiefs were annoyed. I was going to depict the misery that a victorious army would produce if they did in Mtesa's capital what his soldiers did elsewhere, but I was told by people in authority, 'Hold your tongue;' and I thought that perhaps, after all, it would be wiser to do so; still I entered my protest."

British & Foreign News.

ENGLAND.

We learn with regret that Canon Carpenter, the new Bishop of Ripon, has had in his church a surpliced choir, full choral service, Communion every Sunday at 8 a. m. and on saints' days, no evening communions, Hymns Ancient and Modern, and the surplice in the pulpit.