

How hard it is to wait for the fever to turn, when we are watching by a loved one's bedside, and our only hope is in waiting! It is hard to wait from seed-time to harvest, from the beginning of the voyage to its end, from the sad parting to the joyous meeting again, from the sending of a letter until its answer can come back to us. How much easier it would be to do something to hasten a desired event, instead of patiently, passively waiting for its coming! It is so much easier to ask in faith than to wait in faith. The minutes drag while the response tarries.

In a certain battle a detachment of cavalry was kept inactive. It was hard for the men to do nothing but wait, while the fight was going on before them. At last, in the crisis of the contest, the command was given them to charge, and that body of fresh men, sweeping down like a torrent, turned the tide of battle.

So, in the battle of life, waiting is often the surest means to victory. And it is comforting to know that where we see only the unsightly bud, God sees the perfect flower; where we see the rough pebble, He sees the flashing diamond.—*Selected.*

GOSSIP.

It would be interesting to trace the use of this word from its original meaning to that which it has now. Its origin appears to be from the Saxon "godsibb"—"god," good, and "sib" or "sibb," peace, adoption, and relation: a Saxon name of a sponsor in baptism.

But our present concern is with the evil form it now wears, and with the mischief, and oftentimes wickedness, for which it is responsible—for which it is "sponsor."

And it is not a modern vice: the ancients appear to have indulged in it, as we gather from direct and indirect reference to it both in the Old and New Testament. In the Book of Leviticus (xix. 16) we read, "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people"; and we are familiar with Solomon's language in the Book of Proverbs: "A talebearer revealeth secrets," "The words of a talebearer are as wounds," "A whisperer separateth chief friends," "He that repeateth a matter separateth very friends." And again, in the New Testament, amongst Christians, we find the same evil habit, and both St. Peter and St. Paul strongly condemning it: "Let none of you suffer as a busybody in other men's matters," "We hear there are some which walk among you disorderly . . . are busybodies," "They are 'attlers also, and

busybodies, speaking things which they ought not." Thus we see clearly that the habit and vice of gossip is of old standing, and one which suits itself to every age. And yet how little people think what harm they are doing when, chatting over their five o'clock tea, they calmly take away the character of their neighbors, and assert as true, "on the very best authority," what, in fact, never took place, or, at any rate, had a very different complexion in truth from that with which it was painted at the tea-table. As a rule, this silly, evil habit is found chiefly amongst women, but there is a class of men with whom, though least expected, it is unfortunately found—not, we fully believe, generally, but in a sufficient number of cases to do untold harm. Of all men, the clergy should be the most particular to hold their tongues, and set their face, when calling upon their parishioners, against this pernicious habit. When they fail in this, much evil has been the result, for not only the respect due to their office is lowered, but their preaching in church is received with something akin to contempt and scorn, when the hearers have cause to remember the harm they have done by their tongues out of the pulpit. Of course, members of a congregation, however much they may feel that there is cause for such a feeling, have no right to give way to it; for our plain duty is at such times to think of the office, and not of the man, as George Herbert has so quaintly taught us. But human nature is weak, and we often fail when, perhaps, we think ourselves most strong. And, therefore, we repeat that the clergy (and their wives also) cannot be too particular in speaking about other people and their affairs. If they would just confine themselves to the good qualities of their neighbors, and never repeat an unkind remark, such an example and influence would soon bring forth fruit, and members of their flocks would "go and do likewise." During this season of Lent we may all profitably exercise self-restraint over our tongue. At the best, it is naturally an "unruly evil"; and, at its worst, it is "full of deadly poison." The prayer, therefore, of all should be: "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."—*X., in Family Churchman.*

HUNTING A MINISTER'S FAULTS.

MR. SPURGEON puts into the mouth of "John Ploughman" the following homely bit of wisdom, which we commend

to any reader that may have magnified his pastor's imperfections: "I never knew a good horse that had not some odd habit or other, and I never saw a minister worth his salt who had not some crotchety or oddity. Now, these are bits of cheese that cavillers smell out and nibble at; the first is too flowery, the second is too dull. Dear me, if all God's creatures were judged in this way, we should wring the dove's neck for being too tame, shoot the robins for eating spiders, kill the cows for swinging their tails, and the hens for not giving us milk! When a man wants to beat a dog he can soon find a stick, and at this rate any fool can have something to say against the best minister in England."

—*The Episcopal Recorder.*

BLINDED BY SUNSHINE.

ON a lonely spot of the Australian coast a clergyman and his family are enjoying a pleasant little picnic. Up amid the rocks sits the father, reading, and listening to the merry laughter of his children bathing below. Presently, looking down, he catches sight of his eldest daughter standing in the water. In her arms she holds the youngest of the flock, a boy of two years, and, as every succeeding wave sweeps up, she plunges him into it. The hot noonday sun sheds a dazzling glare over the sea. Shining full in the girl's eyes, it hinders her seeing a dark object creeping nearer and nearer. The father sees it, and horror overpowers him. Too well he knows the shark's form. He shouts; his voice does not reach her. But at this moment a cloud crosses the sun, and, as the shadow falls about her, the girl's eyes are suddenly opened to her danger.

Her heart almost stops beating with fright. There is barely time to spring back to a place of safety, for the very next wave would have enabled the shark to seize upon its prey.

To many, especially the young, life is so full of sunshine that they are blinded by the brightness, and forget, or do not see, that a danger there is, which every wave, as it were, wafts nearer—*death.*

But, dear children, if you see the danger, see also the escape. The Lord Jesus says, "He that believeth (that is, trusts) in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

For those who really trust Him, who try to follow Him here, death loses all its terror. Resting on His promises, they need feel no fear.—*Selected.*