

TWO PENCE.

THE HOME PART OF SUNDAY.

BY MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

AS I was walking along the Strand in London, late one summer's night, a respectable appearing young man accosted me, and asked for twopence, with which to obtain a lodging for the night. I looked at him, and asked how he came to be in that condition of destitution. He said that he had formerly been a teacher, but had fallen into bad company and disgrace, and had lost his situation; had come to London, and was there friendless, homeless, and penniless. A pointed question or two brought out the facts of his past life, and I solemnly warned him to turn from the error of his ways and seek the Lord. I handed him a shilling, which he declined, saying he only wished for twopence: but I had no change, and I told him he could make use of the money, and invited him to come the following evening to a meeting held in a tent, in Great Arthur-street, Golden-lane. He came, and I there had the privilege of preaching to him Jesus and Him crucified, as the helper and refuge of the needy and the lost.

Months after a letter reached me from a missionary labouring in Clerkenwell, London, who said: "Do you remember meeting and talking with a man upon the Strand one night?" He said that the man was since converted, and was taking part with him in missionary labour. He related a thrilling tale of his experience, and told how that night, friendless and homeless, he was walking the Strand meditating suicide. That timely admonition and invitation turned his mind to better things, and led his feet to walk the heavenward path.

It is a little thing to give a few pennies, a cup of cold water, or a word of earnest counsel to a fellow-pilgrim in need and distress; but the results of such an act cannot be measured in the lapse of earthly years. They pass over into other ages, and lay hold upon eternity. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."—*H. Hastings.*

HEAVY THINGS.

"IRON is heavy," said a friend, as I took hold of a slender bar which he held in his hand. "Yes," was the reply, "but not so heavy as gold, for that sometimes sinks men in destruction and perdition."

There are many people who, notwithstanding this fact, are willing, yea, anxious to load themselves with such a burden. The man who would run a race lays aside every weight. The man who swims for his life, divests himself of every encumbrance; and yet men who feel and admit the necessity of putting forth their utmost efforts to save themselves from this untoward generation, still continue to load and burden themselves with things that perish with the using—with gold, that encumbers us here, and cannot help us hereafter. Our Saviour has declared that the deceitfulness of riches chokes the Word of God; that it is easier for the camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven; that the rich are in especial danger; and an apostle has taught us that "the love of money is a root of all evil," and yet, in spite of all these warnings, persons persist in loading themselves with worldly possessions which must hinder their spiritual progress, and possibly imperil their eternal interests.

Let us "take heed and beware of covetousness," lest at the last, we weep and howl with the rich, for the miseries which shall come upon us, when our gold is cankered, our garments moth-eaten, and the treasures which we have amassed, shall perish in the flames of the burning day.

DIED FROM NEGLECT.

DIED—In Laodicea, the prayer-meeting, aged one year. The health of this meeting was poor, most of the year, and its life was despaired of. But anxious friends kept it alive, and sometimes it would so revive as to encourage them. Discouragement, however, at last prevailed, and the prayer-meeting is dead. It died from neglect. Not a Christian was present when it died. Over forty are living within a mile of it, and not one was there. Had two only been there, its life might have been saved, for where two are agreed as touching anything they shall ask, it shall be done for them. Two-thirds of the forty might have been there, had they been so disposed, but they were not, and the prayer-meeting died.—*Selected.*

VERY much of Sunday is spent by religious people in church and Sunday-school, and therefore in public. In a certain way there is a sort of insulated seclusion in the pew, and as the service progresses the devout worshipper can lose the sense of neighbourhood, and commune alone with God, helped, indeed, to the highest spiritual delight by the feeling of the communion of saints. In God's house everything tends to quieting and subduing the soul, and to ridding it from the cares of the world. The voice of prayer, the solemn chords of the organ, the grand uprising of the psalm, and the persuasive force of the sermon, all help to carry the hearer into an upper realm of peace.

The Sunday-school, on the other hand, awakens and enlivens quite another set of faculties. It is the place of places for natures which are gregarious, social, sympathetic. It is lively, bustling, brisk, mirthful through all its solemnity of purpose, as birds are when they carol to the morning. The singing-birds from many nests are gathered there, and what else can there be but a jubilee? What with the bright eyes and the dimpled cheeks, the scarfs and the sashes, and the eager alert faces, and mingling of ages and stations, the Sunday-school is like a great garden full of all manner of flowers in the flush and glory of summer.

But the church service passes, and we go home; the Sunday-school pours its hundreds out into the street, and they go home. What is the home part of Sunday to multitudes of church-going folk?

To tell the truth, it is very stupid. They rise late in the morning, scramble through breakfast, dash with hurry and fret through the business of dressing, and set out for the sanctuary when the second bells are ringing, with a sigh of relief that the house-door is shut behind them. Lucy usually puts her room in order on week-days before she walks abroad; but Sunday morning is the one exception. She condones her lack of order with her conscience by the rather comforting thought that she must neither work nor play, because it is the holy day. Yet coming in at noon to find a dusty mantel-shelf, laden chairs, and a bed covered with odds and ends, is vexing and disturbing. It detracts from the Sunday tranquillity which ought to be predominant. Joe generally finds plenty to do on Monday or Tuesday, but his Sunday hours at home are endured, not enjoyed. It is a real boon to him to have somebody ill, so that he can relieve himself of his surplus vitality by rushing for the doctor or flying full speed to the apothecary's shop.

The sweet, soft twilight time ought to be almost heavenly in its balm and gentleness; but it is, in many houses, dulled of all. Music is forbidden, pious books only are permitted, laughing is frowned upon, and conversation is limited to what is fit for the day. Now, religious conversation of set purpose is apt to be dry and formal. If it grow out of the genuine experience of any human being, and is a real utterance and expression, it may well be helpful and interesting. But mere pious platitudes lack the savouring salt of heartfelt conviction. Even children see through them, and learn to despise them for the shams they are.

Our Sundays are far too precious to be treated so lightly as they are. They often give to the father his one weekly opportunity for gathering his whole family around him and having a pleasant time. They bring the one season when the busy mother's needle lies quietly in her basket, when the sewing-machine is closed, and the provident maternal hands are allowed to cross themselves in the luxury of inaction. They are, to the young men and women, the pause in life which comes to this restless generation only once in every seven days. Here is the silver cord of union for the household, shining with the glory which the angels leave on whatever they touch. Shall we drop it, or take it up to tie our hearts the closer together?

Mothers can usually give tone if they try to the home part of Sunday. But it is not mothers' duty only. It is anybody's duty who loves Christ, to set in motion by word, or silent example, or song, or pleasant book, the better way of spending the Sabbath hours, which shall consecrate them all, those in the household as well as those in the congregation.—*Christian at Work.*