

Our Home Circle

AN ARMY INCIDENT.

There was a surgeon in the Union army who was a Jew. Just after the battle of Gettysburg, among the many wounded soldiers brought in to the hospital where he was in charge, was a young man who refused to inhale chloroform to deaden the pain of an amputation. When the doctor urged it, fearing he would not live through the operation, he said:

"I have a Saviour whom I love and trust. He will support me."

For such a faith the Jewish doctor had no sympathy. To him it was superstition, and homage to Christ only a foolish idolatry. He suggested to his patient that he might at least take a little brandy. The wounded man looked up with mingled pleading and resolve in his eyes.

"My father died a drunkard," he said, "and my mother has prayed ever since that I might be kept from indulging in strong drink. I am nineteen years old, and I do not know the taste of liquor. I suppose I must die soon. Would you have me leave the world intoxicated?"

The surgeon was silent. As he said years afterwards, "I hated Jesus, but I respected the boy." The surgeon did what he never did before; he sent for the chaplain of the regiment, who knew the young soldier, and could talk with him. He saw the brave boy give the chaplain his pocket Bible, and his last message to his mother.

"I am ready now, dear doctor," he said.

During the operation the young hero lay whispering prayers to his Master. When the anguish was keenest, he held the corner of the pillow in his mouth to stifle his groans.

Five days passed, and there was some hope of life. Then a change came. The doctor was suddenly sent for.

"Doctor, it is nearly over. I want you to stay and see me die. You do not love my Saviour, but I have been praying that he would teach you to love him."

The doctor would not remain; he could not bear to see the Christian boy die rejoicing in the love of One whom he had been taught to hate.

Charlie soon breathed his last, and the surgeon tried to forget him, but the young soldier's dying words followed and distressed him for years, till one evening he went into a Christian meeting, determined to seek the relief the gospel of the despised Nazarene offered.

At that meeting an elderly lady told of her dead boy who had lost a limb and his life at Gettysburg, and how he had prayed for his surgeon, who was an enemy to Christ. The Jew started to his feet as soon as she had done.

"My sister," he said, "the blessed Lord heard your boy's prayer. I am that surgeon, and since I came into this meeting I have been led to love him whom I once hated."

This story the doctor himself told, not long ago, at the Brooklyn Tabernacle, to a crowded assembly, who listened in silence and tears.

EXTEMPORANE PREACHING.

They make a great mistake who suppose that extempore preaching has been the law with all great preachers; in fact, we may almost go so far as to say the reverse has been quite the case. Extemporising will often be exposed to difficulties which only a very honest mind can overcome, and make the best of. When Father Taylor once lost himself and became bewildered in the course of his sermon, he extricated himself by the exclamation: "I have lost the track of the nominative case, my brethren; but one thing I know, I am bound for the Kingdom!" and the frankness of such a confession would be sure to save him from suffering in the esteem of his audience. But the more stately and dignified masters, it is very obvious, cannot deliver themselves in that way. The most singular instance of this kind in our memory is the case of a very distinguished man to whom we loved to listen in our boyhood, a preacher with a wonderful command over every faculty that could give brilliancy or beauty to pulpit exercises. He always preached without notes, and always broke his discourses into divisions, but once, to our amazement and that of the congregation, having travelled through so far as we remember, two departments of the discourse, he caught himself up and said, "I—I forget the third division!" He turned round to the organist, "Organist, strike up a verse!" He gave out a line of a hymn, and while the organ was playing and the people singing, he leaned in deep thought over the pulpit; the singing over, he announced the missing link. "But," said he, "is not that singular?" and he proceeded to show how it was that he had lost it, and how he found it—proceeded in a really enchanting way, to talk upon the law of association of ideas, and the mystery and marvels of retentiveness and memory, as proof of the immateriality and immortality of the soul, until the time was gone, and

we really had no more of the sermon after all. A similar anecdote has been often told of the late Thomas Binney, Dr. Harris, the author of "Mammon," had begged his services for some anniversary, and Binney declared his utter inability to prepare a sermon—in those days he was a strictly extempore speaker. It was urged, "Oh, come and preach such and such a sermon; that is ready to your mind!" And so Mr. Binney promised that he would take the service; but he also, having got through two heads of the discourse, became bewildered. "Thirdly—thirdly—I've forgotten what was thirdly!" he said, and he looked over the pulpit to where Dr. Harris was sitting. "Brother Harris, what was thirdly?" Harris looked up and said, "So and so." "Exactly," said the discomfited preacher, who pursued his way with ease and happiness to the close.—*Sunday at Home.*

THE MAGNETIC POLE.

Why the magnetic needle points to the north is thus explained by Prof. C. T. Patterson, of the United States coast survey: "The earth is itself a magnet, and attracts the needle just as ordinary magnets do, and it is found to be affected by the action of the sun in a manner not yet fully understood. The magnetic poles of the earth are not in line with the geographical poles, but make an angle with them of nearly twenty-three degrees. At the present time the northern magnetic pole is near the arctic circle, on the meridian of Omaha, and, from the nature of the case, the pole may better be described as a region rather than a fixed point. The needle does not everywhere point to the true astronomical north, but varies within certain limits. At San Francisco it points seventeen degrees east of north, and at Calais, Me., as much to the west. At the northern magnetic pole a balanced needle points with its north end downward in a plumb line; at San Francisco it dips about sixty-three degrees, and at the southern magnetic pole the south end points directly down. The action of the earth upon a magnetic needle at its surface is of about the same force as that of a hard steel magnet forty inches long, strongly magnetized, at a distance of one foot. It is very probable that a study of dynamo-electric machines, now so much used in electric illumination, will soon reveal some far-reaching truths regarding magnetism in general."

A TRUE NARRATIVE.

One cold, stormy evening, my children were in bed, and I had seated myself with my work, when my husband came from his study, and said: "Mary, I want you to take a basket and fill it with food for Mrs. L."

"Why!" I exclaimed, "I shouldn't dare to; it would never do; they have just moved here. She seems so proud and inclined to keep aloof from the neighbors; she would feel insulted. What could have put such an idea in your head?"

Said my husband, "As I sat reading, the impression came to me so strongly that that woman was in need, I must help them. I cannot shake it off. I will go with you."

With many remonstrances and objections on my part, a basket was filled with bread, meat, tea, coffee, and such things as my pantry afforded. We went to the door, and as I had called on her with other neighbors, it seemed best for me to go in. I had been repelled by her distant and haughty manner, and I dreaded to go on this errand. In answering my knock, she led the way to the sitting-room, and with much embarrassment I put down the basket and said a few kindly words.

For a moment she stood still, white and trembling; then, bursting into tears, told me her situation. Three little children, she a widow with very scanty means, and this Saturday night she had put the last food on the table for supper. "Then," said she, "I went on my knees to the Lord and told him all, asking him to help me in my desolation. My father was a good old minister, and I knew his God would not forsake me. While I was yet speaking I was helped."—*Am. Messenger.*

A minister was soliciting aid to foreign missions, and applied to a gentleman, who refused him with the reply, "I don't believe in foreign missions. I want what I give to benefit my neighbors."

"Well," replied he, "whom do you regard as your neighbors?"

"Why those around me."

"Do you mean those whose land joins yours?" inquired the minister.

"Yes."

"Well," said the minister, how much land do you own?"

"About five hundred acres."

"How far down do you own?"

"Why, I never thought of it before, but I suppose I own about half-way through."

"Exactly," said the clergyman; "I suppose you do, and I want this money for the New Zealanders—the men whose land joins yours on the bottom."

"HE WHO DIED AT AZAN."

The beautiful poem, called then "Not Dead, but Bisen," which was read at the memorial service of the late Mr. Bowles, attracted wide attention, and its publication was followed by inquiry and discussion as to its authorship. This was finally rightly attributed to Edward Arnold. A lady of Springfield, sojourning in London, Mrs. Louisa Andrews, has recently sent us a corrected copy of the poem, obtained from the author himself.—*Springfield (Mass.) Republican.*

AFTER DEATH IN ARABIA.

He who died at Azan sends
This to comfort all his friends.
Faithful friends! It lies, I know,
Pale and white and cold as snow;
And ye say "Abdallah's dead!"
Weeping at the feet and head.
I can see your falling tears,
I can hear your sighs and prayers;
Yet I smile, and whisper this—
I am not the thing you kiss;
Cease your tears and let it lie;
It was mine, it is not "I."

Sweet friends! what the women love
For its last bed of the grave,
Is a hut which I am quitting,
Is a garment no more fitting,
Is a cage, from which at last,
Like a hawk, my soul hath passed.
Love the inmate, not the room—
The weaver, not the garb—the plume
Of the falcon, not the bars
Which kept him from the splendid stars!

Loving friends! Be wise, and dry
Straightway every weeping eye;
Wipe ye his upon the brow,
Is not worth a wishful tear.
'Tis an empty sea-shell—one
Out of which the pearl has gone.
The shell is broken—it lies there;
The pearl, the all, the soul, is here.
The earth has far whose light
Allah sealed, the while it hid
That treasure of his treasury,
A mind that loved him; let it lie!
Let the shad be earth's once more,
Since the gold shines in His store!

Allah glorious! Allah good!
Now that word is understood;
Now the long, long wonder ends!
Yet ye weep, my erring friends,
While the man whom ye call dead,
In unspoken bliss, instead,
Lives and loves you; 'tis his true
By such light as shines for you;
But in the light ye cannot see
Of unfulfilled felicity—
In enlarging paradise,
Lives a life that never dies.

Farewell, friends! Yet not fare well;
Where I am, ye, too, shall dwell.
I am gone before your face,
A moment's time, a little space;
When ye come where I have stepped,
Ye will wonder why ye wept;
Ye will know by wise love taught,
That here is all, and there is naught.
Weep awhile, if ye see fair—
Sunshine still must follow rain;
Only not at death—for death,
Now I know, is that first breath
Which our souls draw when we enter
Life, which is of all life center.

Be ye certain all seems love,
Viewed from Allah's throne above;
Be ye stout of heart, and come
Bravely onward to your home!
La Allah iltu Allah! yes!
Thou Love divine! Thou Love away!

COUNSEL TO YOUNG MEN.

James Parton concludes a recent very suggestive article upon the habits and death of Bayard Taylor, whom he had, as a personal friend, warned against the danger of wine and beer-drinking and smoking as follows: Mental labor is not hostile to death and life, but I am more than ever convinced that a man who lives by his brain is of all men bound to avoid stimulating his brain by alcohol and tobacco as only a slow kind of suicide. Even the most moderate use of the mildest wine is not without danger, because the peculiar exhaustion caused by mental labor is a constant and urgent temptation to increase the quantity and strength of the potation. I would say to every young man in the United States, if I could reach him, if you mean to attain one of the prizes of your profession and live a cheerful life to the age of eighty, throw away your dirty old pipe, put your cigars in the stove, never buy any more, become an absolute teetotaler, take your dinner in the middle of the day, and rest one day in seven.

MOTHERS AND SONS.

Most boys go through a period when they have great need of patient love at home. They are awkward and clumsy, sometimes strangely wilful and perverse, and they are desperately conscious of themselves, and very sensitive to the least word of censure or effort at restraint. Authority frets them. They are leaving childhood, but they have not yet reached the sober good sense of manhood. They are an easy prey to the tempter and the sophist. Perhaps they adopt skeptical views from sheer desire to prove that they are independent, and can do their own thinking.

Now is the mother's hour. Her boy needs her now more than when he lay in his cradle. Her finer insight and serener faith may hold him fast, and prevent his drifting into dangerous courses. At all events, there is very much that only a mother can do for her son, and that a son can receive only from his mother, in the critical period of which we are thinking. It is well for him, if she has kept the freshness and brightness of her youth, so that she can now be his companion and

friend as well as mentor. It is a good thing for a boy to be proud of his mother; to feel complacent when he introduces her to his comrades, knowing that they cannot help seeing what a pretty woman she is, so graceful, winsome, and attractive! There is always hope for a boy when he admires his mother, and mothers should care to be admirable in the eyes of their sons. Not merely to possess characters which are worthy of respect, but to be beautiful and charming, so far as they can, in person and appearance. The neat dress, the becoming ribbon, and smooth hair are all worth thinking about, when regarded as means of retaining influence over a soul, when the world is spreading lures for it on every side.

Above all things mothers need faith. Genuine, hearty, loving trust in God, a life of meek, glad acquiescence in his will, lived daily through years in presence of sons, is an immense power. They can never get away from the sweet memory that Christ was their mother's friend. There is a reality in that, which no false reasoning can persuade them to regard as a figment of the imagination.—*Christian Intell.*

MARRIAGE FEES IN RUSSIA.

If we may judge from an anecdote in the *Smolensker Bote*, there are parts of the Russian Empire in which it is no easy matter to get married, owing to the atrocious wilfulness of the Russian clergy. A schoolmaster in the District of Jucknow was engaged to wed the daughter of a landowner in the neighborhood, whose wealth was not at all proportionate to his acres. The bridegroom, bride and the parents of the latter called on the priest of the lady's village, in order to settle the amount of the wedding fee. The clergyman fixed it at 25 roubles. Unhappily, the bride's father was determined to make a show more in accordance with his ancestral dignity than with his impoverished condition, and invited all his kinsfolk and acquaintances from far and near to attend the ceremony. The result was that the procession to the church included no fewer than eleven carriages, all full of wedding guests.

When the priest saw this magnificent preparation, he hurried to the bridegroom, and informed him that the fee for a marriage of such pretensions would not be twenty-five, but one hundred roubles. When the man pleaded his poverty as a school master, the pastor replied by pointing to the signs of his father-in-law's wealth. The wedding party held a consultation, and, indignant at the priest's conduct, resolved that the whole procession should drive off to the next village. The priest outwitted them, however; his messenger arrived at his brother cleric's door long before the lumbering coaches, so that when they reached the church, and asked the price of the sacerdotal function, the parish priest was ready with the reply, "one hundred roubles." The procession started again for a further village, but the messenger had been there before them; the priest could not marry them for less than one hundred roubles. They experienced a similar discomfiture, according to the reports, at no less than four village churches, and it was only after a long drive across the country that they succeeded in finding a "little father," who readily consented to bestow the sacramental benediction of matrimony for the fee which the lady's own pastor had originally asked.—*London Globe.*

Our Young Folks

HAVE AN AIM.

A great deal of time is wasted by young people who have no particular aim in life. Aimlessness and lack of motive are the chief obstacles to the best and most profitable use of time. With a goal to attain, an end to accomplish, and force of character sufficient to hold the mind steadfastly to its purpose, the sands of time are easily transmuted into golden rain. Life is made worth living. Then boys—especially if you live in the country—utilize your time. Resolve to turn to good account your hitherto wasted moments. Most men of rank have easily learned the lesson of utilizing the minutes. Elihu Burritt "the learned blacksmith," found time during his work at the forge to master several languages, and surprised cultured Europe by addressing its chief learned body in Sanscrit. Hugh Miller learned the secrets of the old Red Sandstone in the capacity of a labourer. While his fellow workmen idled during their mornings, he was actively at work finding out the why of the specimens and fossils his hammer disclosed. Lord Chesterfield relates of one of his friends that he wrote a book of abstruse character during the interval of waiting for his wife to appear at breakfast. Why not follow such examples as these?

TWO KINDS OF HOME SUNSHINE.

Carrie Graham was a famous hand at fancy work. Early and late she was busy over her dainty fabrics, turning raisin stems and wheaten straws and

bits of cardboard into things of beauty. The house was adorned from top to bottom with her handiwork. Her mother often sighed that she found no time for other work, so much was she taken up with this.

"How beautiful you make your rooms," said an admiring visitor. "What a rare talent you have; and so much patience and perseverance!"

Carrie smiled, well pleased at the compliment. She was setting out for a long walk to the home of a lady who had promised to teach her a new mystery in the art of home decorations. Mother had a severe headache it is true, the children were troublesome, and there was the supper to get for father and the rest; but then she must not fail to keep to such an important appointment for such trifles!

So Carrie went away. But soon plain little Ruth came tripping home from school.

"You have a headache, I know, mother," she said as she put away her coat and hat. "Let me take Floy. Just lie down on the lounge a little while, and let me put a wet cloth on your head. I can get tea as well as not if you will just tell me what we are to have."

So she glided about like a good little fairy, bringing more real sunshine into the room than all Carrie's picture-frames. Kind, loving deeds are what make a home bright. There is no art that can equal love's painting and gilding. Even the plainest and most unaccomplished can bring this joy to a home fireside. A dear, loving, helpful daughter is always "mother's sunshine," and God looks with a blessing on dutiful children.

It is very well for girls to be ornamental in the parlor, but it is more necessary for the household that they should be able to be useful in the kitchen. Both parlor and kitchen are necessary in the complete home.—*Child's World.*

A RICH MAN ON RICHES.

The following story, says *The Way-side*, is told of Jacob Ridgway, a wealthy citizen of Philadelphia who died many years ago, leaving a fortune of five or six million dollars.

"Mr. Ridgway," said a young man with whom the millionaire was conversing, "you are more to be envied than any gentleman I know."

"Why so?" responded Mr. Ridgway. "I am not aware of any cause for which I should be particularly envied."

"What, sir?" exclaimed the young man in astonishment. "Why are you not a millionaire? Think of the thousands your income brings you every month!"

"Well what of that?" replied Mr. Ridgway. "All I get out of it is my victuals and clothes, and I can't eat more than one man's allowance or wear more than one suit at a time. Pray, can't you do as much?"

"Ah, but, said the youth, "think of the hundreds of fine houses you own and the rental they bring you!"

"What better off am I for that?" replied the rich man. "I can only live in one house at a time. As for the money I receive for rents, why, I can't eat it or wear it; I can only use it to buy other houses for other people to live in. They are the beneficiaries, not I."

"But you can buy splendid furniture, costly pictures, and fine carriages and horses—in fact anything you desire."

"And after I have bought them," responded Mr. Ridgway, "what then? I can only look at the furniture and pictures, and the poorest man who is not blind can do the same. I can ride no easier in a fine carriage than you can in an omnibus for five cents, without the trouble of attending to drivers, footmen, and hostlers; and as to anything I desire, I can tell you young man, that the less we desire in this world the happier we shall be. All my wealth cannot buy me a single day more of life, cannot buy back my youth, cannot purchase exemption from sickness and pain, cannot procure me power to keep afar off the hour of death; and then, what will all avail when, in a few short years at most, I lie down in the grave and leave it all for ever. Young man, you have no cause to envy me."

"I cannot escape to the other side of the Dead Sea."

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THE LATE CHARLES DICKENS ON THE NEW TESTAMENT.—In the recently published letters of Charles Dickens there is one addressed to his son Henry while the latter was at College, advising him to keep out of debt and confide all his perplexities to his father. The letter concludes as follows: "I most strongly and affectionately impress upon you the priceless value of the New Testament, and the study of that book as the one unerring guide in life. Deeply respecting it, and bowing down before the character of our Saviour as separated from the vain constructions and inventions of men, you cannot go very wrong, and will always preserve at heart a true spirit of veneration and humility. Similarly I impress upon you the habit of saying a Christian prayer every night and morning. These things have stood by me all through my life, and remember that I tried to render the New Testament intelligible to you and lovable by you when you were a mere baby. And so God bless you."

Sunday School

LESSON X.—SEPTEN

LOT'S ESCAPE FROM SODOM. 19: 12-26

TIME—B. C. 1897. In the last lesson.

PLACE—Sodom, one of the plain. Probably located on border of the Dead Sea from Hebron.

INTRODUCTION.

The nineteenth chapter tains the conclusions of tory of the cities of the p of Sodom and Gomorrah ripe for judgment. They to a tree scared and bl unn winds, but having the topmost branches wi the next powerful gush them to the earth. Th thinks of Lot, the more seems to us. From all the history, there was n in his character; for eventually saved was more than for his own. He history, to present to weak and selfish charac appears in the history, strong fears for this ma Peter calls him a just m while in Sodom "he vex soul, from day to day, v veration of the wicked, us, by showing that h still substantially true. altogether clear him fr tions. It shows that he and perceptions, but w man, lacking the streng own convictions. He mourn over the guilt b rather passively sit do tainties of danger and judgment, than rouse great and energetic effo at whatever sacrifice, abominable and tainted

EXPLANATION.

Had thou here any be eous men would have s there seems to be only o shall at all events esca sons, daughters, or wa directed to be brought t city, which was rapidly crisis of its fate. That of the divine administr wickeds are blessed fo righteous is here most s for that such were the dent from the contem which they received the fact that they perished the city.

Sons-in-law, which mar It is commonly thought t ters were betrothed but betrothal being sufficient "son-in-law" or "brideg flanced husbands. It h he had two daughters a married to these sons-in-mocked. One can almo hears them saying, "T city to be destroyed! T and temples to be over in flames! These act perish in a body, and the heard-of judgment as from heaven! Incredi Thus too often is the s punned and made light ters were playing un credulities of their fello Lot. It was natural t cleave to his home.

While he lingered, t upon his hand. The upon that "he suffered dered and embarrassed carers," perhaps relative

Escape. They were the city. Look not beh much less the heart... in all the plain. Lot the whole of the devote had coveted for his own he parted from Abrah his habitation, and sou self (13: 10). *Escape* The mountains are th other side of the Dead S

I cannot escape to the instead of cheerfully mandment of the Lord great mercy shown to vation of his life, and to of his escaping to the r the evil overtaking hi therefore that he mig take refuge in the sma city, which received the 14: 2) on account of L

It is a little one. T should be spared rest smallness. It would of any great amount of

I have accepted thee, not rebuked; his req the city was spared fo God designed at once the fervent prayer of avails, and at the same to teach his short sig much wiser a part he had he confided in a ch God, and fled to the m instance. For it is cle verse 30, that his terrer to remain in the pl but that he was soon g in the very mountains v ishly declined to seek.

The Lord rained upon stone and fire. The d understood quite literally, brim-stone and fire, fell from the sky. B is one of the most infla known, and will melt water. The meaning phur" is the burning of Lord rained upon Sodo brimstone and fire" (stone). As these cities the vale of Siddim, whi writer informs us, was