

not tell, for she was able to talk on every other subject imaginable.

"I—wish you'd excuse me," she said hesitatingly.

"Why, you're not sick—are you, dear?" asked Edith, pausing in the middle of the floor with the table she was pushing to one side.

The rest half stopped. There were some who knew the cause of Sue's hesitation, they watched with some curiosity to see what she would do; the others, a trifle vexed at the delay, were puzzled to know what reason she could give for her, to them, unreasonable hesitation.

Of course the only thing for Sue to do was to say, simply but firmly: "I cannot, for I am the servant of the King of kings, and he would not wish me to."

She knew that was just what she ought to say and do, but she shrank from it.

"I cannot," she said to herself. "Besides, this is not the proper place for anything like that." But all the time she knew perfectly well that she would not hesitate a moment to say, "My mother and father would rather I did not." Why should she hesitate when it was her heavenly Father? But she must say something, for they were all waiting.

"I am not sick," she said, wishing most devoutly that she was, "but I would rather not to-night."

"Oh! well," laughed Edith gaily, "we cannot excuse you for any such excuse; you're too accommodating, I know, to spoil our pleasure for no better reason than that."

And Sue instead of telling them she had a far better reason, let them go on with their preparations.

"I cannot help myself," she said; "and I'm not sure that I ought, either, for it would be so unaccommodating, as Edith said, and would prejudice them all against religion."

"What is that to thee? follow thou me," whispered a still small voice within; but Sue would not heed it.

"I will dance this time for the sake of accommodating," she pleaded mentally, "and then, when I have a suitable opportunity, I will tell Edith that I cannot do so any more, and why."

But the days came and went, and no such opportunity presented itself; there was always some reason why the time or place was not proper. And meantime, while she was waiting for it, there were other sociables where she was needed to make up a set.

But, as I said, something was the matter with her. She found herself too tired at night to read her Bible. In the morning, if she had time she read a few verses so hastily and inattentively that five minutes afterward she could not tell anything what they were about, and her prayers were mere forms; she took no comfort in them. She knew she was wrong, but she could not help herself, she said. She felt wretched enough; but instead of bravely retracing her steps, she kept going farther and farther away from peace and happiness.

But at last the crisis came. Edith had proposed a German on Thursday evening, which was to be the last of her stay; and, alas for Sue! was also the regular prayer-meeting evening.

The morning of the day before, the girls were gathered in a little group in the Academy dressing-room discussing it—all unconscious that Sue was in the library, and the door was ajar.

"I say, Edith, is Sue Wilson going?" asked Georgie Dunham.

"Why, yes, of course, unless something unforeseen occurs."

"Well, then, all I've got to say is, that I'd take my name off the church-roll, if I were in her place. I'm no saint myself, as you all know, and I don't profess to be; but if I did, I'd live up to it; I wouldn't go hopping from one side of the fence to the other. I actually had half a mind to 'go and do likewise,' she seemed so different at first; but I'm glad I saved myself the trouble, for she's just like all the rest of us now, for ought I can see; only it does not take much observation to see that she's more uncomfortable."

Sue dropped the book she held in her hand, and went back into the school-room. The girls found her there with her head buried in her hands. She never forgot that morning. Never in all her life before had she been so utterly wretched; she went down into the depths of the valley of humiliation as never before. She had brought dishonor on her Saviour's name; she had professed

to come out from the world, but she had not; she had turned one soul from him, and what a Christian bright, energetic Georgie would make. Perhaps, she thought, with a shudder of remorse, she had turned others among the girls also.

She went home into her own room, and, down on her knees, she sobbed out her grief and penitence. Then, by and by, when she was calmer, she took up her Bible—her neglected Bible—and searched it eagerly for comfort. It opened to Acts, and her eyes fell on Peter's name. She was glad of that; she would like to read something about him, for he, too, had denied his Lord. She will always remember that fifteenth verse of the fifth chapter of Acts—how they brought the sick into the streets, and laid them there, that perchance Peter's shadow, as he passed by, might overshadow them.

She put her Bible down. Could it be possible that the shadow she had cast could be made to bring healing also!

There was a long hard struggle. The downward path we tread so easily is hard to retrace, but Sue was in earnest.

The girls were all there when she went into the Academy the next morning, and as usual Georgie Dunham was the centre of an interested circle.

It seemed to Sue that for an instant her heart stood still, but she went bravely up into the very midst of them all. "Girls," she said, "I have something to say to you. You all know that last winter I professed to have found my Saviour, and publicly confessed my intention to follow him; but instead of acknowledging him in all my ways, I have dishonored him; I have done things I know he would not wish me to, but I have asked his forgiveness, I believe it has been granted, and I ask yours now. And one thing more, girls; don't look at my life, at the very best it is so imperfect, but just look at Him. You can't find anything in His life to criticise unfavorably, and there is something in His religion, though my life may not show it."

Georgie Dunham winked briskly for a minute or two, then, jumping down from the desk where she was sitting, she put out her hand and said frankly: "I'm right glad to hear you say so, Sue; I didn't like the way you were doing, and I've more faith in you now than ever before, for there must be something in it, or you would not say this."

No one but Sue herself knew how thankful she felt when, a few weeks later, Georgie, half laughingly, half tearfully, but wholly in earnest, avowed herself on the Lord's side henceforth and forever. But Sue never forgot how near she had been to turning this soul away from Christ rather than to him, and the memory caused her to be always very humble, vigilant, and also very pitifully charitable toward others.—S. S. Times.

THE CRY OF THE HEATHEN.

Ruttonji Nowroji, of Aurungabad, in the dominions of the Nizam of Hyderabad, Central India, was recently preaching with his Christian helpers at a town called Paitan, on the River Godavery. There was a great Hindu fair going on, which was attended by thousands of people. He writes:—

In the great gathering of this celebrated town we have managed to keep up our preaching for twelve hours daily for nearly a week. I calculated that at least 10,000 or 12,000 people heard the Gospel message, and never did they hear us with greater attention and pleasure. I have noticed a strange desire on their part to know our religion.

There is a restlessness, an increasing restlessness, on the part of the masses, and often have I heard them exclaim, "Oh, do show us the way of salvation! Show us the inner mysteries of your religion. We are far from being happy. We want peace. Our religions do not satisfy us. Can your religion give what ours cannot?"

I will mention one instance. A Brahmin, employed as schoolmaster, visited us daily. He had several questions to propose, and he was so earnest that it was a pleasure to converse with him. At the time of parting he put up both his hands—joined them together (which Brahmins never do, except only to Brahmins)—and with moistened eyes he told me in the presence of a large audience—

"Oh, sir, how grateful I am for the trouble you have taken in solving my difficulties, and how much I feel refreshed and comforted! I will remember your kindness to my dying day. I know not when God will

permit us to meet each other. But, oh! sir, let me make one request. In all your preaching, and at the conclusion of every religious discourse, call upon my countrymen to learn to read. When they read your Scriptures they will be convinced that Christianity is Divine, revealing to sinners God's plan of salvation. I feel so sorry to part with you, but my leave is up, and I must be at my post. But from the bottom of my heart I thank you.—Word and Work.

DAILY BREAD IN HARD TIMES.

"It's dreadful to live this way! I do wonder why God doesn't answer your prayer and send you some work," said Mrs. Wilson.

"Are you hungry, wife? I'm sure I thought we had a very good breakfast," responded John Wilson.

"But we've nothing for dinner!" "But it isn't dinner time yet, my wife."

"Well, I must confess I'd like to know what we are to have just a little while before dinner time."

"God has said our bread and water shall be sure, but he has not promised that we shall know beforehand where it's coming from."

"Father," said little Maggie, "do you s'pose God knows what time we have dinner?"

"Yes, my dear child, I suppose He knows exactly that. I've done my best to get work, and I'll go out now and look about; you go to school, and don't be the least mite afraid, Maggie. There'll be some dinner."

"But we're out of soap and starch," said the mother.

"As for the starch, you couldn't use it if you had it. I'm sure I had soap when I washed my hands this morning," said John.

"Yes, a little bit. But it's not enough to do the washing."

"But the washing will not come till next Monday. As for the starch, it isn't one of the necessities of life."

"If I had some potatoes I could make some," said Mrs. Wilson, musingly.

"Well, I'm going out now to try and find some work. You just cast your burden on the Lord's mother, and go about your house-work just as if you knew what was coming next, and don't go and take the burden right up again. That's the trouble with you. You can't trust the Lord to take as good care of it as you think you would, and so you take it up again, and go round groaning under the burden."

"Well, I do wonder He lets such troubles come. Here you've been out of work these three months, with only an occasional day's work, and you've been a faithful, conscientious Christian ever since I knew you."

"I've been an unfaithful, unprofitable servant, and that's true, mother, whatever you may think of me," replied John Wilson humbly. "God is trying our faith now. After He's provided for us so long, what will He think of us if we distrust Him now, just because want, seems to be near, before ever it has touched us?"

John Wilson went away to seek work, and spent the forenoon seeking vainly. God saw that here was a diamond worth polishing. He subjected His servant's faith to a strain, but it bore the test. I will not say that no questionings or painful thoughts disturbed the man as he walked homeward at noon. Four eager, hungry little children, just home from school to find the table unspread, and no dinner ready for them; an aged and infirm parent, from whom he had concealed as far as possible all his difficulties and perplexities, lest he should feel himself a burden in his old age, awakened to a realization that there was not enough for him and them—these were not pleasant pictures to contemplate, and all through the long, weary forenoon Satan had been holding them up to his view, and it was only by clinging to the Lord, as drowning men cling to the rope that is thrown to them, that he was kept from utter despondency.

"Thou knowest, O Lord, that I've done my best to support my family. My abilities are small, but I've done my best. Now, Lord, I'm waiting to see Thy salvation. Appear for me! Let me not be put to shame."

"Increase my faith, increase my hope, Or soon my strength will fail."

So he prayed in his own simple fashion as he walked along.

He drew near to his own door with something of shrinking and dread. But the

children rushed out to meet him with joyous shouts.

"Come right in, father; quick! We've got a splendid dinner all ready. We've been waiting for you, and we're fearfully hungry."

The tired steps quickened, and the strongly drawn lines on the weary face softened to a look of cheerful questioning, such as was oftenest seen there. He came in and stood beside his wife, who was leaning over the fire dipping soup out of the big dinner pot with a ladle.

"How is this, mother?" said he.

"Why, father! Mr. Giddings has been over from Bristol. He came just after you went out. And he says a mistake was made in your account last August, which he has just found out by accident; he owed you fifteen shillings more, and he paid it to me. So I—"

"I don't think it was by accident, though," said John Wilson, interrupting her.

"Well, I thought as we had nothing for dinner I'd better buy some meat and—"

"Do you think it was accident that sent us that money to-day, mother?" persisted the thankful man.

"No, I don't think so," said his wife, humbly; "I think it was Providence. And I'm thankful, I'm sure. I did try to trust, but I'll try harder next time. You haven't heard the whole, though. Mr. Giddings wants you next Monday for all the week, and he thinks for all summer."

The grace at table was a long one, full of thanks and praise, but not even the youngest child was impatient at its length.—British Workman.

Question Corner.—No. 5.

BIBLE ACROSTIC.

- The ancestor of a line of priests.
- A runaway slave.
- A beautiful queen who disobeyed her husband.
- A beautiful Jewish wife of a heathen king.
- A giant king.
- A great man who was a leper.
- David's oldest brother.
- A Christian who spoke words of comfort to a blind man.
- One who came with Joseph of Arimathea to pay respect to the body of Christ.
- The fourth of the minor prophets.
- A disciple employed by Paul to carry his letters to several churches.
- The mother of Manasseh.
- The grandson of Adam.
- The son of Simon the Cyrenian.
- The whole is a saying of St. John.

BIBLE STUDY.

The earliest Bible mention of the object of which I am thinking occurs in connection with a very ancient country, a royal personage and a young man who had great trials, and came to high honor. Later it is associated with a miraculous event; then, with some one whose peculiar action gave rise to a proverbial expression; again, with a man of exalted rank whose earnest spirit of enquiry led to glorious results. The sublimest utterance is concerning the most high God.

Aside from sacred association, my word is linked with the thought of heathen deities, and mortal men; with fire and water; with love and war; with quadrupeds, birds and fishes.

- What is the word?
- What are my Bible allusions?
- What the other associations?

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS IN NO. 8.

- 1. Fox. Herod. The royal surroundings. The dens of foxes. The food which they take. The fox Indians. To cover the feet of boots with new front upper leather. The Fox river. George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, or Quakers. John Fox the historian; he wrote the Book of Martyrs. Charles James Fox the English statesman.
- 2. Judges xv. 4; Ezra xiii. 4; St. Matthew viii. 20; St. Luke xiii. 32.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

- Jonathan—Abinadab.—1 Sam. xxxi. 2.
- 1. J-oshu-a..... Joshua i. 1.
- 2. O-re-b..... Judges vii. 25.
- 3. N-oom-i..... Ruth i. 20.
- 4. A-nro-n..... Exodus i. 14.
- 5. T-abith-a..... Acts ix. 36.
- 6. H-ero-d..... Acts xii. 1.
- 7. A-quit-a..... Acts xviii. 2.
- 8. N-ada-b..... Num. iii. 4.

VALUABLE POSSESSIONS.

- 2 Peter i. 5, 8.
- CORRECT ANSWERS RECEIVED.
- Correct answers have been received to No. 2. From Annie D. Burr, Flora C. Burr, and Alma G. McCullough; and a very neatly written and correct answer to the Christmas Puzzle Story from Bertie Thomson.