

Editorial Articles.

THE OPPORTUNITIES OF THE SUMMER.



IT seems like the opportunity of one's lifetime—the “making” of oneself, to many young people of the city, to get away “summering” for a month or two. But it is equally a great opportunity for the country people to have “city visitors.” Explain it as we may, the city people have the most of the *talking*. A man who has spent ten or twelve hours alone in the fields or woods every day, with nobody to talk to, debating some thought in his mind—“chewing” it, as he would a bit of liquorice root—may have got some kind of a settlement of the point made in his own mind, but he has not learned how to use his tongue; and the use of the tongue has to be learned, just like the use of the hands. So the city visitor will be installed in the position of a teacher. Happy if he remembers that the listening of his country friends is not necessarily a proof of their ignorance. A man, in Persian story, bought, in the tumult of the market place, a silent bird for a wren, but in the quiet of his cottage it turned out a nightingale.

In the most natural way, a conversation about city ministers and churches will give a field for the Gospel there delivered; the evidences of the New Birth; the reality of prayer and its fulfilment; growth in knowledge and holiness; how to know the love of God, and to teach others the same knowledge—and the hundred ways in which the teaching Spirit fills and leads the obedient mind. And *there* the city visitor will find the joy that every teacher finds in an appreciative pupil. These people have learned to *think*; and in the fields of Christian doctrine and experience they are on familiar ground. How much good can be done in such directions is only known by those who have tried it. But here is the opportunity for every summer visitor of brightening his own faith while he puts a keener edge on the faith of another. We were never intended to be alone;

and we miss the best half of the blessings of our faith when we try to keep it all to ourselves.

THE “BIBLE SCHOOL.”

When Robert Raikes, in seventeen hundred and eighty something, got the waifs gathered in off the streets of Gloucester, and some teachers at a shilling a day, to teach them the “Three R’s,” it *was* a “school,” and being held on the Lord’s Day, it was called “Sunday School.” But we in America never imported it in that shape, if indeed we ever imported it all. The Sunday school in America grew up from the first as a distinctively Bible-teaching institution. It was not as in England (where something of the notion lingers yet), for the children of the church-neglecting class, but for *all* the children. And now the thought is getting general, that it is for all, whether old or young; and that none are too old—they may be too sleepy or too lazy—to come to Sunday school!

But in proportion to the broadening of the Sunday school constituency, appears the narrowness of the name we imported from Robert Rakes a hundred years ago. A “Sunday school”—a school held on Sunday—does not express the idea we wish. No more would “Monday meeting” nor “Saturday club” express the purpose of those gatherings. It is *not* a school, different from the five-days-in-the-week schools, only that it assembles on Sunday. In that sense it is not a school at all.

But if we take “school” in a higher and very proper sense, the “Sunday” fails entirely to differentiate this from other schools. It is not the day on which it is held, but the nature of the studies, that makes the difference. We have heard of “sidewalks in the middle of the street,” and while we laughed at the confusion of the language, we knew what was meant. And we have heard of “Sunday schools on the week evenings,” and still we knew what was meant! But there is no need of our continuing a term that does not properly distinguish what we mean. Macaulay says John Bull never reforms an anomaly till it becomes a grievance, and then he sweeps it away! This term “Sunday school” has become a misnomer, in that it does not describe the thing