Christ performed many wonderful works among the people. Next month we will learn about some of these.—H. M. B.

SEPT. 12.—SUN OF MY SOUL. John 8: 12-20.

The author of this hymn was Rev. John Keble. He was born in 1792 at Fairford, Gloucestershire, England. He was prepared for college by his father, who was a minister. He received his college education at Oxford, where he was a very brilliant scholar.

He became a clergyman of the English Church and began and ended his pastoral work at Fairford. It was a small place, and he received only a meagre salary, but it satisfied his modest ambition. He refused many invitations to places with larger salaries because he felt it his duty to remain where he was.

He wrote a great many poems, the most important of his publications being "The Christian Year," which was published only under the strongest pressure from his friends. It is from one of the poems in this collection, the one called "Evening," that this hymn is taken. From the profits of the sale of the work, "The Christian Year," Keble built one of the most beautiful parish churches in England.

Keble and Cardinal Newman, of whom we learned last month, were good friends; Keble was the older by ten years. He was stricken with paralysis when quite an old man and lived an invalid for a year and a half. He died at the age of seventy-four.

NOTE.—Although it will be impossible for the juniors to remember many facts about the writers of the hymns, they should at least remember who wrote each hymn and anything of outstanding interest in his life. The leader should see that the children get an understanding of the hymns so that when they sing them they will at least catch their meaning. The object of the study of the series is not that they remember a large number of facts, but that they be taught to appreciate the worth of our most beautiful hymns. Many children sing them, but have little idea of what they mean.

Charles Wesley wrote of Jesus as "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," Toplady as the "Rock of Ages," Cardinal Newman as a "Kindly Light," and now we have Keble writing of Him as "Sun of my soul."

We all know what the sun means to the world; without it all the world would be darkness and there would be no life, for nothing can grow without light. Keble knew that Jesus was the Sun of his life, a Sun which meant light and strength to his soul, or he could not have written this beautiful hymn. Do we all realize what Jesus means to our world and to each of our lives? He has told us that He is the Light of the World, and if we follow Him we will not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. Following such a guiding Light we are always safe and our lives will show forth to others the radiance which we find in Jesus.—H. M. B.

A Flower Talk with the Juniors

THERE are wild flowers and garden flowers; the one left to run wild and grow as they like, the other tended and cultivated, and sometimes put into nurseries and hot-houses until they get quite artificial in their ways and habits, and appear stiff and conceited.

God looks after them all. They are something like the great human family, part of which are still in a state of wildness and uncivilization, while others are trained, and educated, and disciplined.

But you will notice that some wild flowers are quite as beautiful, so I think, as garden flowers. What can be more lovely, for example, than the primrose on the bank, or the violet of spring?—and as for southern wild flowers, their loveliness is indescribable. I have seen an April hillside in Palestine blazing with scarlet blossoms under the olives. And those are the very flowers (so people think) Jesus had in view when He said, "Consider the lilies of the field how they grow more beautiful than Solomon in all his glory." Jesus so teaches us that, if God takes so much care to make flowers beautiful, He will spend a great deal more pains in making little boys and girls happy if they will only mind what He has to say to them.

Well, that is our first lesson—if God spends such a deal of care upon flowers which toil not, neither do they spin, surely He will spend more upon us, who are so valuable that Christ was willing to die for our salvation, and rose again to give us eternal life. The next thing I have to speak of is the prodigal variety of the flowers that God has made. Nobody can number the different sorts and what is more strange is that there are no two sorts and no two flowers even that are exactly alike.

Many of you, I expect, have heard of the Coliseum at Rome. It was a great stone circus or amphitheatre, built while the apostle John was alive; but it is now half in ruins. People used to have games there, and fighting with wild beasts, and many Christians were killed there and burnt to make a Roman holiday. One hundred thousand people could sit on those stone seats all round, and see all the games going on. Well, the time came when the grass had grown over those seats and arches, and briars had tangled about the walls, and I can remember seeing it some years ago when the whole place was starred with wild flowers. Now there was a botanist in Rome about thirty years since who made a collection of the wild flowers he gathered on the Coliseum. And how many different kinds of flowers do you think there were? There were more than four hundred—four hundred different species of wild flowers on that one gigantic ruin alone.

Now remember no two of these different flowers are alike; they have different habits, different characters, different faces. And yet God knows each individual flower apart from the rest. Every single flower he knows; and so it is with you children. You are all different, the one from the other. Your faces are different—no two faces are alike; your habits are different; your minds are different; your thoughts are different; and yet God knows each one of you through and through. And God cares for each one of you, and Christ died for each one of you, and God desires to make each one of you happy.

Now talking about the habits and characters of flowers, let me tell you that flowers have different characters and habits, some have very curious habits. With regard to character, some are bashful, some are shy, some are innocent and lovely, and some are lovely and not at all innocent; some are modest, and some are stiff and self-assertive, and some, I am afraid, are jealous and spiteful.

I had some blue violas in my garden, planted side by side with yellow violas, and these yellow ones did not like it, and they managed somehow to kill the blue ones, so that there is not one left. Again, there are flowers that set traps to catch flies, which they manage somehow to feed upon. And again, there are some that are very sensitive. I remember one day in Nubia stumbling over an acacia bush by the river bank, and every little leaf of the bush closed up at the touch and shrank back, as much as to say, "How very rude you are!" Now I am sure you children, if you are observant at all, must have noticed many of the different habits of flowers; for example, how some of them close up and go to sleep before sundown, and some after sundown; some of them go to sleep all the day and wake up at night. But there is one habit that a good many flowers have in common, and of that I should like to say a word, namely, they turn their faces to the sun. Flowers all love the sun; they are all faithful to the sun; and there is one of them, the sunflower, which they say follows the sun all round from morning till night. Now, children, there is a pattern for you and me. Jesus is the Sun of Righteousness, and we ought to try to keep our faces all day long turned to Him. Without the sun the flowers would die, and without Jesus Christ you and I must die. Let us then hold our faces and hearts open, so that Jesus may come into His garden and shine into each of our hearts and warm us with His love.

There is another curious property that flowers have which I must mention, and that is the power of waking up old memories. All thoughtful people recognize this. The passing scent of some particular flower, on a summer's evening, perhaps, will set into action a train of memory or thought, and carry the mind far away into realms of cloud and sunshine of the distant past. Memories of childhood, memories of schoolday hours, memories of the old garden at home, where a lost mother or sister used to walk in the cool of the day—memories of a walk by the river-bank when the heart was young—these all are brought back by the passing scent of a flower. That is one reason, I doubt not, why flowers are so acceptable to poor sick people in London: flowers talk to them of green fields, and country lanes, and babbling rivers, and so take the sufferer's attention off for a little time from his own sicknesses and pain. And then the sick children play with flowers and make garlands of them, and fancy they are in the fresh green meadows of the country again. In fact, if you have ears to hear, flowers will talk to you of many things, even as they talked to Jesus of God's fatherly love and care. No one ought to be dull in a garden of flowers.

Now there is one other lesson that flowers teach, and that is the shortness of life. Flowers very soon die, and man in this respect is likened in Scripture to a flower: "As a flower of the field so he flourisheth, for the wind passeth over it and it is gone, and its place shall know it no more." The goodliness and beauty of man is as a flower of the field.

And it is, I suppose, because of this fact that flowers are so associated with the dead that graves are decked with flowers, and the dead are strewn over with flowers. We feel that there is something appropriate and touching in garlanding a grave with flowers or planting flowers to grow over it. You all know the author of that hymn we sing, "Abide with me, fast falls the eventide"—Henry Lyte? He was buried at Nice, on the shore of the Mediterranean, within sound of the blue sea, and there is a cluster of Banksia roses that blows in wild profusion over his grave. The last time I was there it was full of blossom, and I gathered some roses to put over his hymn in my book.

And then there is another sweet hymn-writer—Doddridge, who wrote "My God, and is Thy table spread." He died at Lisbon. He was buried on the high hillside above the broad glassy Tagus, about a hundred years ago, and his grave is covered with a tangle of tropic flowers quite beautiful to behold.