UNCLE TOBIAS'S PRAIRIE SCHOONER.

BY THE REV. EDWARD A. RAND.

!O this is nice!

That was all that Nate Walters said. Then in silence he looked around him and saw all the mysteries of the prairie-schooner and emigrant-waggon in which with his Uncle Tobias's family he expected to make a journey to the foot of a lofty mountainrange that could only be seen in very clear weather. The waggon was a stout, ample, canvas-covered structure borne by four strong wheels. There were seats by day, and mattresses by night. There was a little stove whose slender funnel pierced the canvas roof, a collar of tin enclosing the funnel where it projected from the canvas. This collar around the long neck of the funnel was not for good looks but to prevent any danger from the fire.

'Can't hardly wait till to-morrow, when Uncle Tobias starts off,' declared Nate.

The morrow came, and the emigrant waggon moved away, their oxen slowly journeying over the prairie. Nate was proud of the waggon. He walked a while by its side. The waggon halted in half an he could take a nap on a little mattress in the rear of the big waggon.

You see, aunt, it tires a boy a-walkin', said Nate, stretched out on the mattress

and already gaping.

'I know it. It is very, very hard for a

Then Aunt Nabby sighed.

At first he could not understand why his aunt would sigh when she talked about boys. He soon learned the reason. How much he could have guessed that very day if he had been awake five minutes later when Aunt Nabby bending above a curly haired boy sighed heavily and murmured 'Don't I wish our Joe wasn't any bigger and was a-lyin' down here fast asleep.

Joe was a young fellow about eighteen Two months ago he had gone off with a party of rough men toward the far away blue mountains whose misty tops rose above the long, stretching prairie the schooner was now toiling across.

When Nate awoke it was noon. big, heavy waggon was not in motion. Nate looked out and he saw the shade of trees and he caught the flash of a bright stream. Aunt Nabby was busy with pre parations for dinner, and when ready, it seemed to Nate that it was the very finest meal he had ever eaten, and it was eaten too in the finest dining-room he had ever seen-a green nook in the clump of trees by the side of the bright stream. After dinner the stream was forded, and toward the distant mountains the waggon slowly. heavily, steadily lumbered along.

There was one thing Nate missed in his interesting waggon trip. He had left behind him a Christian home from which he expected to be absent a year on a visit to this Uncle Tobias in his anticipated new home at the foot of the mountains. Nate's father was particular to call together the family every morning for prayers, and was

not that Uncle Tobias's fashion?
'Your Uncle Tobias has a lot on his mind. He's a-worryin',' Aunt Nabby had said more than once. Was he worrying about Joe, Nate wondered. When Uncle Tobias would stand and look off toward the distant mountains of azure, his face clouding, Nate would say 'He's a-thinkin' about Jue.

But if he were worrying about his son who had strayed off with the rough men, was not that a reason why the fire on prayer's altar should be kindled—a light to shine in a shaded place I So it seemed to Nate. And if Uncle Tobias and Aunt Nabby had for any reason let the fire goout on prayer's altar, was it not all the ole that so the comforting, hopeful flame? It had better be a boy than nobody.

The next morning Nate was alone in the old prairie-schooner. Uncle Tobias and Aunt Nabby were outside making some plans for the day ere the heavy waggon wheels began slowly to turn round toward the mountains. Nate had said his prayer that morning, but he wondered how it would sound if all alone he said it aloud. Would his voice sound like his father's

prayer?
Nobody here!' said Nate, looking around the waggon interior. Then he dropped upon his knees, closed his eyes, clasped his hands, and said aloud the prayer he had already breathed out to God in the early morning.

'Hark!' said Uncle Tobias to Aunt Nabby. 'What's that?'

'Somebody speakin', Tobias.

Nobody is there except Nathan.' P'raps, Nabby, he's sayin' a piece. He's a good boy to say pieces in Sunday

school, they all say.'

Here Uncle Tobias and Aunt Nabby stole up to the old waggon, thinking they might hear a Sunday-school piece.

O God, bring poor Joe back from the mountains, and help us to pray for him, said a reverent voice. Nate did not finish his prayer, for he was startled by the sound of a hasty, heavy rustling, and his next word was 'Amen.

That night the waggon wheels came to their usual stop. The camp-fire threw out its heat as the chilling shadows fell. And how chilling they were that night! Was it because the mountains were so near and hour. Then he climbed a very short flight the shadows were cool with the white snows of steps up to the little door in the side of that had trailed their folds across or dethe canvas wall, and Aunt Nabby told him scending from the lofty summit? The warm shelter of the canvas house on wheels was very grateful. How snug this shelter seemed! And what made it still more of a protection?

'I think, Nabby and Nate,' said Uncle Tobias, 'we will have prayer to-night. Just hand me that Bible under that seat near you, Nathan,'

It had been lying untouched under that

seat during this journey.

Uncle Tobias pulled out his silver-bowed spectacles, turned to a Psalm, and slowly, devoutly read, 'I will lift up my eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help; my help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth.

As Uncle Tobias read on how strong a place of shelter seemed that waggon, as if every wall of canvas had changed to one of stone:

It was now dark without, but the old lantern suspended from the waggon roof seemed to shed the light of a cheerful day. The Bible is a lamp unto the feet, and a light unto one's path.

Let us try to pray!' said Uncle Tobias, removing his spectacles, whose glasses showed an unusual dampness.

As Uncle Tobias's tones sounded there in the prairie schooner, it seemed to Nate as if he were home again and his father's voice echoed about him.

But what was the occasion of the stir outside? There were shadowing figures moving up to the waggon. Yes, one, two, forms were there.

'Hark!' said one of these, laying his hand on his companion. 'Hold on !

They crouched beside the waggon, each man keeping his hand upon a revolver he had already grasped.

Uncle Tobias's tones, broken yet strong,

rose up in the still night air.
Oh, Lord, save poor Joe—that lost sheep among the mountains-and bring him back-to his father-and mother.'

Come back here!' said the younger of the two men outside to his companion.

They went away to a distance of a hundred feet and held a conference.

No riffin' of that team !' said the young · Why not? You goin' to settle it?

'Come away farther and I'll give you some good reasons. I know the people.' The next day's sun looked down on the little camp.

'We have got an early start and there

is time for prayers, Nabby——,
And if not, Tobias, we had better make time. I slept better last night than I have for a long time. I heard steps while you were prayin', but nothin' came of it.'

Tobias had said 'We will try to pray, Nabby and Nate.'

They all looked up as those nearing steps

reverently saying at home the words of crime. In the new home by the grand that he wished to see me at his home, mountains he proved the sincerity of his reformation. - Christian at Work.

A MESSAGE FROM GOD.

The Rev. Galusha Anderson LL.D. in a series of papers which he is writing for the Chicago Standard (Baptist) tells the follow-

ing interesting story:
Years ago while pastor of a church preaching Sunday morning and evening, I carefully prepared a discourse, for the second service, on the story of Ananias and Sapphira. Sunday afternoon the heavens were covered with clouds, the chilly east wind crept through the streets of the city, and as the day began to darken, a cold drizzling rain came pattering down. An hour before service, I began, according to my custom, to go mentally through my sermon, that I might be sure that every thought was fully within my intellectual grasp; but to my dismay I found it impossible to recall in any logical order, what with great labor I had wrought out during the preceding week. Every attempt which I made ended in mental confusion and darkness. With consternation I looked forward to the moment, near at hand, when the church-bell should strike and summon the evening worshippers. 'What shall I do, what can I do? cried I in the solitude of my study. On the eve of service, and no sermon! I fell on my knees and prayed in agony of spirit. My fear and agitation fled. Calm trust and ineffable peace pervaded my soul. Into my mind flashed this text, 'For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. The subjects, the proposition, the divisions of the discourse in a twinkling were before my mental gaze. The church-bell pealed out its last musical call to service, and conscious that I had a message from God, I entered the pulpit

with firm, undaunted step. Was this the manifest providence of Let us see. Full two miles from God. the church, on that cloudy, rainy, cheerless, Sunday afternoon, there sat a business man, alone in his house. The political paper, which he had been mechanically holding before his face, had no interest for him, and at last it fell from his hand upon the floor. He looked out of his window on the dreary, deserted street. The scene seemed to be consonant with the gloom and hopelessness of his soul. The evening was near. He stepped into the hall, put on his overcoat, took his umbrella, and walked out into the storm and the thicken ing darkness. The wind seemed to cool and soothe his agitated nerves. He went on without any purpose. There was no place to which he was intentionally going; t was only agreeable to saunter along one street after another in the drizzling rain. Just as the church-bell, which I had at first so much dreaded, rang out its last note, he was near by, and the thought came to him, he knew not why or how, that he would go into the church and hear what the preacher had to say. He did so.

The next day a messenger-boy delivered to me a note. It was from a merchant whose place of business was a mile away. He wished to see me as soon as it was convenient. Without delay I called upon him. He told me how, without any clear purpose, he had found his way the night before into my church. He said my sermon must have been made especially for him. Every word just fitted his case. By it he had been deeply convicted of sin. He wished me to guide him in this supreme crisis of his soul. An earnest struggle with the forces of evil, lasting several days, ensued, and then there was victory, light and peace. He had received from Christ that divine life which the law could not give. He has proved to be a faithful follower of him who found him in bondage and gave the God-given sermon. But there was still another, no less re-

markable. On that same stormy Sunday were heard, and a penitent voice said, 'It's only Joe—poor Joe—that lost sheep among the mountains, but he is, back for good. Father! mother!'

Oh, what a prayer of thanksgiving then ascended to God from the old prairie schooner! The young man too was thankful he had been saved from a robber's markable. On that same stormy Sunday might, there sat in the congregation a gray-haired, well-dressed gentleman. He was a familiar figure. He was almost invariably present at the evening service. He had listened to thousands of sermons with apparent interest, but was still unsaved. On this occasion, however, when the congregation had left, he sent me word

which was near the church. When I entered his room, he said I must have made the sermon just for him. He was in distress on account of his spiritual condition, but he now gave himself to Christ at the eleventh hour. That very week he was taken sick. He was soon dangerously ill. On the following Sunday night he sent for me again. I found him greatly troubled in spirit. I asked him if he did not have the assurance that God had forgiven his sins. He said that he had, but, covering his face with his handkerchief, he cried aloud: 'I am so sick that I can never make a public profession of my faith in baptism. But the merciful Lord who had forgiven this aged sinner, calmed his agitated spirit, and filled his soul with peace. A few days afterward, sitting in his arm chair, he died in faith and hope. How strange that he should have heard so many sermons, and have been saved by the last one to which he ever listened.

When these things had transpired, then it was made plain why on that stormy night, to that small audience, the Lord did not permit me to preach the sermon which I had so carefully prepared, on Ananias and Sapphira. The Lord doubtless leads every prayerful, trusting minister in selecting his subjects and texts for sermons, but at times, his guidance is unusually manifest.

HOME.

The sweetest type of heaven is home. Nay, heaven is the home for whose acquisition we are to strive most strongly. Home, in one form and another, is the great obiect of life. It stands at the end of every day's labor, and beckons us to its bosom. And life would be cheerless and meaningless did we not discern across the river that divides us from the life beyond, glimpses of the pleasant mansion prepared for us. -J. Holland.

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