

## BOOKS AND MAGAZINES.

### *The National Sunday School Teacher.*

Chicago: Adams, Blackmer & Lyons Publishing Co.

In the April number of the "National Sunday School Teacher" the international lessons for the month are well expounded, and there are besides, a number of useful and interesting articles more or less connected with Sabbath School work, such as: "Satan," by Rev. W. F. Crafts; "A Model Sunday School," by M. E. Winslow; "Children's Promises," by Lucy J. Rider, etc.

### *Fairy Tales; Their Origin and Meaning.*

By John Thackray Bunce. New York: D. Appleton & Co. Toronto: Hart & Rawlinson.

Philosophy and Fairy Tales—this is a happy combination indeed. It is a book for old and young. The young—and some of the old—will like it on account of the many romantic tales that the author has gathered from various climes, various languages, and far-separated peoples; and readers of a more philosophical class will be pleased with it on account of the power of generalization which he evinces in comparing these tales and tracing them to their original Aryan source. The book is evidently the result of no small learning and a very extended course of study, but it is not less readable on that account. It is the substance of a course of Christmas Holiday Lectures delivered by the author in 1877, to a mixed audience, at the Birmingham and Midland Institute; and he was thus under the necessity of popularizing his subject and bringing his deductions within the grasp of ordinary minds. Besides being an entertaining book, it forms a good introduction to what we may call the new and interesting science of folk-lore.

### *The People's Pulpit.*

New York: The People's Pulpit Publishing Co.

The number of "The People's Pulpit" for the week ending March 17th contains a striking sermon by Stephen H. Tyng Jr. D.D. The title is "The Two Altars" and the text is Acts xvii. 23: "I found an altar with this inscription, To the unknown God." The application is chiefly to the infidel philosophy of some of the so-called leaders of modern thought. But Dr. Tyng finds another altar:

"Not on Acropolis, but on Calvary, God built an altar and shaped it like the malefactor's cross. The multitude passed by wagging their heads. Above the sufferer was nailed the title of His accusation, and I read this inscription: 'This is Jesus.' 'He shall be called Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins.' I stand before the altar of the revealed God; the holy Lamb is present in the fire of justice and purity, an acceptable sacrifice unto Him who is 'unknown' to the world, but through Christ becomes an intelligible Governor and Father of men. I read the legend: 'He is God manifest in the flesh.' God's name is no longer the deep mystery for it is couched in the language of love. God's nature is no more a hidden depth, for he that dwelleth in the bosom of God hangs a substitute and sufferer for man."

### *Thomas Carlyle; his Life; his Books; his Theories.*

By Alfred H. Guernsey. New York: D. Appleton & Co. Toronto: Hart & Rawlinson.

This volume and that on the Origin of Fairy Tales, noticed above, belong to the Messrs. Appleton's "New Handy-Volume Series." They are got up in an inexpensive form, with an exterior plain but pleasing, and of a size and shape very convenient for perusal. The author of the book now before has given what we consider a very fair estimate of the character, the powers, and the works of one of the most remarkable men of the age. He has not, like some, been carried away by undue admiration; neither is there, as in the case of another class, any appearance of his judgment having been warped by envy. As a historian, he accords Carlyle a place among the highest, but as a thinker and leader of men, the praise which he bestows upon him is far from being unqualified. We will quote some sentences from the closing pages, as a specimen of our author's style and as a summary of his opinions regarding the subject of the book:

"We think that it is not too early to assign to Thomas Carlyle his true place as a man and an author. In him indeed the two are one; the Books are not merely the exponents of man; they are the Man himself. We suppose few men were ever more free from positive blame. But he seems to have considered that his sole work in life was to do nothing save to exhort everybody else to be up and doing something; and latterly to exhort everybody else to stop exhorting anybody to do anything. He has completed his orbit; we know its perihelion and its aphelion, and can lay down all the curves of the ellipse. It is a tolerably large one; com-

ing nearer to the Sun than Mercury does, and going farther from it than Uranus does. His endowments, natural and acquired, were very high, but not very broad; his being was tense, but not very extensive. The very concentration of his nature, which in a manner precluded him from taking a large view of any subject, intensified the perceptions which he did acquire. . . . The thing of which he at any moment happened to be thinking was the only thing worth thinking about; and, despite his objurgations to others, he was ever ready, by tongue and pen, to give utterance to the thought of the moment. If, as was often the case, that thought was a noble one, no utterances were nobler than his; if, as was not unfrequently the case, that thought was not a noble one, few utterances were less noble. . . . In fine, leaving out of view his unquestionable merits as a historian and a biographer, and giving all due weight to the innumerable detached ideas of the highest import scattered profusely even through the least worthy as well as the worthiest of his books, it must be said that as a guide to conduct one through the mazes of speculation and enquiry there could hardly be a poorer one than Carlyle. His place is that of a stimulator to thought rather than a leader of it. He has taught us *multa*, not *multum*—Very Many things, but not Much."

### *Sunday Afternoon.*

The opening article of "Sunday Afternoon" for April is about "The Mormons." It details the origin and early history of that "peculiar people" in an exhaustive manner, and is to be followed by other articles on the same subject. The writer of the paper on "Christianity and the State," in his eagerness to oppose and denounce Erastianism, goes over the fence on the other side of the road. He takes great pains to prove that the Constitution of the United States recognizes neither Christianity nor any other religion, and he seems to contemplate his discovery with unmixed satisfaction. We cannot dispute the soundness of his argument. His conclusion, we suppose, must be admitted—there is no help for it. But we cannot see where the rejoicing comes in. The people of the United States are a Christian nation. Their manners and customs are, on the whole, Christian. Their laws as far as they go are derived from the Christian code. Even in their judicial forms the letter, at least, of Christianity is plainly discernible. And why should the Government not recognize the Christian religion, and give the dignified appellation of a Christian State to what is really a Christian country? If the Government of the United States does not now recognize Christianity, the sooner the people get it to do so the better—how otherwise—even if nothing more should be at stake—can they have any security for the legal protection of the Christian Sabbath? Are they afraid of sectarianism? Of all sects the Infidel sect is the narrowest and the most bigotted. Almost any religion—nay, we will venture to say any form of superstition, is preferable to infidelity. The infidel is a step lower than the idolater. The American flag has no cross on it, but surely we are not to regard it as the emblem of a heathen country. The editor, in his article on "Mint, Anise and Cummin" does not do himself justice. He tells us of an association of Christians who have adopted the formula: "We do desire, and will, consecrate ourselves to God's work by putting away every conscious evil within us." Of this he approves; but on further examination of their programme, he finds that they descend to particulars, and bind themselves not to use tobacco, drink spiritous liquors, go to the theatre, dance, or play cards; and at this he is very much disappointed. He thought "consecration" meant something far higher and nobler than that—just like a lot of people who have a great deal to say about a sublime and indefinite morality, of which they do not seem to have any idea further than the sound of the word, and at the same time are quite disgusted to hear any reference made to the ten commandments, which are the sum and substance of all morality. We have heard many people, of a very different class from the editor of "Sunday Afternoon," and with quite a different object in view, talk pretty much in the same way.

THEY who are first informed should instruct those who are later in being informed; and those who first apprehend principles should instruct those who are slow in doing so.

CHARITY is never lost; it may meet with ingratitude; or be of no service to those on whom it was bestowed, yet it ever does a work of beauty and grace upon the heart of the giver.

THE most agreeable of all companions is a simple, frank man, without any high pretensions to an oppressive greatness; one who loves life, and understands the use of it; obliging alike at all hours; above all, of a golden temper, and steadfast as an anchor.

### PULPIT PRAYER.

A peculiarly valuable thing in pulpit prayer is the calming of the mind, both in preacher and hearer, effected by it. When burdens press,—when the world has been present in disagreeable forms,—we obtain access to our Divine Help, and are strengthened and calmed. The remark was homely but pertinent, when an old minister said, in answer to a suggestion that someone else should pray before he preached: "No, I like to *whet my own scythe*." And many a one has found the kindling of soul obtained in the morning prayer, present through all the following discourse.

Paradoxical as it may seem, those ministers who quote most Scripture in their prayers, are often the least impressive and stimulating in their pulpit intercessions. For such is the weakness of human nature, that it is not always that a quotation is given because it best expresses the exact shade of emotion we wish to embody in words; but because it is easiest, and saves us the trouble of further thought. The best way of using the exact words of Scripture in prayer, is to plead the promises, *as promises*.

Pulpit prayer deserves to be studied; and in proportion as it is studied, with prayer in the study of it, will it be edifying and satisfactory. Some men excel in this matter; and their pulpit prayers are found quite as edifying as their sermons.

The language should be terse and plain. The tone should be reverent, but not whining. The pitch not to be on an ascending scale, till breathlessness ensue, and then a sudden dropping down, to begin the ascending scale again! The volume of voice should not be so great as to be deafening and confusing; nor so small as to make it difficult to catch the words. Nor is it a practice to be unrebuked to *begin* in so low a tone as to be indistinct for a time. As in pulpit prayer, so in all pulpit speech, every word—from the very first word—should be distinctly uttered.

I have not spoken of reading prayers from a book. The making of such belongs to authorship; and the reading of them to the science of reading—an art by itself. Yet the arranging of a prayer from the pulpit, like the arranging of a discourse, should be a matter of care and thought. God, who helps the good minister of Christ to preach, will also help him to pray.

People are fastidious about the length of prayers. To be acceptable to the people's ideas they must never exceed ten minutes. And probably we have but ourselves to blame for this:—if they had been more perfect models of what a prayer should be, more length of time, no doubt, would have been allowed them. Just as telegrams and post-cards have tended to condensation in messages and letters generally, so the three-minute and five-minute rules, in Y.M.C.A. meetings, and in conventions, have tended greatly to condensation in pulpit prayers. Condensation is not everything, nor the principal thing; but it is yet a great thing; and generally is accompanied by strength;—and let us hope, always with clearness.

The pulpit prayer should have a special reference to the Scripture reading, and the sermon—just as in the case of the hymns. And here opens out a rich vein for felicitous thought and expression.

Variety of Scripture-topic will suggest variety in petition. And the theology of a pulpit prayer should be sound. Do not ask God to do what He plainly commands us to do. And do not let us make God, in our prayers, the author of evil, when in our sermons we assert that he is only the author of good. And, finally, if we look for conversions under our sermons we may do the same under our prayers—if we only make them as earnest, as pointed, as appropriate, and as varied. It is a subject that needs more study—and will repay it.

BE honest. If Satan tempts you to defraud your neighbour, it is only that he may rob you of your ill-gotten gain in the end.

CARLYLE says that one cannot move a step without meeting a duty, and that the fact of mutual helplessness is proved by the very fact of one's existence. No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

HE is a fool that grumbles at mischance. Put the best foot forward is an old maxim. Don't run about and tell acquaintances that you have been unfortunate; people do not like to have unfortunate people for acquaintances. Add to a vigorous determination a cheerful spirit. If reverses come, bear them like a philosopher, and get rid of them as soon as you can.