

THANKSGIVING DAY.

BY EPIPHANIUS WILSON.

Hogaid, "I have no thanksgiving to yield;
My days are dark, my labors long."
"Hast thou not seen, this year, full many a field
And forest glow with verdure, ring with song?"
"But winter now is near; the skies are gray—
"Yet hath the earth her fruits bestowed."
"Ah! autumn tells how swift we pass away;—
"The shorter then henceforth the toilsome
road."
"I have had strokes from death's bereaving
hand—"
"Yet some remain with smiles of love."
"Gap after gap is rent in friendship's band—"
"Larger the host to welcome thee above."
"I am forgotten and neglected here—"
"So safer from the clang of strife."
"My name unuttered by Fame's clarion clear—"
"See it be written in the book of life."
—The Churchman.

NEWSPAPER READING.

BY EMILY TOLMAN.

In this progressive age the newspaper justly claims some attention from all intelligent people; but do not our great dailies occupy much time that might be more wisely employed? "Multifarious reading weakens the mind more than doing nothing," says Robertson. "It is the idlest of all idlenesses, and leaves more impotency than any other."

One who reads from beginning to end her daily paper, and takes two on Sunday, keeping up with all the society gossip and divorce suits, when questioned about George Macdonald's works, replied: "What are they? I've forgotten. There are so many of these novels, all very much alike." We are reminded of a saying of Hobbes: "If I had read as much as other men, I had been as ignorant as they."

"I have no time to read anything but the paper" is the complaint of many who spend the entire evening over a daily journal which should occupy not more than fifteen or twenty minutes. The rest of the time might better be given to some standard author.

The great French philosopher, Auguste Comte, abstained wholly from newspaper reading. He wished to preserve from any adverse influence his wonderful power of abstract thought. Such a course can hardly be justified even in his case, and is certainly not to be commended to most people.

Rightly—that is, slightly—used, the newspaper is an invaluable educator. It brings us into sympathy with the whole civilized world, and saves us from the narrowing influence of isolation. By means of the newspaper those who stay at home can be nearly as well informed as those who travel.

If newspapers were as good as the best, the danger of reading them would be less. Many of our so-called respectable journals instead of seeking to elevate the public taste, pamper the grossest and most vulgar. For one short paragraph on Samoan affairs they give column after column of a prize fight or the disgusting details of a divorce suit. A mother refused to take a certain local weekly because she did not wish her growing family to become accustomed to its incorrect grammar and spelling. How many parents consider as well the pernicious influence of some of our most widely read dailies on the moral character of their sons and daughters?

People who would shrink from contact with a bad man or woman accustom themselves to the vilest companionship in the printed page. "Indiscriminate and depraved appetite in reading," says Dr. Geikie, "is as fatal as it is degrading. Unfortunately, it is not the negroes only who are dirt-eaters."

Suppose we admit only the best newspapers into our homes; how much time can we afford to spend on them?

They all give a great deal of space to trifling incidents, which in a few months will be forgotten. Novelty is the great thing. What happened yesterday seems of chief importance. A silver dollar held near enough to the eye will look larger than the sun. We should learn to distinguish between that which has a mere temporary notoriety and that which is of lasting value.

"Most great men," says one of them,

"have the courage to be ignorant of an infinite number of useless things." In every good newspaper there is likely to be something for each of us. Let us find our portion and read only that. To skim judiciously is an art worth acquiring. One who has a proper respect for his mental digestion will no more read his daily paper through than he will partake of everything on the bill of fare at table d'hôte. Why should we be less careful of our mental than of our physical diet?

On one day in seven it would seem that men might be content to abstain from the newspaper and turn their thoughts into deeper channels. Not so; the Sunday dailies are larger and, if we may believe what they say of themselves, more widely circulated than any others. Look at the alluring prospectus in the Saturday's press. There we are informed in bold type that politicians of every class will need the Sunday paper; that business men will find in it the "latest financial and commercial information;" those interested in baseball must have it for the "best reports and most lively gossip;" it is urged upon the attention of the ladies as containing more "chat and information" for them than any other paper; it advertizes matter "especially interesting to the boys and girls." So the great Sunday daily goes into the homes—yes, even into the Christian homes. The Bible may be all very well, but nobody denies that it is rather old. The majority care less for what God said to Moses four thousand years ago than for what Mr. — said to the reporter yesterday.

The father and mother look over the Sunday paper, and perhaps go to church to ponder the latest news or interesting

"chat." They wonder that their boys do not care for religious services. John and Tom stay at home to read the paper. If they chance to attend Sunday-school, it is to talk over the last base-ball game with their mates during the devotional exercises, and to astonish the teacher by looking for Corinthians in the Old Testament. Having spent the morning on the Sunday daily provided by their Christian parents, they naturally see no harm in studying their Monday's lessons in the evening. Why should they?

We are told that a large proportion of cases of insanity is traceable every year to a disregard of the fourth commandment. Are not the Sunday newspapers, helping as they do to break down the dividing line between the Sabbath and the week day, partly responsible for this? Men need mental as well as physical rest, and that is gained, not by idleness, but by a change of thought and occupation. They need to keep their minds free from the consideration of those financial and business topics which occupy the six days in the week, and to which the Sunday paper calls their attention.

"Respect yourself too much to take up with indifferent company either in print or broadcloth" is excellent advice for every day in the week.

In this matter of newspaper reading, it would be well for many of us to practice a little more moderation. We might take a lesson from Aunt Dinah's receipt for her sweet-potato pie: "You puts in two eggs, one cup of milk, one-half cup of sugar, a little salt, and a little cinnamon."

"But how much sweet-potato, Aunty?"
"Just as little as possible, honey."
—Christian Union.

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