

see how you are so much better off than other folks!"

"Well, we gain by a loss in one direction," said Robert, in continuation of the conversation on "ways and means" begun half an hour since. "We leave 'worry' out in the cold. We don't take him into partnership with us!"

"I wish I could," said poor Will. "What kind of bolts do you use to keep him out?"

"Living strictly within our means, come what may, if it makes us singular and misunderstood. This is one bolt and it shoves a little harder sometimes, but then it stays put. Earning justly by steady work, each and all of us, is another bolt with a splendid fastening."

"Nonsense! there's some necromancy about it. You're as full of play as colts, every one of you."

"The bow couldn't relax if it had not been bent pretty severely," laughed Robert's wife, who knew all about it.

Will Seely looked perplexedly into the glowing grate.

"The fact is you're all talented. Heaven has gifted you. That's where the laugh comes in. You eke out with your pen-labors and Ethel with her music and John with his drawings. I wish I was gifted!"

"What is it to be gifted?"

"You tell."

"Gifts are ready to flow in if we put obstructions out of the way. Artificial living, costing too much time and thought, as well as money and anxiety, makes our ear dull to music, makes the tired brain unequal to clear perception; demoralizes the whole man. My wife and I don't claim to be 'smart,' but we do hold ourselves like children obedient to the great laws of nature, which we do not think it safe to disregard. We work for what we have. We spend less than we have. We gather up the gold-dust of time and we can't afford to jump every fence we come to just because the rest of the sheep do."

Seely laughed. "I feel like selling out and retiring with my family into the loft above my store. The spell won't last though. I know myself. If I should have something the first year, I should be so encouraged I should overspread double the amount. I wish I could stiffen up into moral courage though; upon my word I do! If my wife would join with me," he added meditatively, "but we might as well go to an asylum as to begin at our time of life on a new base. I wish I could!" said the troubled man.

"Each to his taste," softly uttered Madame Robert, in very pure French.

And pushing his way homeward, Will Seely pulled his soft hat over his eyes and said to himself: "I declare the gilding and the gay colors always look 'loud' to me when I go home after one of my evenings at Robert's, and the girls' voices sound harsh and uncultivated. May be honest work in some way would refine my folks. Still, we live as handsomely as any in the block: the young folks have always had all they want. We can't all be alike. Robert's family is an exception. They were 'queer folks!'"

A CHIP THAT COULD TALK.

The following anecdote, related by John Williams, the martyr missionary to the South Sea Islands, will be new to many of our young readers. He was engaged one day hewing timber for a chapel, surrounded by many wandering natives. It was when thus employed that the incident occurred of which he thus tells in his "Missionary Enterprise:"

"As I had come to the work one morning without my square, I took up a chip, and with a piece of charcoal wrote upon it a request that Mrs. Williams would send me that article. I called a chief, and said to him—

"Friend, take this; go to our house, and give it to Mrs. Williams."

"He was a singular-looking man, remarkably quick in his movements, and had been a great warrior; but in one of his battles he had lost an eye. Giving me an inexpressible look with the other, he said,—

"Take that!—she will call me a fool and scold me, if I carry a chip to her."

"No," I replied, "she will not; take it and go immediately; I am in haste."

"He took it from me, and asked, 'What must I say?' I replied, 'You have nothing to say; the chip will say all I wish. With a look of astonishment and contempt he held up the piece of wood, and said,—

"How can this speak? has it a mouth? I desired him to take it immediately, and not spend so much time in talking about it."

"On arriving at the house he gave the chip to Mrs. Williams, who read it, threw it away, and went to the tool-chest, whither the chief, resolving to see the end of this mysterious business, followed her closely. On receiving the square from her, he said, 'Stay, daughter; how do you know that this is what Mr. Williams wants?'"

"Why," she replied, "did you not bring me a chip just now?"

"Yes," said the astonished warrior; "but I did not hear it say anything."

"If you did not, I did," was the reply: "for it told me what he wanted. And all you have to do is to return with it as quickly as possible."

"With this the chief leaped out of the house, and catching up the mysterious piece of wood, he ran through the settlement with the chip in one hand and the square in the other, holding them up as high as his arms would reach, and shouting as he went, 'See the wisdom of these English people! They can make chips talk! they can make chips talk!'"

"On giving me the square, he wished to know how it was possible thus to converse with persons at a distance. I gave him all the explanation I could, but it was to him such a mystery that he actually tied a string to the chip, hung it round his neck, and wore it for some time. For several days after, we frequently saw him surrounded by a crowd, who were listening with intense interest while he told them of the wonders which this chip had performed."

Raratonga is now a Christian land. It has its churches and Christian schools, and is governed, wisely and well, by "Isaia," a native chief. He never forgets, in his laws and plans for the good of his people, that "righteousness exalteth a nation."—Selected.

THE OFFICIOUS MAN.

Some years ago I was accustomed to ride to my place of business, quite early in the morning. The stages did not run as frequently as they do in these days, and many of the passengers met morning after morning until they became quite familiar with each other.

There was one young woman who appeared to excite the interest of all. She walked with the aid of a crutch and entered the stage, so regularly, at the corner of a particular street, that I think the driver would have halted if for any reason she had failed to be waiting for him. On very rainy mornings I had seen her hurrying from a shabby house near by, but usually she stood at the corner. The passengers had no knowledge of this plain, modest-looking young woman, further than to know that morning after morning, rain or shine, she sought some place of business, at this early hour. Their interest arose from the fact that one so afflicted should, like the strong men by her side, be obliged to earn her bread by her daily labor.

There was one pleasant-faced, jolly-looking man, who rode regularly at this early hour whom I had named to myself, the officious man. He was always moving us up to make room for one that had no seat, or lifting a woman's basket to the end of the coach, lest people should run over it. He hopped about so continually, that he might sometimes have had less exercise if he had walked all the distance.

Weeks and months passed, the bright spring and the warm summer were succeeded by the autumn, and the mornings were now cold and dark. The men began to button their heavy coats around them, and remark that winter was at hand. The young girl came as usual, frequently the regular stroke of the crutch would be heard before she could be seen through the heavy mists of the early morning. She wore over her shoulders the same little cloak of very thin waterproof cloth, that she had worn through the summer. I do not know that she shivered—I had not noticed; it had not appeared to concern me. The officious man (I am ashamed, now, that I gave him such a name) did think it concerned him, and looking after her one morning as he held the door for her to get out, remarked, "That poor child is not half clad. If I had not so many girls of my own to clothe she should have a warm coat. Gentlemen, will you help me to warm her?" Several expressed their willingness, a few dollars were collected, which he promised to invest in a coat, and send or take it to her that very evening.

The next morning was bitterly cold, we were all very glad of warm garments. When we reached the corner and heard the stroke of the crutch, all eyes were turned to the door. The young girl entered with the comfortable coat of heavy cloth buttoned closely around her. She did not raise her eyes, so was not aware of the look of satisfaction that passed from face to face. She probably never knew that she was indebted for the acceptable gift to the plain, hard-working man whose fatherly heart had warmed to her because of her infirmity, and whose kind interest in his neighbors had led others to call him, "The officious man."—Standard.

"SAY IT."

The Duke of Wellington often remarked that those gentlemen who had been trained in the business correspondence of the East India Company made the best diplomatic writers in the English service. They wrote clearly and precisely what needed to be said, and nothing more.

Dr. Nicholas Murray, famous twenty years ago for his pithy and effective style, used to

tell with great glee how he acquired it. When he was a student in Williams College, he thought he could write well, and took a composition to Dr. Griffin, the President, expecting commendation for its eloquence.

President Griffin glanced through the first sentence, and said, "Murray, what do you mean by this sentence?"

He answered modestly, "I mean so and so, sir."

"Then say so, Murray;" and across line after line went the broad pen, erasing what Murray thought the most eloquent passages. Passing to other sentences, "Murray, what do you mean by this?" again asked the merciless critic.

With a trembling voice the answer came, "Doctor, I mean so and so."

"Please just to say so," was the quick reply.

When the reading was ended, the beautiful manuscript was spoiled, and the erased portions nearly equalled what was left unmarked. Dr. Murray always maintained that those simple words, "Say so," made him a writer.—*Youth's Companion.*

OLD THOUGHTS ON AN OLD THEME.

The first condition of a good prayer-meeting is to have something to say, and then say it. The underlying cause of poor prayer-meetings is that the pastor has nothing in his head, and the people have nothing in their hearts. You cannot bring chaff to the Lord and pass it off on Him as wheat. If the people are empty, more reason why the pastor must come full. If they have nothing to say to each other, he must have something to say to them. If they come cold he must come warm. You cannot make a tropical meeting by gathering together a hundred iceberg Christians. He must himself be a gulf stream to melt them.

The next thing is to get rid of formality. Pews and benches are murderers of prayer-meetings. Meet in a parlor if you can. How often do you see a dull prayer-meeting break up, and then, after the meeting is all over, the people gather again about the stove in one corner and spend half an hour over a subject of real live interest, and the best part of the prayer-meeting is after the prayer-meeting is dismissed! The story is told, we believe it is authentic, of an eccentric but successful pastor who opened his prayer-meeting as usual with a hymn, a Scripture reading and a prayer, and then called on the brethren for remarks. No one stirred. Would any brother lead in prayer? No one did. "Well, then," said the pastor, "if no one wants to speak and no one wants to pray we had better go home; receive the benediction;" and he dismissed them. They gathered around the stove and discussed their prayer-meetings, and made a new beginning that night. The method might fail in other hands, but the principle was sound. Anything to break the dreadful formality of a prayer-meeting that is as stiff as a brook in January because it is as cold.

One other thing: you can never make a good prayer-meeting by dragooning or coaxing people to come out to a Barmecide feast. The hungry man may take the joke for a single night, but he will not keep it up for a year. Give them something to come for and they will come. The only way to make a good prayer-meeting is to make the prayer-meeting good.—*Christian Union.*

ATTENTION TO TRIFLES.—It is attention to trifles which constitutes the real difference between good and bad housekeeping. It is not the amount of money spent, nor the beauty of the furniture, nor the table, on which comfort depends. A very plain style of living may be very delightful if the home element predominates. The lady of the house who gives as much attention every day to her table as would insure its being neat and attractive will do much toward making her family contented. A soiled table-cloth, cracked plates, and old cups and saucers will take the good taste away from the best viands, unless people are very hungry. Children behave better if they are always brought to the table looking nice. They should never be permitted to seat themselves at a meal unless their faces and hands are clean, their hair brushed, and the disorder from play removed from their appearance. Let mothers remember that these little things are stepping-stones to the formation of habits, and habits build character.—*Housekeeper.*

PREACHING THE WORD.—In Wales the effect of the preaching of the Word in the elevating of morals has been such that many of the country jails have been abolished, as no longer required, and in one instance, at Bala, it has been proposed to purchase the building for a theological college. Nor is this transformation so singular as at first sight it would seem. There is not one infidel book in the Welsh language, nor has Romanism ever made any headway, while, on the contrary, the Bible is everywhere read and prized and studied throughout the principality.

Question Corner.—No. 6.

Answers to these questions should be sent in as soon as possible and addressed EDITOR NORTHERN MESSENGER. It is not necessary to write out the question, give merely the number of the question and the answer. In writing letters always give clearly the name of the place where you live and the initials of the province in which it is situated.

BIBLE QUESTIONS.

61. Where do we read that certain postmen were mocked and jeered at when they delivered the news?
62. What king offered to covenant with the men of a city, provided he might thrust out their right eyes?
63. What two young men fell victims to a curse which had been pronounced five centuries previous?
64. Who, in Bible times, preached from a pulpit?
65. Name two Hebrew leaders whose strength did not abate with age?
66. Who, though not a king, was said to have acted in a kingly manner?
67. What king was slain by conspirators and was brought on horses to his grave?
68. Name a king who was an extensive farmer and loved husbandry?
69. What king applied the very same words to a prophet as that prophet had previously applied to another prophet?
70. Of whom was it said that baldness was produced artificially as indicative of mourning?
71. Whatsoever hath a blemish, said Moses, that shall ye not offer. What exception was there to this rule?
72. Where is the following assertion found: "He that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city?"

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

- Name the awful mystery worn  
By the priest on holy morn.
- Who delighted in the Lord  
When she proved how true his word?
- Whose whole family was blest  
When he took the ark in rest?
- By what river dreamed the seer  
Scenes of many a distant year?
- On what sea though lacking rest,  
Jesus walked, God manifest?
- Where the deadly angel stayed?  
Who a mighty man betrayed?
- Whom did Peter doom to death?  
Name the son of righteous Seth?
- Seek the town his cousin built?  
Who the blood of thousands spilt?
- Who through Peter lived once more  
With the poor she lived before?
- Name the land of Reuel's well!  
And the vale where Giant fell?
- A truth lies here that we must prove!  
Like the poor outcast—may it be in love!

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS IN NO. 4.

37. Eber, being 464 years old, surviving Abraham about four years, Gen. xi. 17.
38. Because a band of men who had come with the Arabians had slain all the eldest sons 2 Chron. xxii. 1.
39. To illustrate God's dealings with those of the house of Judah who had gone into captivity and with those who were left behind in Jerusalem, Jer. xxiv. 1.
40. That the daughters should marry some one in their own tribe, Num. xxxvi. 6.
41. Omri, 1 Kings xvi. 24.
42. David, Psalms i. 4.
43. Uncle, 1 Chron. ii. 16.
44. Josiah, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 1 and Jehoiachin, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9.
45. Joel and Abiah, 1 Sam. viii. 2.
46. Uziah, 2 Chron. xxvi. 19.
47. The daughters of Shallum, the son of Haloesh, Neh. iii. 12.
48. Jonathan, his uncle, 1 Chron. xxvii. 32.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURAL ACROSTIC.

1, Hezekiah. 2, Ananias. 3, Levi. 4, Lehi. 5, Omri. 6, Word. 7, Ebed-Melech. 8, Doeg. 9, Boanerges. 10, Esther. 11, Tadmor. 12, Hiel. 13, Yoke. 14, Nathan. 15, Agabus. 16, Manna. 17, Ekron.—Hallowed be Thy name.

CORRECT ANSWERS RECEIVED.

To No. 4.—Jessie D. McGibbon, 11; Edith Macklin, 1. To No. 3.—Mary L. Tatts, 10; Annie Donaldson, 10ac.; Francis Hooper, 10ac.; Richd. Anderson, 11; Lizzie Maud McGibbon, 11; George Cann, 9; John Golsbro, 11; Rosetta J. Feren, 11; S. M. Lamont, 11ac.; Louise Robinson, 4; John P. Millen, 12ac.; Alice A. Hamilton, 11; Helen M. Davis, 2; Margaret Jane Coffin, 2.