

Miscellaneous.

From the Christian Advocate and Journal.

THE THOUGHTLESS MULTITUDE.

Messrs. Editors,—Being at a friend's house a few mornings ago, and sitting in the back part of the room, my attention was arrested and attracted by a collection of black ants on the surface of the block of wood which lay behind the fire. After observing them for a moment, I made a remark concerning them, and drew my chair nearer to the fire to observe more closely the busy little creatures. They seemed to be enjoying the genial influence of the heat which had caused them to arouse from the torpor which the preceding winter had brought upon them. They had crept into the old decayed log for shelter and protection; and in the course of the husbandman's provident economy, at the commencement of the past winter he brought the log to his woodyard for fuel. All seemed, thus far, to be well for the puny race—they were brought, perhaps out of some open field, exposed to the pelting northwest storm, and placed beneath a large pile of wood, secure from the inclement weather.

Winter passed, and the pile was consumed. Spring came, and the old log, which lay at the bottom, was divided in blocks, and the one in which the insects were was allotted to the back part of the fireplace, to serve as a "back log." As the fire consumed the small sticks the heat affected the block also. The sleepers awakened from their torpid state, no doubt thinking the season for them to leave their retreat had come; they came forth animated and active. I observed their manoeuvres with interest and attention. They passed to and fro, up and down, upon the block, and when they met each other, they seemed to do it with a cheer of gladness, yet seemed to be in so much hurry in preparing to live again, that they had but little time for delay. They rushed on, apparently careless, or unconscious of the danger to which they were exposed. But, alas! as I observed them more narrowly, I discovered that many approached too near the verge of their little globe. Ever and anon one or more of their number fell down into the flames below. They dropped and struggled a moment, and life was extinct. The number on the block, however, did not decrease; for as fast as the first comers fell others came forth to take their places. Thus they came into life and disappeared, and none seemed to regard the lost. The living hastened to and fro as before, as if in perfect safety. As the danger of the little insects increased, my feelings became interested in their behalf. I commenced trying to devise means for their rescue. I first reached out the sheet of paper upon which I was penciling down some of the reflections which the circumstances produced in my mind; some thus made their escape, by leaving the multitude and choosing to walk upon the paper. I carried them to the door, and placed them on the ground. Many, however, nay, the great majority, refused the kind offer, and continued to follow their own course toward the flames below, and every moment one or more dropped into them, and expired. I then took the little hearth broom and applied it to the block, and thus many more made their escape by clinging to it. Some that crawled upon the broom left it again, and returned to the careless multitude, and perished in the general ruin. There being many seemingly unconscious of their danger, I tried to cause them to feel it, which I did by turning the surface of the block toward the fire. This put the whole collection into a consternation, and induced many to run to the little broom. By these means I rescued many from ruin, and they seemed to rejoice in it.

Being warned by the rapid march of the morning that my hour of school was approaching, I once more

placed the broom for them to crawl upon, and requested Miss H. to use her efforts to effect the escape of as many of the remaining little creatures as she could, and I proceeded to my charge; reflecting on the exercises of the morning; which reflections I now submit to your disposal, trusting, that if they are thought worthy, they will be perused by your readers with serious attention.

How fully, thought I, did the busy multitude of insects on the block of wood represent the human family in the world. As the insects on the block sported in the pleasant and enlivening heat of the fire, feeling the genial influence, but not thinking whence it proceeded, or of the dangerous consequences of abusing their blessings, so do the busy multitude of the world enjoy the good things of this life without once referring to the source from whence they flow. They hasten to and fro on the wide world, busying themselves about the things of time and sense, regardless of the end of their being, and of the consequences of thus carelessly posting their way through life. And as the little insect rushes into destruction, so do many careless human beings in their mad career, indulging in sin and folly, abusing the mercies of God, till they either fall by their own guilt into irreparable ruin, or involve themselves in evils which bring them to the verge of the tomb, and just ready to be hurried into eternity. Death sweeps many from the stage of action, and yet the living seem not to lay it to heart. They see their comrades drop, and pass into the shades of oblivion, but in a few short hours they seem to have forgotten the impressions, if any were made, and rush on Gallo-like as before, seemingly careless of consequences, and regardless of earth, heaven and hell. And though every moment witnesses the departure of some soul into eternity, they live as though they were not mortal. The gospel minister comes along and warns them of their danger, and offers salvation, but few accept the offer. Some, however, awake to their dangerous condition, and make an effort to escape, but ere they have long tried the means, they return to their former course of folly, and finally perish. Others grow up in sin, and become hardened in their crimes, and, like the poor ignorant ants, unconcerned till they feel the heat of the fire, seem not to be conscious of their danger till the faithful minister of God describes the pains of the damned, and brings them to feel the agony of a guilty conscience. Then do they begin to be alarmed, and seek salvation.

But many refuse to repent and serve God. The means of grace pass by—the harvest is over—the summer is ended, and they are not saved. The minister is called to his reward in heaven, or to another field of labour on earth, and the sinner goes on in his sins and in his folly.

Sinner, flee "the wrath to come." The dreadful doom which awaits the finally impenitent is fully and forcibly pointed out in the Scriptures of truth. Wicked men, indeed, do not like to be told of it; it tends to disturb their merriment, and the consideration is disagreeable to them; but if they cannot bear to hear of it now, how will they be able to endure it hereafter?

"My thoughts on awful subjects roll,
Damnation and the dead;
What horrors seize the guilty soul
Upon a dying bed!

Ling'ring upon these mortal shores,
He makes a guilty stay,
Till like a flood, with rapid force,
Death sweeps the wretch away.

Then swift and dreadful he descends
Down to the fiery coast,
Amidst abominable fiends,
Himself a frightened ghost.