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Monthly Messenger.

Edited by Rev. T. HALL, Congregational Minister, Queen's Road Chapel, St. John's.

NEW SERIES. VOL. V. No. 12.

DECEMBER, 1878.

PRICE FIVE CENTS.

This number completes the fifth volume of our magazine, and will terminate for the present our editorial duties. Circumstances that are unnecessary to state have led us to discontinue this publication. We tender our sincere thanks to the many friends, both in city and country, who have rendered willing and valuable assistance, especially to Mr. L. T. Chancey, who has had all the trouble of the finances, and through whose good management we have been saved from pecuniary loss. We resign this work with reluctance. The many encouragements but recently received make this all the harder; but necessity compels us.

In taking leave of our readers, we wish to cordially recommend to them a new weekly magazine, to be published in January next, the *Canadian Independent*. This will only cost one dollar per year. The best talent of our churches in Canada will be employed on this magazine, and if it would be any inducement to any to subscribe for the *Canadian Independent*, Newfoundland affairs will receive attention from the pastor of Queen's-road Chapel, who is appointed corresponding editor. Specimen copies will be forwarded on application, and orders will be strictly attended to. Payment in every case in advance.

TWILLINGATE.

The vice-president of the Congregational Home Missionary Society, the Rev. T. Hall, has visited the rising town of Twillingate in Notre Dame Bay, where he organised a church and conducted the ordination service of the Rev. Jas. Wilson. Mr. Wilson has been a year and a-half in the town, and his labours have been blessed to the salvation of many. A Congregational Church is about to be erected.

THE EDITOR ON HIS TRAVELS.

(Concluded.)

I spent a pleasant evening in the quiet town of Bowmanville. Just arrived in time to be present at a strawberry festival in the Congregational Chapel, and to make some sort of speech. The Rev. Mr. Huedeburgh, the venerable pastor, is making strenuous efforts to erect a new church, and if earnestness and faithful labour on his part, and hearty co-operation on the part of his flock can succeed, there is little doubt but Bowmanville will shortly have a church as commodious and modern as any town in the great Dominion. I was the honoured guest of Mr. H. O'Harra, a true son of Old Erin, with as warm a heart, fertile brain, and valuable tongue as any Irish-

man between this and Mourne Mountains, under whose shadows he spent the hours of happy childhood. Coburgh was my next halting-place, where I "tarried but a night." Here I wished to see the family of one my esteemed predecessors, the late Rev. Chas. Pedley. His son, the Rev. Hugh Pedley, is the able successor of his honoured father in this place. His eldest son Charles is also a graduate of McGill University, and has devoted his life to the work of the ministry. One or two of his other sons appear to be looking in the same direction. The many friends of my predecessor here will be glad to learn that his family are nobly fighting the battle of life, though early deprived of a mother's love and care, and a father's counsels. He that has promised to be a father to the fatherless, has graciously guided and blessed them. They are young men of great promise and of indomitable energy. The seed of the righteous shall be blessed. My next resting-place was the city of Kingston. There are two Congregational churches here; the first is under the pastoral care of the Rev. Dr. Jackson; second in charge of the Rev. W. M. Peacock, whom many of my readers remember, for seven years ago he spent five weeks with us in St. John's, making fast and firm friends among the members of the Congregational Church, and other churches too. Mr. Peacock was supposed to be dying then, but here I found him a paterfamilias, pastor of a church, and in labours more abundant. Doctors differ and patients live. I spent a pleasant week in Kingston, preaching one part of the Sabbath in First Kingston, the other part in Kingston Second, and giving a lecture on Newfoundland during the week. I visited the palatial residence of G. S. Fenwick, Esq., brother to Vice-Principal Fenwick, of the Congregational College, of British North America. I had a pleasant sail on Lake Ontario, crossing to Cape Vincent, in the State of New York, and to Crownall. I spent a whole day with a warm-hearted farmer, on his splendid farm, about four miles from the city. I was in no place more at home, nor more happy than in Kingston. At five o'clock a.m., in company with the Rev. J. R. Cox, of Nova Scotia, embarked on a steamer bound for Montreal, via the Thousand Islands, the Lachine rapids, etc., etc. The scenery from Kingston to Montreal baffles my powers of description. I will not attempt it. The day was most beautiful. The accommodation on board the steamers were all that could be desired, the passengers were pleasant and sociable. We had two guides on board, who not only pointed out the places of interest, but kept us laughing most of the time. A genuine Indian piloted

our steamer down the most dangerous rapid, when, without steam or sail, we made a speed of three miles and a-half in seven minutes, literally jumping down the river. Montreal was reached at six o'clock p.m. Here I was the guest of the Rev. H. Wilkes, D.D., LL.D., the venerable Principal of the Congregational College of British North America, and hon. pastor of Zion Church, Montreal. For upwards of thirty years Dr. Wilkes was the popular preacher of the city, and he is still a leading man in educational and philanthropic enterprises. It was a rare privilege to me to enjoy the company of one so gifted, and owned of God, of such ripe experience and genuine piety. Under God, Congregationalism owes its present prosperous condition in Canada to the untiring efforts of Dr. Wilkes.

The Congregational College is affiliated with McGill University, and the full course of study extends over five years. The Principal has associated with him the Rev. G. Cornish, M.A., LL.D., the Rev. K. M. Fenwick; Vice-Principal, the Rev. J. F. Stevenson, LL.D. Number of students from twelve to sixteen. There are four Congregational churches in Montreal. I had the pleasure of preaching in Calvary Church on the hottest day I have ever witnessed. Whether the hot day had anything to do with my impressions of the Calvary brethren I cannot say, but I have the idea that they are a warm-hearted, earnest people. The Rev. Mr. Forster is the newly-installed pastor—I believe the right man in the right place. Since I returned the good people of Calvary Congregational Church have sent thirty dollars for our home missionary society. The third sermon I had the pleasure of hearing on the continent was in Zion Church, Montreal, from the Rev. Mr. Bray. I had heard so much about this gentleman's herodoxy, that I was almost afraid to venture to hear him. But with my very keen scent for heresy, I must acknowledge that I could not discern the faintest smell. Mr. Bray is remarkably gifted in prayer. There was power and impressiveness in his whole service, and especially in the sermon. He is indeed a very dangerous heretic in the opinion of several intelligent persons—competent judges, with whom I have conversed—who never heard him. He may be. I only speak what I know.

But I must think of home. I am getting tired of the heat, and begin to sigh for the cool breezes off the hills of Newfoundland. They tell me the thermometer is 102 in the shade. I only regret leaving the many friends, old and new, and none more sincerely than kind and good Dr. Wilkes, and his most amiable family. One night on board the screw-steamer Montreal, and I am again in the old City of Quebec, so far on my way to *Terra Nova*. I spent one week in the ancient city, visiting all the places of interest—the Citadel, Plains of Abraham, churches, chapels, and cathedral, the Natural Steps, and the Falls of Mount Moreney.

On the Sunday I occupied in the morning the pulpit of the Rev. D. Anderson, Presbyterian Church, Levis, and in the evening the pulpit of the Rev. Mr. —, of the Methodist Church, same place. By the way, the latter gentleman has recently left the Episcopal Church for the Methodist. He is a Frenchman, a scholar, a good preacher, and devoted to his Master's work. Had been fifteen years a minister in

the Episcopal Church. After a pleasant week in Quebec and suburbs, I took a ride of twenty-seven hours on the Grand Trunk and Intercolonial Railways, and found myself in Halifax. Three days were pleasantly whiled away in this old city. Mr. Lay was my kind host here, and good earnest Captain Mylius, of the s.s. Newfoundland, was my constant companion. With fear and trembling I ventured my precious life on board the s.s. Cortes, of the ill-fated Cromwell Line. What a misfortune it is to get a bad name! Many a thing, animate and inanimate, has got that unjustly, and among these, I must candidly say, not more unjustly than the Cromwell Line. We had a trial of wind, and sea, and fog. I have been a good many times at sea, and can speak with authority. I never witnessed so little trouble in time of storm than on board the Cortes. It would be well if some other lines of more pretensions would keep as good a table, or give even a part of the attentions to the comfort of passengers. Captain Bennett, officers, crew, and stewards were unremitting in attention to business, and in attending—even anticipating—the wants and comforts of the passengers. If I am going to Halifax or New York, I will look out for the Cortes and Captain Bennett.

After exactly ten weeks' absence, I was once more at home, profoundly thankful to the Almighty Guide for "journeying mercies," and for His protecting care over those dear ones of home and congregation.

A CANDLE IN THE POWDER.

A MERCHANT was celebrating the marriage of his daughter. While they were enjoying themselves above, he chanced to go to the basement hall below, where he met a servant carrying a lighted candle without a candlestick. She passed on to the cellar for wood, and returned without the candle. The merchant suddenly remembered that during the day several barrels of gunpowder had been placed in the cellar, one of which had been opened. Inquiring what she had done with the candle, to his awful amazement her reply was that, being unable to carry it with the fuel, she had set it in a barrel of "black sand" in the cellar.

He flew to the spot. A long red snuff was just ready to fall from the wick into the mass of powder, when with great presence of mind, placing a hand on each side of the candle, and making his hands meet at the top, over the wick, he safely removed it from the barrel. At first he smiled at his previous fear, but the reaction was so great that it was weeks ere he recovered from the shock which his nerves sustained in that terrible trial.

There are candles in many a barrel of gunpowder to-day. Many homes have been blown to ruins by them. There is a candle in the cellar of the wine-bibber. It burns brighter with the added fuel of every cup he drains, and ere he is aware, all his hopes for this world and the next will be blown up with a ruin more terrible than any destruction that gunpowder may bring.

There is a candle in the cellar of the liquor-dealer, burning slowly but surely. He who is dealing death to others will be startled by a sudden blasting of his own peace, when the wrath of God, restrained no longer, shall fall upon him in a moment. "Every way of man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord pondereth the heart." "He that by usury and unjust gains increaseth his substance, shall gather it for him that will pity the poor." The man who is wilfully destroying himself may be deluded, and see no danger; the man who is destroying others may say, "I do not see it"; but the eyes which ponder both their ways see not only the evil, but the sudden "destruction" which is before them if they do not speedily repent and reform. See to it that no righteous anger burn against you. See to it that no burning candle is endangering you in your cellar.—*Children's Messenger*,

GLORIOUS PROMISES.

BLISS IN DYING.—"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord."—Rev. xiv. 13.—My soul! is this blessedness thine in prospect? Art thou ready, if called this night to lie down on thy death-pillow, sweetly to fall asleep in Jesus? What is the sting of death? It is sin. Is death, then, to thee, robbed of its sting, by having listened to the gracious accents of pardoning love, "Be of good cheer, thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee"? If thou hast made up thy peace with God, resting on the work and atoning blood of His dear Son, then is the Last Enemy divested of all his terror, and thou canst say, in sweet composure, of thy dying couch and dying hour,—"I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, because Thou, Lord, makest me to dwell in safety." Reader! ponder that solemn question, "Am I ready to die? Am I living as I should wish I had done when that last hour arrives!" And when shall it arrive? To-morrow is not thine. "Verily, there may be but a step between thee and death." Oh! solve the question speedily, -risk no doubts and no p r-venture. Every day is proclaiming anew the lesson, "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." Seek to live, so that that hour cannot come upon thee too soon, or too unexpectedly. Live a dying life! How blessed to live,—how blessed to die, when the consciousness that there may be but a step between thee and glory!

A DUE REAPING.—"In due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not."—Gal. vi. 9.—Believer! all the glory of thy salvation belongs to Jesus,—none to thyself; every jewel in thine eternal crown is His,—purchased by His blood, and polished by His Spirit. The confes-sion of time will be the ascription of all eternity,—“By the grace of God I am what I am!” But though “All be of grace,” thy God calls thee to personal strenuousness in the work of the high calling;—to “labour,” to “fight,” to “wrestle,” to “agonise”; and the heavenly reaping will be in proportion to the earthly sowing. “He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully!” What an incentive to holy living and increased spiritual attainments! My soul! wouldst thou be a star shining high and bright in the firmament of glory?—wouldst thou receive the ten-talent recompense? Then, be not weary. Gird on thine armour for fresh conquests. Be gaining daily some new victory over sin. Deny thyself. Be a willing cross-bearer for thy Lord’s sake. Do good to all men as thou hast opportunity; be patient under provocation, “slow to wrath,” resigned in trial. Let the world take knowledge of thee that thou art wearing Christ’s livery, and bearing Christ’s Spirit, and sharing Christ’s cross. And when the reaping time comes, He who has promised that the cup of cold water cannot go unrecompensed, will not suffer thee to lose thy reward!

AN END OF WEeping.—"The days of thy mourning shall be ended."—Isaiah lx. 20.—Christ’s people are a weeping band, though there be much in this lovely world to make them joyous and happy. Yet when they think of sin—their own sin, and the unblushing sins of a world in which their God is dishonoured, need we wonder at their tears?—that they should be called “Mourners,” and their pilgrimage-home a “Valley of tears”? Bereavement, and sickness, and poverty, and death, following the track of sin, add to their mourning experience; and with many of God’s best beloved, one tear is scarce dried, when another is ready to flow! Mourners, rejoice! When reaping time comes, the weeping time ends! When the white robe and the golden harp are bestowed, every remnant of the sackcloth attire is removed. The moment the pilgrim whose forehead is here furrowed with woe bathes it in the crystal river of life—that moment the pangs of a lifetime of sorrow are eternally forgotten! Reader! if thou art one of these careworn ones, the days of thy mourning are numbered! A few more throbbings of this aching heart, and then the angel who proclaims “time,” shall proclaim also sorrow, and sighing, and mourning, to be “no longer!” Seek now to mourn thy sins more than thy sorrows; reserve thy bitterest tears for forgetfulness of thy dear Lord. The saddest and sorrest of all bereavements is when the sins which have separated thee from Him evoke the anguish-cry, “Where is my God?”

A SPEEDY COMING.—"Behold, I come quickly."—Rev. iii. 11. "Even so! come, Lord Jesus!" "Why tarry the wheels of thy chariot?" 6,000 years this world has rolled on, getting hoary with age, and wrinkled with sins and sorrows. A waiting Church sees the long-drawn shadows of twilight announcing, "The Lord is at hand." Prepare, my soul, to meet Him. Oh! happy days, when thine adorable Redeemer, so long dishonoured and despised, shall be publicly enthroned, in presence of an assembled universe, crowned Lord of all, glorified in His saints, satisfied in the fruits of His soul’s travail, destroying His enemies with the brightness of His coming,—the lightning glance of His wrath,—causing the hearts of His exulting people to "re-joice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Prepare, my soul, to meet Him! Let it be a joyous thought to thee—thy "blessed hope," the meeting of thine Elder Brother. Stand oftentimes on the watch-tower to catch the first streak of that coming brightness,—the first murmur of those chariot wheels. The world is now in preparation! It is rocking on its worn-out axle. There are voices on every side proclaiming, "He cometh! He cometh! to judge the earth." Reader! art thou among the number of those who "love His appearing"? Remember the attitude of His expectant saints. "Blessed are those servants whom their Lord, when He cometh, will find watching!"

A CROWN OF LIFE.—"When the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."—1 Peter v. 4.—What! is the "crown" to be "raised from the dunghill, set among princes, and made to inherit a throne of glory"? Is dust and ashes, a puny rebel, a guilty traitor, to be pitied, pardoned, loved, exalted from the depths of despair, raised to the height of heaven—gifted with kingly honour—royally fed—royally clothed—royally attended—and, at last, royally crowned? O my soul, look forward with joyous emotion to that day of wonders, when He whose head shall be crowned with many crowns, shall be the dispenser of royal diadems to His people; and when they shall begin the joyful ascription of all eternity, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings, . . . to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen!" Wilt thou be among the number? Shall the princes and monarchs of the earth wade through seas of blood for a corruptible crown; and wilt thou permit thyself to lose the incorruptible, or barter it for some perishable nothings of earth! Oh, that thou wouldst awake to thy high destiny, and live up to thy transcendent privileges as the citizen of a kingly commonwealth, a member of the blood-royal of heaven! What wouldst thou not sacrifice, what effort wouldst thou grudge, if thou wert included at last in the gracious benediction, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"?

THE VISION AND FRUIT OF GOD.—"God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."—Rev. xxi. 3, 4. Glorious consummation! All the other glories of heaven are but emanations from this glory that excelleth. Here is the focus and centre to which every ray of light converges. God is "all in all." Heaven without God! It would send a thrill of dismay through the burning ranks of angels and archangels; it would dim every eye, and hush every harp, and change the whitest robe into sackcloth. And shall I then, indeed, "see God"? What! shall I gaze on these inscrutable glories, and live? Yes, God himself shall be with them, and be their God; they shall see His face! And not only the vision, but the fruition. Oh, how does sin in my holiest moments damp the enjoyment of Him! It is the "pure in heart" alone who can "see," far more, who can enjoy "God." Even if He did reveal Himself now, these eyes could never endure His intolerable brightness. But then, with a heart purified from corruption, a world where the taint of sin and the power of temptation never enters; the soul again a bright mirror, reflecting the lost image of the Godhead—all the affections of their original high destiny—the love of God the motive principle, the ruling passion—the glory of God the undivided object and aim—the will no opposing or antagonist bias. Man will, for the first time, know all the blessedness of his chief end—"to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever"!

PROCRUSTES IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

By Rev. A. R. TAYLOR.

IF we may credit ancient tradition, Procrustes was a strong-armed person inhabiting a locality in Greece, where he made himself disagreeable to passing travellers by the exercise of a very peculiar sort of hospitality. His principal piece of furniture appears to have been an iron bedstead, about large enough to accommodate a man of average size. To this he would consign those whom he could induce to lodge with him, probably with much of the elegant imperiousness of manner that characterises the first-class hotel clerk of modern days. Procrustes was more thorough in his attentions than the hotel clerks are, for he would not only send his lodgers to bed, but would put them away for the night. Anxious that each lodger should fit the bed with exactness, he had a fashion of chopping off the feet of the guests who were too long for it, and, by an ingenious process, which he may have patented, but which has not been handed down to these times, he stretched out the short ones, so as to make them long enough for a comfortable fit. We do not read whether or not anybody ever lodged with him a second time.

Strange as it may seem, there are excellent men of these latter days, who, in a certain branch of Christian effort, follow to some extent the example set them by this crusty old heathen. True, there is no actual bedstead introduced into the Sunday-school, but there is too frequently an iron regulation rigidly enforced by that tinkling piece of hardware which is the standing abomination of every speaker who has nearly done his speech, but who fears that if he runs two minutes over the allotted time he will be chopped off, and compelled to cause his hearers to wonder what he would have said in conclusion.

Procrustes is superintendent of a Sunday-school. Bell in hand, he mangles the opening hymn by chopping off two of the best of its five verses. Does it spoil the sense of a beautiful hymn? No matter; it makes the singing fit the little iron bed appointed for it. He utters his opening prayer in such a way that the desire to be through with it in two minutes and a-half by the clock seems to be uppermost in his mind, rather than anything he is asking God for. When the hour for the teaching of the lesson expires, without a moment's warning, or a gentle premonitory tap of the bell, *bang!* goes the cruel instrument of torture, as much as to say, "There now, quit your teaching! time's up!" Promptness and punctuality are invaluable in every department of the school, but Procrustes errs in overdoing the matter.

Sometimes we find Procrustes officiating as chairman of a convention. Taking the hint from some excellent chairmen who have a way of stopping the discourse of long-winded men, he overdoes the business by putting finger on the bell almost as soon as the speaker begins his remarks; and, looking by turns at his bell, his watch, and the speaker, intimates that the conclusion of the speech is the most important part of it, and that he hopes that the speaker will on no account transgress, by the fraction of a minute, the appointed limit. Such chairmanship is enough to embarrass almost any speaker, and render almost valueless a discussion which is carried on under such stiff regulations. But it is worse, when the speech is nearly finished that is made by appointment. The invited speaker, who has come from a distance—let us say a thousand miles—and who has prepared himself expressly for the subject in hand, finds, on looking at the programme, that he is expected to condense his wisdom into twenty minutes by the clock and bell. It will go, we will suppose, into half-an-hour. He boils it down, as well as the limited time for additional preparation will permit, leaving out here a little, and there a great deal, till he thinks he has brought it within the prescribed measure. He is introduced to his hearers in connection with the announcement that his speech will continue for twenty minutes. He proceeds. At the expiration of nineteen minutes and a-half he is in the midst of a splendid peroration, which will take about three minutes to finish. The audience listen in breathless attention. The inexorable chairman puts his finger on the bell, and looks at his watch. The speaker looks at him, as much as to say, "Hold on; I will be done in a minute or two." No use. The half minute rapidly goes. Twenty minutes up. Chop! goes the Pro-

crustean axe, and the speaker and his speech have their feet taken off. The speaker does wish that some man of reasonably good sense had been put in charge of the meeting, and resolves not to come again where *that* man presides.

At an institute where certain exercises are appointed to come on succession, Procrustes is sometimes put in charge of the work of getting up the programme. The institute then seems to be gotten up for the benefit of the programme, rather than the programme for the institute. Five or six speeches are appointed, to occupy the time which should have been occupied by three; the hour and minute at which each will begin and conclude, are printed, as the railroad companies print their time tables; and the remark is also printed, "This programme will be *strictly adhered to*." Each speaker has a chopped-off feeling during every moment of his speech, and the result is the absence of that large liberty which is so profitable to all who know how to enjoy it.

As to the error in the other direction, just a word. When the original Procrustes got hold of a man too short for his bed, he stretched him. I do not often happen that a chairman has to stretch a speaker's speech, so as to make it fill the allotted time. But it sometimes happens that a man who is short of material to fill the time, fills it out, either by a heavy apology at the beginning, or by saying several times over what might have been profitably said only once; or by saying nothing for a while during the concluding part of his talk. This kind of stretching is uncomfortable to all concerned. When a man has said all he has to say he should stop, whether his allotted time is three minutes or sixty.

Let us be prompt and punctual, but not ferocious in our promptness or punctuality.

While we must allot certain time to certain speakers, let us try to arrange our time-tables for the mutual comfort of the speakers and those who are spoken to.

A speaker who is known to be a bore, need not be invited to speak at all. If a man of whom better things are expected proves to be wearisome and unprofitable, and must be chopped off, it is better to chop him as soon as he makes full proof of his tediousness, than to wait for the fulfilment of any allotted time, long or short.

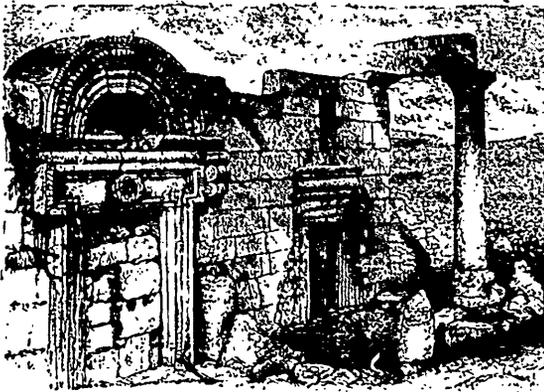
WHAT TEACHERS HAVE DONE.

A SOLDIER'S TEACHER.—At the annual meeting of the Sunday School Union, in 1822, the Rev. George Marsden stated, that as a gentleman, who by the providence of God had become reduced in his circumstances, was walking along the street, he was met by an old soldier, who immediately recognised him and mentioned the pleasure he felt in having been one of his Sabbath scholars. The soldier had heard of the circumstances which had reduced his former teacher to distress, and thus addressed him: "You were my teacher; I have a pension from Government; I can work a little, and will willingly give my pension for your relief."

GAOL TESTIMONY.—An American writer states, that out of 500 convicts, it was found, on examination, that only three had ever been in a Sunday-school. In a work recently published, entitled "England's Exiles," written by a pious surgeon of the Royal Navy, it is stated that out of 900 convicts exiled from their native land for breaking its laws, only seven had been admitted into a Sabbath-school; probably not one of the seven had attended it regularly. During five voyages to the penal colonies, A. Browning, R.N., states that he has conducted 1,065 prisoners, of whom only fourteen had been in a Sunday-school. The Rev. John Clay, chaplain to the House of Correction at Preston, in Lancashire, states that out of 1,129 persons committed to that prison only one was familiar with the Holy Scriptures and conversant with the first principles of religion as any child in the Bible class of a well-conducted Sunday-school would be; and that not above twenty of the whole 1,129 had been in the habit of attending any place of public worship. Again, the Rev. David Ruell, chaplain of the New Prison, Clerkenwell, states that upwards of 100,000 persons have passed under his care, the great majority of whom regretted that they had been brought up in utter disregard of the Lord's-day, and affirmed that neglecting the Sabbath in youth had led to grosser crimes in after years. We need not ask how many of these 100,000 had been trained from infancy in a Sunday-school.

THE LORD'S LAND.

BY REV. H. R. RIDGAWAY, D.D.



Ruins of Synagogue at Meiron.

THE plain was soon crossed, and we began to ascend the hills of Asher. With each successive height the shore line receded, and the great sea opened out in its wide expanse. On the right was the range of hills terminating in the White Cap, on which is perched Ramah of Asher; and far away on the left we could see the cliffs overhanging the course of Nahr el Kasimiyeh (River Leontes), which formed the northern boundary between Israel and the Phenicians. When we reached the highest range of hills, the view of the sea backward, of Lebanon and Hermon, north and north-east, of the valleys and the old castle at Tibniu, just ahead, was really grand. A short ride further on, and we found our tents pitched near the village of Tibnin. In two hours from Tibnin we came, by a south-east course, to Bint Jehel.

Part of our company went directly on to Safed, and others of us detoured to Meiron, about two hours out of our way. At Meiron are located the tombs of the rabbis, which are held in highest veneration by the Jews, such as Hillel, Shammai, Simeon, and Ben Joehai. These tombs are more revered among the Jews than any other shrines in Palestine, except, possibly, the Wailing Place at Jerusalem. Meiron is supposed by some to mark the location of the ancient Meroz. The road to Safed was quite rough, and the climb to the village very steep. The summit of the hill above the village is crowned with an old fortress in ruins. It covers a large area, and must have been a great strength. Clambering to the top, we obtained the first good view of the Sea of Galilee. There it lay, seemingly just at our feet, as beautiful, amid the encircling hills, as the day when Jesus sailed over its bosom, or walked along its shore. Beyond the sea, stretching far away, were the mountains of Bashan; and towards the south, Kurn Hattin, and the clean and graceful form of Tabor.

The descent from Safed to the sea was very precipitous. Three hours brought us to Ain Tabigah, directly on the shore of the sea. This is supposed by some to be the site of Bethsaida of Galilee, the home of Peter and Andrew, of James and John, and of Philip. About twenty minutes further north, on a gentle slope not far from the shore, we came to Tell Hum, where are extensive ruins. This Tell Hum is by many regarded as the site of Capernaum. Here, while most of the party turned back, three or four of us followed the path northward, determined to see the upper end of the lake and the upper mouth of the Jordan. It took us three and a-half hours to accomplish the task, but we were well repaid. We crossed Wady Kerazeh, on the left bank of which, about a mile back from the shore, is Bir Kerazeh, and because of its location, and the striking correspondence of the name, it is regarded as the Scriptural Chorazin. Wheeling about, we retraced our steps as rapidly as possible to rejoin our companions.

We were now fairly on the traditional "land of Gennesaret" (Matt. xiv. 34), called by the Arabs el Ghuweir, the "Little Shar." We paused a moment to look at an Arab tomb, and then hastened on, finding at the further end, on a gentle swell of ground, Mejdel, or Magdala, the home of Mary

Magdalene. Mejlol is a miserable, squalid mud village; we had seen none inferior to it in all Palestine. The name fully identifies it with the Magdala of the evangelists, and the situation is entirely appropriate in relation to other places.

Sunday, June 7. In the morning the lake was quiet. We felt delighted that we could have a Sunday on its shores, and thus commune, on the Lord's own day, with the scenes which were so familiar to Him.

Tiberias is thrice spoken of in the New Testament, and in each instance by John; twice as the name of the Sea of Galilee (John vi. 1; xxi. 1), and once as the name of the city (John vi. 23). We could not see the south end of the lake from our camp, because the mountain extends out a short distance below the baths, and the shores trend eastward. Well nigh the whole eastern shore is visible. It rises very abruptly to the height of two thousand feet through its whole extent, except as it nears the north end of the lake, when it falls toward the plain of the upper Jordan. There are no peaks, but the land from the upper line rolls away gradually, and the mountain forms a sort of natural wall to the hills of Bashan. There is little or no verdure, except as here and there a small wady makes down to the water's edge. Almost directly east of us, where Wady Semarik marks the barren mountain with its line of green, and where, between the main mountain wall and the sea are a few slopes of less height, was pointed out to us the traditional site of Khorsa (Gergesa). Here it was "the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters" (Matt. viii. 32). The western shore is not so abrupt, but is broken by the Plain of Gennesaret, and such depressions as 'Ain Tabigah. Upon the whole, the hills of both sides are too naked and uniform to entitle them to be regarded as either grand or beautiful.

Early the next morning we bathed in the sea, and after breakfast were soon again in the saddle. Resuming our journey from the Round Fountain, we took our course diagonally across el Ghuweir for Knah Minyeh. It was not without regret that, after another lunch under the same tree, overlooking 'Ain Tin, we mounted the hill back of 'Ain Tabigah, and, riding along the line of an old Roman road toward Kahn Jubb Yusuff, we finally left the home of our Lord and the chief scene of His earthly ministry.

Khan Jubb Yusuff lies on the great caravan route from Accho, or Acre, to Damascus. From this point the direct road to Damascus runs north-eastward, on the right of Lake Huleh, and to the east of Mount Hermon.

The next morning we continued our journey up the plain, frequently fording streams of water. About noon we arrived at Tell el Kady, the Hill of the Judge. From Tell el Kady we rode eastward for an hour and a-half until, amid rushing waters, we came to our camp at Banias. In the morning we walked around Banias, the Cesarrea Philippi of the New Testament. Just in the grotto the water is quiet, and covered with scum; but, passing under broken rocks, it flows out a stream of fifty feet in width, and, rushing on for several hundred yards, dashes violently down a deep ravine on the north side of the town. Cesarrea Philippi is the farthest point in the north-east reported to have been visited by our Lord. It was in this vicinity in which He said to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi. 13-20).

Our course on leaving Banias lay north, through the great Wady et Teim, along the banks of Nahr Hasbany, with the slopes of Hermon on our right. Riding on northward, we soon came upon the flourishing town of Hasbeiya. The population of Hasbeiya in 1860 was five thousand persons, of whom four thousand were Christians.

June 11. The next morning we came first to the Fountain of Hasbany. The water springs up liberally through a gravelly bed, rushes on, and leaps over a stone wall, forming a beautiful cascade. This is another source of the Jordan. It flows down Wady et Teim till it intersects the streams from Dan and Banias, and then together they empty into Lake Huleh. Soon after leaving the fountain, we turned westward, and ascended one of the slopes of the Lebanon range to the village of Yabmur. The ride during the afternoon, through the broad valley et Teim, was rough, but entertaining. At every step we would get different views of the noble Hermon, called fittingly by the Arabs es Sheik, and once in the Bible (Num. xxxiv. 7, 8) Mount Hor, the mount, by way of pre-eminence. It towers aloft 9,376ft.

above the sea, and more than 6,000ft. above the bed of the valley.

After five hours' ride we found our camp pitched at Rasheya, on the north-west side of Hermon. Resuming our journey, we descended the hill and rode north-east through a pretty, oval-shaped valley, and by a little lake. Two and a-half hours up a big hill, and through a series of ascents and descents, brought us to Rukleh. Here are the ruins of another temple. The road from Rukleh lies through a narrow wady. Deir el Ashavir, a village inhabited by Druses and Christians, stands at the edge of the plain in which the wady opens. Here are the ruins of another temple, much more extensive and perfect than those at Rukleh, but evidently not so ancient. One hour down the plain brought us to the French turnpike leading from Beirut to Damascus. One hour and a-half more and we branched off to the old road, and encamped on a hill-side by the village of Damais, four hours from Damascus.

The next morning we were in the saddle by six o'clock. On crossing the bridge at Dummar, a villa-like place, we turned to the left on the old road. I had seen nowhere hills more sterile and unattractive than those we were now crossing. And it seemed as though they were interminable. At last, just ahead, was a wady perched on an eminence, which we knew overlooked the valley. Some of the party spurred their horses up to it, but I kept the road which winds to the left through a deep cut, and as I emerged from it the city lay before me. The effect was as if a vision were suddenly let down from heaven. As far as the eye could see, a broad strip of green, glistening like an emerald, stretched along the plain. Through this strip of green could be seen an occasional quiver of the Abna as it rushes along, sending out, like threads of silver, through innumerable canals, its life giving waters to the roots of every tree, and to the homes and shops of the people. Amid and above a vast forest of trees rose domes, towers, and minarets, springing gracefully into the air, all shining in their whiteness with intense brilliancy as the rays of the morning sun fell upon them. This was the picture, while the bare, grey, glaring mountains on either side of the valley furnished the framework. It is impossible for language to exaggerate the beauty of the scene; though often described, no description has ever yet done justice to the reality.

We descended from the hill whence we obtained our first view of the Plain of Damascus, and entered the city on the north side, winding through crooked lanes between high mud walls, which enclose fertile gardens filled with all sorts of fruit trees: the tall, spreading walnut overhauling the walls, the graceful pomegranate, the richly laden apricot, with fig, plum, pear, olive, and apple trees. We struck into the French road, and followed it until, crossing the Barada by the Porvishes' Mosque, we found the customary camping ground by the side of the mosque.

On Sunday we attended service at the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Our party made up almost the entire congregation, as the missionary families were absent, dwelling in mountain villages during the hot season.

A ride of a few hours took us to the chief points of interest about the city. One of the first of these shown to the stranger is the "street which is called Straight." (Acts ix. 11) A part of its course is through the bazars, and it is not now quite straight, but its identity is unquestioned. In Roman times, and long afterward, a noble street extended in a straight line from east to west through the city. It was a mile in length, and a hundred feet wide, and was divided by Corinthian colonnades into three avenues. On our riding around the south-east wall, the spot was pointed out where St. Paul was let down from the wall. It is marked by a doorway with an arch above, and also a break in the wall. Near by stands a tower on the wall, the foundation work of which is evidently Roman. We could still see houses built and standing in the manner, perhaps, of the time of Paul. Near by is the tomb of St. George, who, it is claimed, was the instrument of Paul's escape from the city. A few hundred feet farther we came to the Christian cemetery. This is the traditional site where Saul of Tarsus was stricken to the ground when "suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven." (Acts ix. 3.)

On returning, outside of the wall we saw a dilapidated, lonely house, which is used as a leper's hospital, and which is said to stand on the site of Nathan's house. Passing thence to the north side of the wall we came to an old

mosque, where is buried one of Mohammed's most noted saints, and in the cemetery near by are the tombs of three of Mohammed's wives, and others of his family. Entering the city again through the east gate, we turned aside not far from the entrance to visit the house where Ananias found Saul and baptized him. (Acts ix. 17, 18.) The ground floor is now at least ten feet below the present surface of the street, and a Latin chapel occupies a part of the grotto.

June 16. We broke camp early in the morning, but did not leave Damascus until after lunch. We followed the French road out of the city as far as Dummar. The ride by diligence over this road from Beirut to Damascus and return, winding over and among the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges, is one of the grandest and most comfortable in the world. It is easily made in about fourteen hours. The morning ride into Beirut was charming. The view from the bold headland above the river was very grand, embracing the broad expanse of sea, the mountains, and the city. Once down from the pass, our route lay along the sea-shore on a hard, smooth beach around St. George's Bay. The bay derived its name from the traditional spot, still pointed out, where it was supposed St. George slew the dragon that was spreading terror and devastation throughout the land.

Beirut is at present the most prosperous town of Syria. It has grown rapidly during the last quarter of a century, and has lost many of the peculiar features of an Oriental town. The site of the city is very beautiful. It stands on a point which projects far out into the sea, and on a hill which rises gradually back from the coast. It is sheltered by a broad bay, into which vessels from all nations come. The Lebanon mountains rise on one side, forming a wall of indescribable majesty, the higher peaks perpetually crowned with snow, while in sheltered nooks are many villages where the tillage is carried on by terracing the mountain side. Around the town are fruit-trees and vines, and countless mulberry-trees, which give to the environs an aspect of great verdure and beauty. The place was occupied and probably important under the Phœnicians, but historical mention is made of it only two centuries before Christ.

We sailed soon after seven in the evening; the twilight yet lingered, and the day was still bright as we bade adieu to Syria, with mingled feelings of thankfulness and regret. The journey of journeys, the most arduous, the most perilous, the most instructive and romantic of life, was ended.

We had travelled from one end of the Bible Land to the other, well-nigh 2,000 miles, on camel and on horse—much of the time among comparative savages, and far away from ordinary human habitations, yet all the while with a feeling of safety and contentment—and now had come to the consummation of our plans with increased bodily vigour, and with mind and heart enriched.

The noble steamer glided swiftly out to sea, and the beautiful city faded in the distance. As we sat on the upper deck, aft, watching the shore, a bright light appeared over the tops of the Lebanon, and suddenly the moon rose, full-orbed, and cast across the distance a long line of beams, which sparkled upon the water. She seemed to say, in her queenly beauty, Farewell! Farewell our hearts responded to the Lord's Land, the land of all lands!

UNITED PRAYER.

BY THE REV. JOHN THOMAS.

"Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven."—Matt. xviii. 19.

THAT prayer is a means of grace is not a matter of simple faith to the Christian. Experience of the most positive and unmistakable kind puts the question out of the realms of mere belief altogether. Not only does experience confirm the numerous and direct assertions of Scripture relative to the Divine recognition of and answers to prayer, but the Christian enjoys a positive consciousness of spiritual enlightenment—an increase of faith in God—and the blessedness of the Divine nearness, as among the inseparable results of faithful praying; and so it becomes impossible for him to doubt the reality of the grace that he obtains in the exercise. But it will be well to say at once that this is not the object for which the duty and privilege of prayer is appointed. However much the simple exercise of prayer may seem to react for the spiritual advantage of the soul by which it is

performed, it is altogether a misinterpretation of the intention of God in the ordinance to call it spiritual gymnastic, as I once heard a Christian brother designate it. I have not taken prayer in the abstract for my subject this evening—nor prayer in the essentially private phases of it, with which we as separate believers have to do. I call your attention to prayer as a common force employed for common ends, by a greater or lesser number of believers—united prayer; as a means of grace, and an instrument of service for Christ.

Now, let me first state what I understand by united prayer. The simple circumstance that supplication is offered openly, and among a number of praying people, does not necessarily constitute united prayer. Neither is the mere fact that members of a number of different Christian denominations are met together in one building to pray of itself a sufficient guarantee that real united prayer is being offered. But when two or more believers do consent, and determine together upon the subject for petition, and with harmony of motive, object, and faith, do spread their one petition before the Lord, then I believe the act to be of united prayer. This is an agreeing to ask—a deliberate and intelligent purpose, being deliberately and intelligently carried out. You will see that it is not an imperative condition that those who unite should be in the same place, nor even pray at the same time. But, while that is the case—it is of great importance that believers should often meet in one place, to offer together their prayers and praises before God. And though not an essential to the fact, it is perhaps the strongest evidence of it, since it will always be found that where a strong desire for blessing and a strong agreement upon it exists among the members of a Christian organization, those members meet often together, in the body as well as in the spirit, for the purpose of praying together openly as well as in heart. Sometimes two are agreed to ask a thing of God, but they cannot meet on a given time at a given place—thank God that, this being the case, they yet offer united prayer in a sense upon which the promise of Christ unmistakably rests. They agree to ask, and it is done to them. They may live at the opposite poles, but they have a common desire—they have agreed to make it a subject for prayer, and the God who is just as near the one heart as the other sees the connection, the harmony, the oneness of the appeal to Himself, and replies according to the faithful promise of His word.

How shall we, as Christians, avail ourselves of this "means of grace" and "instrument of service for Christ?" Let me guard you against the idea of using it as a "means of grace," simply—it is a "means of grace" to us in proportion as we employ it as an "instrument of service for Christ." I think that is clear to you.

1. Let us seek to exercise united prayer for the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit upon our church, upon our deacons, upon the pastor. Let not general petitions satisfy us, but let there be agreement between Christian and Christian—a compact, entered into as before God, and then sacredly adhered to, that we will give God no rest until we are as men and women, and as a Church, full of the Holy Ghost and of power.

2. Let us unite in the same holy compact, to ask for the sound conversion of individuals—as men, women, and children. I do not mean only that we should do as we are always doing—pray for the salvation of souls, of men and women and children in the abstract, or the crowd, but that we should also go to God together, after agreement upon the subject and persons, and ask Him to save certain persons whom we all have alike in our minds, and purposes, and prayers. I tell you, my friends, that it is my honest conviction that if we do this, we shall have to thank God for the salvation and eternal life of hundreds of souls.

3. Let us unite after the same definite manner to pray for the agencies employed, that they may accomplish the avowed ends they have in view. The interest which would then be felt concerning such agencies would be of a very different kind from that which is felt now. The Sunday-school would be a centre of sympathy, thought, and hope around and upon which the soul of the Church would rest like some brooding dove; and both children and teachers would receive the grace. The prayer-meetings would become the resort of largely increased numbers, because you would expect there evidences of the Divine presence and power such as you now only expect to read of in your Bible. And, to you, the preaching of the Gospel, the unfolding of the Word of Life, would be a service for God,

and souls, no longer delegated to the minister's sole responsibility, but you would know that its power and fruitfulness depended on your united prayers—and if, as even then might sometimes be, there should seem a failure and a disappointment, that would drive you again to your knees, and to your God, in heart-bursting cries for Divine power upon the preacher, and living energy in the word.

Talk of revival, brethren, this would be revival! The heavens would open—the spiritual rains would descend—the power of God would come forth—the liberty of soul and heart would be experienced—the cloud would roll away—and the dark and troubled, the cold and unbelieving spirit that too long has weighed us down, would vanish like chaff night mist before the rising sun. Sinners would be converted to God, and all about us the question would ring in our ears from anxious lips—"Men and brethren, what must we do?"

My people, I call upon you to unite in prayer. Constitute yourselves a praying league. Agree together upon what shall be your prayer—and then pray until heaven is shaken by your spiritual violence—and you take it by force!

I urge you to this, in the name of service for Christ. No lower consideration than this—Service for Christ!

I put this subject prayerfully and hopefully before you, praying that the Holy Ghost will enlighten and direct all thought, and mould all will in the matter; and that Jesus will see the fulfilment of His own gracious designs in the revival of the Church, and the salvation of the unsaved who are upon His people's hearts.

GOD'S WAYS.

BY EMILIE SEARCHFIELD.

GOD'S ways are not as our ways! "Ah," you will say, "I always knew as much as that,"; but, dear reader, have you ever paused and considered the difference between the two ways?

God's way of leading the people of Israel through the wilderness, has often been spoken of by us, as a fitting emblem of the Christian pilgrimage; and there is a great comfort in considering how that way provided even for the minor trials of the journey, and gradually we learn to look to Him in all things.

But the history of that forty years in the wilderness also tells us, that Moses sinned against God, and, as a natural result, was punished accordingly. We do not read that he asked the Divine judge to retract the word which had gone forth against him; but, if it must have been hard to think, that after leading a rebellious people through such dangers, he was not to be allowed to enter the promised land of rest. It was what he had ardently longed for, also it would have been no punishment; and his example stands before us to this day, a burning light, to direct us in similar instances.

When, through our own misdeeds, the whole current of our life is turned aside, and we know that what we once valued and lost will never, never return, may we, like Moses, do our duty still, treasuring in God's way; and when at last we reach Beth-Peor, and the grand struggle is before us, to try us, whether we are really content to keep to the new ways, punishment though it is, may He who chose for us give us grace to walk with unflinching step up its lonely height, fearing nothing so long as we are sure of God's presence. Then, perhaps, like Moses, we may find sweet comfort even upon its rocky summit; or, it may be, as with him, that no more will be expected of us. The struggle of life may not indeed end there, but a full, bright, loving future may begin for us as for him; only while he breathed his last on the mountain top, and the hand of God buried his poor tired body, it will be only our old chequered existence we shall leave behind, and God will bury it where it will never more be brought to light. The path awaiting us may be but similar to the one we have already trodden, or it may, on the contrary, be so full of blessings, that even in our most sanguine moments we have never dreamt of such bliss. But whether this or that, a time of utter dependence upon God—a time of entire trust in His power and strength—will bring its own reward.

Only trust Him! for His ways, though not as our ways, are truth and love.

O lonely grave in Moab's land!
O dark Beth-Peor's heart!
Speak to these curious hearts of ours,
And teach them to be still.
God hath His mysteries of grace,
Ways that we cannot tell;
He hides them deep, like the hidden sleep
Of him He loved so well.

"BEACON LIGHTS."

BY EMILIE NEARBYFIELD.

A CHRISTMAS BLESSING.

"Bitter is patience, but its fruit is sweet."

IT was the morning of Christmas Eve, and the weather was raw, foggy, and cold; even policeman N 212 could scarce keep himself from freezing; so at least he grumbled to himself; but yet, when he came in sight of Jinks' coffee-stall, a something like a thanksgiving rose from his heart—"he was glad to be what he was"—which I suppose meant, that he was glad to be a policeman. Oh, those poor, shivering people—men, women and boys! they drank their cups of coffee with an appetite many an aristocrat might have envied, and

that was about the only point that was at all caviabile in their position; for the cold was piercing, and the coppers scant to pay for even this small refreshment; and, poor creatures, they most of them shivered as they turned away, to go on to the daily toil which lay beyond. One boy, without hat or shoes, had been creeping closer and closer to the charcoal stove for some time past, and Jinks, who was not an unfriendly man in his way, said nothing; till at last one woman, in drinking her coffee, managed to spill a little on his foot, so that the boy cried out. A sharp "Begone," from the man's lips, however, caused the tears to flow down the grimy cheeks—tears which the scald could not elicit—the cold was so terrible to him, poor boy, with no breakfast, no home, and as he would himself have said, "no nothing." The woman, a poor, faded creature, surveyed him pityingly. "Don't send him away, Mister," she said, "jest let him have what he wants."

"And that's about everythink," replied the man; "and as I don't keep everythink here, I think as how he'd better be off."

The woman had emptied her cup, and was surveying a bit of dry bread she held in her hand. It seemed no dainty to her, evidently she was not so hungry as some of the man's customers; still she eyed the steaming coffee in a longing sort of way—oh, it was so very cold! Again the boy shuffled his naked toes near to the genial warmth, the woman saw it, and it settled there and then a point she had been weighing in her mind.

"Let him have a cup, Mister," she said softly; and then, as the boy looked his thanks, she pushed her hunch of bread forward into his hands as well.

It did her good to see him eat and drink, for with her

empty cup still in her hand, she stood a moment to watch; then others came, her standing room was required, so she slipped the coppers into the stall-keeper's hand and went away—away to her day's work of charring. It was always the same for her, day in, day out, and the hard work was not the worst of it. She was so poor and her clothes so worn, that even the servants in the great houses she went to, looked down upon her as a creature utterly beneath their notice, while as for the ladies of the households, they would just as leave have taken a seat on their own doorstep, side by side with a crossing sweeper, as have deigned to talk with or speak to her. And yet, if they had only known, this woman had been and still was, very faithful to her mission in life, although so wretched and miserable.

Well, the boy went away too, but not to work, for he had nothing to do, and had never yet possessed even sufficient



"With her empty cup still in her hand, she stood a moment to watch."

to buy an old broom to keep a crossing. His was just no living at all, only a bare existence, indeed, he often wondered, this boy who was so cold and hungry, of what use he was in the world, and why he did not die out and be no more, like some other folks he had known in his time. He had no father or mother—he had no idea of why he had come into being at all; but oh, he heartily wished at times that he could go out again; and so the tale of his little life is told. This morning though, he felt cheerful compared with other days, and actually whistled as he went on his way in quest of errands to run, horses to hold, and must I say it? pockets to pick. Noon came, but not a single bit of luck had come in his way; he was hungry, hungry and cold, and I think would probably have sat down upon some doorstep and slept, for the cold was causing a numbness to creep through his veins, a numbness which would soon have been succeeded by death had he slept for long. The police were, however, too anxious to do their duty, to allow of any such gentle reprieve to the boy's woes; so on, on he wandered, utterly wearied of life and all belonging to it. He paused at last in a highly aristocratic neighbourhood, and then, having eluded the police for awhile, he sat down upon a step so white and pure, that it seemed nothing short of desecration for him, Tim, even to go near it. Only once was he obliged to move, and that was when a lady, haughty-looking and richly-dressed, came out of the house, and then—but Tim was fast forgetting all about it, he was fast losing consciousness, he seemed even to be forgetting the cold, the hunger, and the misery which had hitherto seemed to bind him so fast to life. The short winter's daylight had faded, the streets were ablaze with gas, yet still Tim sat on, nobody had noticed him—the lady might

have returned, he might even have got up to let her pass; he could not say instinct, would prompt him so far; but now the drowsy stupor of death seemed to be fast stealing over him. But not yet, little Tim; not yet, your time is not come, you have still a bright life and sunshine before you, if you did but comprehend it. The area door just below where he sat and half slept, was opened suddenly, angry voices fell on his ear, then a moment later a woman swept fiercely up the steps, dashed back the gate on the top, and then r. un madly away down the street.

It roused Tim. He rubbed his eyes, and gazed after the retreating figure in a misty sort of way; he had recognised her, the woman who ran, to be the one who had been so kind to him in the morning. Trouble had come to her, he had no doubt whatever of the fact, and she had shown him such kindness as he had never known before. His wits had been keenly alive in the morning, and he had noted the longing looks of the woman at the smoking coffee; aye, even at the very moment when Jinks had been giving the cup into his (Tim's) hand. He, unlike many more favoured ones of earth, had taken the gift therefore at its true cost; and now, full of numbness as he was, he arose and tottered away in the direction the woman had taken. On, on, a weary way he went; away from the warmth of the more sheltered streets, on to the damp and mist of the river-side. Whether he indeed saw the woman going on before, or whether it was only *God* who led him in the right way, he never knew, still he gathered life and warmth as he went on, and by-and-by, as I have said, he stood upon the banks of the river. There were but few people there, and only one solitary policeman was in sight, yet Tim's eye took in her he sought, took her in plainly enough as she wandered aimlessly up and down by the water's edge. The numbness seemed to creep over him again as he stood; he did not go and speak to her, but merely crouched where he was, by a lamp-post out of the policeman's sight, and then he died and once more forgot everything.

The people had all gone away, save the policeman and one friend, and both together they paced backwards and forwards quite at ease; for they had not seen Tim, and the woman they had some little time before watched so carefully, was now gone away with the rest. Then, the policeman being cold, and seeing no need of such over strictness to his duty, turned aside at the suggestion of his friend, just to get a glass at the latter's house, and "a sniff of the fire too," as he himself said, gazing around upon the deserted scene of his watch—and so he went away. A minute later, and a piercing shriek rent the air. The woman, whom we will call for the time being, one utterly bereft of common-sense, had been only in hiding; and although for an hour past she had been meditating this act of self-destruction, still now, when the chill of the fearful water had touched her, she had as it were all unconsciously cried out for aid. It had been somewhat like the chill of death to her, the death she had sought; but we who know how weak human nature is, know of a surety that it is life, sweet life, we crave at the very last, no matter how depending we have been before. Tim started up. Once more death was warded off him, once more the blood coursed weakly in his veins, once more he rubbed his poor, dim eyes with his half-frozen fingers; and then, as he discerned a black figure struggling in the water, he, without thought of any kind, threw himself in as well. Poor boy! it seemed about the only thing he could do to try and save her, and she had been so kind to him! Both would have gone down of course, but One who gave His life for ours, One who knew, too, that little Tim was, all unknown to himself, treading in His holy footsteps, was near at this Christmas-time to help His poor, helpless children. A barge came heavily up the river, the bargemen saw the two drowning ones, they were in time, and—thank God both were saved!

They brought them back to consciousness, and the poor woman wept her thanks. She was in her right mind now, and she feared death, although but a few brief minutes before she had deemed it about the best thing which could come to her. So the police heard naught of the matter, and when they reached a landing-place they were set ashore, warmed, dried, and fed, and, will you believe it, with just a faint glimmering of hope in both their hearts. They had been delivered from a dreadful fate, and when a danger is well over, although perhaps things are not in the least altered, we all feel the renewal of life, we all feel the more ready to grapple with difficulties, and often I believe, our efforts being more hearty and hopeful, we meet with the success which we

have all our lives been trying to obtain. It was Christmas-time, too, but I doubt if Tim new aught of the true meaning of the blessed season, the woman did, because of the grand houses in which she had worked, and because of the dim teachings of her youthful days. Still Christmas was nothing to her—nothing. The bells broke the early morning stillness, and they sounded merry and blithe; and once or twice the woman laughed softly, as she and Tim crept into doorways and dark corners to elude the police on their way, for hopeful as she was, she dreaded the police, dreaded to be questioned as to being found abroad at that unearthly hour.

At length the collar was reached wherein the woman's children lay in the utter unconsciousness of slumber. It was a dank, unhealthy place, full of fearful smells, and rarely with light enough for the pursuance of ordinary household work. We will, however, say no more; but ask you instead to listen to the bells and their glad, glad tale—the same which the angels bore to the shepherds of old, on the sweet moonlit plains of Bethlehem. Tim and the woman heard it too, but the music could not in anywise make up for the wretchedness of the place. Hope died out of the latter's heart when she saw all as it was before, so that she sank upon the floor and shed bitter tears, almost wishing that she had been let die, and so have done with her misery for ever. Tim heard her sobs, but the bit of candle which the woman had lighted upon their going in was fast dying out, so that he could not see her face plainly; he, however, remembered the coffee; and creeping up to her side, put his poor, dirty hand in hers, in real love, pity, and sympathy. Then, from the utter fullness of her heart she told her tale, how that a brooch had been lost in the grand house, and she accused of the theft, there having been no one but she and the owner of the trinket, who had entered the room at all. She had got away, and escaped prison only by bursting from the woman who held her, till the police should come. "Not that I care for prison," she wailed forth. "I have kept them," and she pointed towards her sleeping children, "because I couldn't bear being parted from them I've worked and slaved, bringing home a good part of my own food for them, for a woman's money ain't much to keep four mouths going, and rent besides. Now they'll have to go to the work, and I as well, unless—" and her voice grew hollow and hard, "I'm a bit more lucky than I was last night."

Tim did not answer. Was he asleep, poor boy? Likely enough! By-and-by he roused himself wearily, and asked (for sleep was again coming to his poor, tired body), "What wor the thing like, missis? Wor it goolly and shmy like?" "Yes, but that makes no odds, as I can see," and the woman seemed half angry, by her way of speaking, to think that he should have asked so silly a question.

"No, no, 'course it don't," and yet the boy mused and mused, till sick and utterly worn out he slept, deeply, heavily, there on the damp floor as he was.

The sun, the Christmas sun, shone brightly in through the windows of a house in Eaton-square. The family had wished each other a merry Christmas all the way round, forgetful, utterly forgetful, I fear, of their poorer brethren hard by. If we have naught to give (and surely, surely when so much has been given, we can scarce one of us be so poor as that), we can at least bestow a prayer, a loving thought, upon this day of days. But in this household it was not wilful forgetfulness, it was but the forgetfulness of those who, having never known poverty, give not so much as one thought upon the matter. A servant entered the room, and the master of the house glanced inquiringly round.

"Please, sir, there's a boy at the door who says as he knows somethink of Missis's brooch, and he won't go, he says, till he's seen her."

A tall lady with a haughty bearing, the one who had passed Tim in the doorway the day before, rose from the table to leave the room. "Bring him into the hall, James," was all she said, and then stately as a judge, which she was soon to be, she swept on to where the boy was already waiting.

"Please ma'am, be you she as has lost summat goolly?" asked poor, trembling Tim, as he shivered up to the lady, all in a fright at her very grandeur.

"Yes—and I think I am to understand that you know something about it?"

"Yes, ma'am." He paused, and seemed as though intently examining her countenance, then once more he continued, "Yes, you be the one as I see'd go out o' this very door as I was a-settin' on the step to rest yesterday, and I see'd a summat goolly ashinin' in the ragged bits o' your shawl, and

I minds it well, 'cause I tried to get it, on'y I wor too tired to grab un."

"Is that all you know?"

"Yes, I never had un, 'cause I could'n."

The lady smiled incredulously. Of course he was but come to get something for what he had told, or else to clear the charwoman, who was doubtless his mother: still she would go herself and see; if it had been so when she went out, it might (the brooch, I mean) be still clinging to the shawl even now. She told the boy to wait a minute, and then she went upstairs, and directly after came down, bearing the lost trinket in her hand. Oh, there was such a change in her look and voice, for bitter sorrow was in her heart, in that she had condemned the innocent. "My boy, what can I do to make up for my unkindness to your mother—anything you ask I will give."

"She ain't my mother, but she gi'ed me some coffee," Tim said shyly. And then he told the whole of his and the woman's tale, to which all the family listened in awe-stricken silence—such misery afloat in the world, such misery caused by their doings, such misery unaided by them, and Christmas all around. And they remedied it there and then, they gave Christmas to many, although they judged themselves hardly and called it the eleventh hour; and Tim and the widow, and many another learnt of Jesus, and of His love and patience under the trials of our flesh; learnt also a mighty lesson—to bear bravely on and wait for God's ending, whatever may befall.

OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

- (1) *Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.*
- (2) *The Royal Invitation.* By Frances R. Havergal. 1s.
- (3) *Loyal Responses.* By Frances R. Havergal. 1s.
[London: J. Nisbet and Co.
- (4) *The Little Printer Boy.* 1s.
- (5) *The Gate and the Glory Beyond It.* 1s.
- (6) *The White Rose of Deerham.* 1s.
- (7) *Gabriella, or the Spirit of Song.* 1s.
- (8) *New Coins from Old Gold.* By Thomas Champness. 3s. 6d.
- (9) *Our Blue Jackets.* 3s. 6d.
- (10) *That Boy: Who Shall Have Him?* By Rev. W. H. Daniels, A.M. 5s.
- (11) *The Mother's Friend, Volume.* 1s. 6d.
[London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- (12) *Biblical Things not Generally Known.*
- (13) *After Work.* Vol. I. New Series.
- (14) *Anecdotes of Celebrities.* 1s.
[London: Elliot Stock.
- (15) *Miss Sherwood's Moral Tales. Think before you Act; The Fall of Pride; The Traveller; Grandmama Parker; Frank Beauchamp; Jack the Sailor Boy; The Lost Trunk; The White Heron; The White Pigeon; Duty is Safety; Martin Crook.* 6d. each.
- (16) *The Golden Text Book.*
- (17) *Bible Gems Series of Scripture Cards.*
- (18) *The Mother's Almanack.* 1879. 1d.
- (19) *The Life of Luther.* By A.L.O.E. 1s.
- (20) *The Life of Christ.* 1d.
- (21) *The Umbrella, and Jesus Saves.* By C. R. Howell. 2d. each.
[London: Book Society.
- (22) *The Earham Temperance Series.* 6d.
- (23) *John B. Gough.* (Wall Paper.) 1d.
[London: S. W. Partridge and Co.
- (24) *The Great Apostle.* By Rev. Jabez Marrat.
- (25) *The Story of a Peninsular Veteran.*
[London: Wesleyan Conference Office.
- (26) *Selected Gems for the American Organ.* 1s.
[London: S. G. & F. C. Dennis.
- (27) *Flowers from the Garden of God.* By Rev. Gordon Calthrop, M.A.
- (28) *The Quiver.* Vol. XIII
- (29) *See Willie Winkie.* By C. L. Matheux.
- (30) *Shall We Know One Another?* By Rev. J. C. Ryle, M.A.
[London: Cassell, Petter, and Galpin.
- (31) *Stones of England. Westminster Abbey.* By Wansett Boulding. 3s. 6d.
[London: Bemrose and Sons.

ALTHOUGH the editions of the "Pilgrim's Progress" may be counted by the dozen, yet the book before us (1) has a place of its own, and worthily fills it withal. The forty illustrations by Sir John Gilbert, in his own inimitable style, greatly enhance the value of the volume, the get-up of which is in all respects worthy of its publishers.

Yet another dainty little volume by Miss Havergal (2); "Daily Thoughts on Coming to Christ," is its second title, and most happily and winningly does she descend thereon. As a corollary to this and the three preceding books in the series, the authoress has issued another (3) in which she says, "As my little series of daily books . . . aimed at calling attention to the royal utterances of our King, it seemed that *loyal responses* should follow them." The result is thirty one most charming little poems, gracefully written, and breathing a spirit of pure devotion. We heartily commend all five to those of our readers who have not seen them,

Four of Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton's admirable shilling series are before us. One, by Vicomtesse de Kerkadeo (4), is a story of humble life, written in an easy, unaffected style; another, a tale of the Franco-Prussian War (5), is the story of a gentle Frenchwoman and her son; the third (6) is a story of the times of the grand old Puritans; and the last (7) a touching memoir of a blind girl, who, by her unblemished life, aided by the mystic power of song, exerted no little influence for good on those by whom she was surrounded.

The next volume we have to notice (8) is one of the most practical we have read for a long time. It is a series of homely, everyday sermons, piquant enough to attract the duller reader's attention, short and earnest, and truly catholic. We should like to see this book in every young men's association in the country, and believe it would exert not a little influence on the social and moral characters of all those who perused it.

The name of Miss Weston acts like a charm on our blue-jackets, and good cause have they to be grateful to her. The narrative of her work (9) is intensely interesting, showing what one good woman can do, unaided for the greater part, save by her unwavering confidence in God's providence. What great things have resulted from her labour of love, and how the organisations arising therefrom are carried on, are fully told in this attractive volume, which we most heartily commend.

We don't like "That Boy" (10), though, doubtless, many will. We read the greater part of it in its serial form in an American magazine, and were then struck with what we should term its flippancy, though some may vote it as mere sarcasm. Powerfully written in some portions it undoubtedly is, but there seems to us a lamentable want of soundness underlying all. The conclusion is unnecessarily repellent.

Many a cottage home would be brightened by the advent of "The Mother's Friend" (11). Bright and cheery inside and out, full of good moral lessons, and attractive withal, this little volume should be sold by thousands.

A most useful volume next claims our attention (12). Modestly does the title-page announce it as "a collection of facts, notes, and information concerning much that is rare, quaint, curious, obscure, and little known in relation to Biblical subjects." Patiently and thoroughly has the compilation been made, and we heartily commend it to all studious readers.

Bright and cheerful is the volume so aptly entitled "After Work" (13), and many cottage homes would be enlivened by its possession.

What good end is served by the issue of Mr. Barnwell's "Anecdotes" (14) we are at a loss to discover, unless it be to prove the charm of variety, so amply exemplified in the varying tints of ink and paper used in its production.

Mrs. Sherwood's Tales (15) are again re-issued in a cheap, serviceable form, and many benevolent people will be glad to have them for distribution amongst the youngsters of their acquaintance.

How many more text-books? Yet the last issued by the Book Society (16) can hold its own with any for compactness, attractiveness, and cheapness.

The Scripture Cards (17) just published by the same society, are cheap, well conceived, and very attractively printed, and reflect great credit on all concerned.

A good sheet almanack is that for which Mr. Groom is responsible (18); it should hang in every cottage-home.

The life of the great apostle of the Reformation is clearly and tersely told in the little volume by A. L. O. E. (19).

A wonder, even in this age of marvels, is the abridged edition of Fleetwood's "Life of Our Saviour" (20). One hundred and eighty pages of small type for one penny! It ought to be sold by hundreds of thousands.

Mr. Howell writes earnestly, devoutly, and practically. Many thousands of his little tracts (21) have been issued, and greatly have they been blessed. May he live long to write many more, and may they do their part in winning souls to the Saviour.

A very cheap and attractive series of temperance tracts is that just issued by Mr. Smithies (22). Well printed, on thick tinted paper, with an attractive frontispiece, surely a packet of twelve sixteen-page tracts for sixpence deserves a large sale, and we hope will get it.

Mr. Gough very appropriately forms the subject of one of the most effective of the illustrated wall papers (23) that we have seen.

Mr. Marrat's book (24) fills a place hitherto vacant. To

HEART LONGINGS.

"I do not want one thought that is not fit for Heaven." "If I see one passing the street who causes a wrong thought, I think how would that look in Heaven.—See Bishop Hamlin's Life, p. 516.

Words and Music by L. HARTSOUGH.

Harmonized by Miss ALICE HARTSOUGH.

1. "I do not want one thought," dear Lord, "That is not fit for Heav'n," May ev - ery wish and
2. No words I'd speak would cause Thee pain, Or e'en the least re - gret, No deeds at - tempt Thou

hope I have, By Thee to me be given; I want no vi - sion but the pure, On
wouldst not do, Lord, keep me at Thy feet. A ten - der eye, a shrink - ing heart, All

High would all ad - mire: . . . What an - gel minds would blush to know, That I would not de - sire.
owned and filled by Thee, . . . Would meet the high - est wish I have, Oh make me, keep me free.

3. No step I'd take but only there,
Where God's dear Spirit leads,
No route to press my feet along,
But where are holy deeds,
Thy hand, Thy hand, dear Saviour, now,
Must evermore clasp mine,
So I move on in all Thy ways,
Forever, wholly, Thine.

4. But how can such a worm as I
So purely walk, and free?
Or, how can such a heart as mine,
Turn wholly, Lord, to Thee?
Thou, Thou alone, canst make the change,
And fill the Throne within,
Control the springs of thought and deed.

young people much the same as Dean Howson's well-known volume is to every reading man, this succinct and interesting narrative cannot fail to be of great service.

An interesting volume is that by a late serjeant (25) telling of the principal events of the Peninsular War, in which he was engaged.

Mr. Dennis has produced a speciality (26) for which organ-players will thank him. The gems are well-named "selected," notably "The Orphan's Prayer," and the exquisite *morceau* from "Lieder ohne Worte." We are glad this first issue is to be followed by others.

The name of Gordon Calthrop is a guarantee of something worth reading, and the volume just issued (27) is well worthy of its author. The addresses, intended to be read aloud to children, are all of a popular character; winning in their style, easily understood, free from vexatious points of doctrine. They are exceptionally suitable for the purpose for which they are intended.

Again that old favourite, *The Quiver* (28) is before us. We can say very little new about it, and can only express our unqualified approbation of this undoubtedly the best magazine of its kind. The list of contributors alone would sell the volume, while the almost bewildering table of contents, ranging from the pleasing tales for the youngsters to the more solid articles with which the book abounds, present such a splendid *menu* as has seldom if ever been rivalled.

A first-rate tale for boys is that of a waif of the sea, by M. Matcaux (29). We read it with interest in its serial form, and can speak with confidence as to its sound common-sense and attractive style. The external appearance of the book is all that could be desired.

Canon Ryle's little volume (30) is a perfect gem. Masterly, yet simple; concise, yet sifting his subject thoroughly; pronounced in his assertions, yet most catholic in his deductions. The Canon's volume fully deserves to have reached, as it has done, its thirty-first thousand.

Mr. Boulding is but little known in the world of letters, but whatever he puts his hand to is well done. The last effort of his pen (31) is in verse, and purely historical, as the title indicates. He has chosen a grand subject, and right well has he used it; the venerable abbey, with its brilliant roll of martyrs and of heroes has here a chronicler that does her no mean justice, but in glowing rhythm and ennobling stanzas tells again the story of her fame.

HOME DECORATION.

DECORATIVE art was once known only to the rich, but now it is familiar to the middle classes, who crave forms of beauty. Let us dwell for a few moments on houses and the art of furnishing rooms. Rooms are quick tell tales of character and taste, or the lack of it, and each room should express something and be in harmony with itself. There are elegant drawing-rooms which chill you as you enter, and simple, cosy sitting rooms in which every chair says, "Do sit down with me," and a welcome comes from the very walls. Household taste is but a synonym for household culture, and she is a wise woman who surrounds those she loves with objects of beauty. It is not an impossible feat, for women can accomplish much in this direction. I know one who has changed, as if by magic, an ugly seven-gabled house into a marvel of beauty. It is by a thousand little felicities, a pretty bracket, an artistic gem of a picture, statuette or bust, a gauzy curtain veiling some little recess, a pretty hanging basket, a graceful stand of flowers, a tiny cabinet of choice treasures, a cosy chair, or comfortable divan, these and many another object, trifling in itself and easily manufactured, are the "traps to catch sunbeams," which shimmer and lighten up and glow through the dwelling where taste dwells in unity with utilities and love.

CHRISTMAS LOVE.

By AUNT MAY.



The love of Christ constraineth us.

IT was Christmas Eve, and Harry Vane walked, or rather limped, through the village. A group of boys lay in his way, and at a glance he saw that they were teasing Jim Jones, a bad boy, 'tis true, but one who had never had any one to teach him better. His home was with old Silas Bla; though how it was so I can tell no more than you. Still, I think that Silas found him useful in lighting his fire, and doing little things in the house; for Silas had no wife, so you may fancy the life they led in the dirty cottage they called home, and to which Silas staggered as tipsy as he could well be, every night in the whole year.

Well, it was Christmas Eve, and because of that, Jim thought that he should like to earn a penny: all the other boys had oranges, whereas he had none. So as the woman in the cottage had by had promised him one, if he would but sweep the snow well away from her doorway, he was, poor boy, trying to do his best in return for the coming Christmas joy. But the other boys were hindering him, and now had actually knocked him down in the snow, and were keeping him there too, as Harry Vane came up, and stood with his crutch firmly planted, so as not to share Jim's fate. He feared the boys, but he was resolved to take Jim's part, so he said mildly, in his usual timid way, "Leave him alone." But Jim was in a great passion, and so cared neither for friend nor foe. Harry was weaker than himself, and he struck blindly at him and his crutch as well, shouting out at the same time cruel words which went straight to Harry's tender heart. "Ah, well, 'tis a queer world!" poor Harry sighed, as he limped away, the cry of "Hoppy" echoing after him down the lane.

But that night there was a cry of "Fire! Fire!" and looking out through his window, Harry saw that it was Silas Blake's cottage from which the flames came, and there in the flickering, uncertain light, he saw, too, poor Jim shivering in the cold; for he had had but scant time to wrap clothes about him, ere he had been dragged from the burning pile. No one thought of the boy as he stood—and he was burnt a little, too—no one, I mean, but Harry Vane, and he, weakly cripple

though he was, remembering as he did Jim's cruel words and blows, dressed himself in all haste and went out. It was Christmas time! Somewhere the glad bells were pealing; somewhere waiting hearts were welcoming Jesus anew; and, full of the sweet tenderness of theseason, Harry made his way to Jim's side. "Jim, come home to our house," and he touched the shivering boy on the arm.

Jim started, and turned first red and then pale. But just now Jim stood to Harry in the stead of the dear Saviour, who when on earth had had no place to lay His head, so he would take no refusal. He would act kindly, lovingly, thinking of the dear Lord who takes all acts of love as done to Himself. So he drew Jim back to his own home, and coaxed his mother into asking him to spend Christmas Day there, as his own dear guest. And so they had a merry time, and after that the poor orphan was never so lonely again, although he went back to old Silas, who had another house, and lighted his fires and waited upon him as before. Harry was his friend, and Jesus was with them both.

Dear children, can you not give a Christmas joy? Can you not be a friend to *someone* in the stead of the Babe of Bethlehem, that so He may look down from Heaven upon you, and prepare a place for you beyond the clear, bright stars? Jesus said when on earth, "Ye have the poor always with you, but Me ye have not always," which means that *they*, and not He, stand in need of our love and help, and more especially when we remember that now at Christmas time He came into the world for us, a little babe without a cradle or a home. We were not alive then to carry him, as did the "wise men from the East," "gold, and frankincense, and myrrh"; but we can give Him our worship and love, and we can give the best we have to those of His people who are about our paths. We can -

Help *someone* to keep Christmas morn,
The day our Saviour Christ was born.

ACCIDENTS.

By REV. J. H. McCARTY.

ONE-HALF of the world is quite forgetful of the other half. There is a wedding-party in one house, while a funeral *cortige* passes from the door of the house adjoining. Here they are singing and making merry, and just across the way they are watching by the bedside of the sick and dying. Plenty crowns the board in one house, while want pinches in another. Human life is made up of these extremes.

But, then, we do not believe that, because there are sorrows and sickness and want and death in the world, there should be no cheer and gladness. If my neighbour is too poor to own a carriage, that is no reason why I should not. If my next door neighbour has the gout, that is no reason why I should screw up my face as if I had it too.

The more of cheer and joy there is in the world, the better for the world. We should sympathise with those in affliction, and help them; but we should not aim at hanging the whole world in weeds of mourning. All accidents affect, more or less closely, human life. We are everywhere exposed to them. In this world neither life nor property is anywhere safe, excepting in a comparative sense.

There is in us, and in all our works, an element of frailty—imperfection. The laws of nature are perfect; the instincts of the animal world operate with certainty—animals make no mistakes: but when you come to man, the being of reason, then you find a being of error in judgment and sinfulness of heart. Let him be as careful as he will over all his actions, yet he will find himself where he will say: "If I had done this, or left undone that, this would not have happened."

Then there is in the very constitution of things an element of weakness. The very rocks are temporary: they crumble under the hand of time. The granite or iron shaft will fall; the most gigantic engine has its weak part, which, under some pressure, will give way. The steamer may go safely on many a voyage over the stormy sea, triumphing over wind and wave; but in the end sinks to the bottom, or falls a prey to the consuming flames.

The human judgment is weak; and often, when man would be true to himself and to others, he makes mistakes, and ruin comes on others, disasters ensue, which shroud whole communities in gloom. We are bound to protect life and limb, but we must be merciful in our judgments of men. The patient may die, though the best medical skill be

employed. The disaster will come on life and property, do what we will.

If left to us, none would die; for we always seek to prolong life. And, when our friends die, we say, if we had used this remedy or that, they might have lived. No machines would break, if we had our way. No accidents would occur if we could prevent them.

Alh, this human frailty, this innate imperfection in man, which shows itself in all his works and in all his actions, we cannot think of it without a deep feeling of humility: This frailty and death are implied in the text, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." God means to execute the law of mortality in this world. The man of health and strength often falls to the ground in a moment, without any assignable cause. Infancy and age alike perish from the earth. The pestilence walks with deadly tread among the children of men, sparing none. The earth is made to quake by some invisible power, and cities are toppled into ruins, and life and property are wasted with lavish hand. The rains descend from the heavens, and floods are created which sweep away the abodes of men with all they hold dear.

Build as strong as you will, be as careful as you may; and yet, with humanity as it is, and with material things as they are, it can be said truly, "There is nothing sure but heaven."

OUR NOTE BOOK.

THE war-cloud has burst over Afghanistan, and preparations continue to be made. By some means guns and ammunition find their way to the dominions of Shere Ali, and the spark requires but to be kindled and the holocaust will be in a blaze. The price to be paid will be as usual, several millions of money, many thousands of lives, and at least five times as many widows and orphans. In these "latter days" there are still many "men who delight in war."

The autumnal conference of the Church Association has been held at Derby, and was largely attended.

The Baptist Union of Scotland has held its annual meetings at Edinburgh. The Union has just entered on its first decade. When it commenced there were 50 churches in connection with it, and a membership of 3,850. There are now 81 churches, with 8,163 members. In the Sabbath-schools there are 7,670 young people.

The last Conference of the Wesleyan Methodists appointed a committee to consider the best method of relieving the existing embarrassments of various Connexional funds, and providing, as far as possible, against the recurring accumulation of debt, as also of raising the means for the erection of a new branch of the Theological Institution, and for other pressing purposes. The committee met in the Centenary Hall, on Oct. 29, and it was resolved to raise £200,000, to be called "The Wesleyan Methodist Thanksgiving Fund."

Ruth Elliott (by which name she was best known), after a lengthened period of suffering, which did not, however, prevent her from exercising her gifts as a charming storyteller, has died at the early age of twenty-eight years. Miss Peck (for that was her real name) was the daughter of the Rev. W. P. Peck, Wesleyan minister, of Chelmsford. In her tales she always wrote "with a purpose," and she had gained a high place as a Christian novelist. Her remains were committed to their last earthly rest by the Rev. W. Statham, at Abney Park Cemetery, Stoke Newington.

The Rev. Thomas Spurgeon, son of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, has returned from a lengthened tour in Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania, his return having been hastened on account of the recent illness of Mrs. Spurgeon, which it was feared had assumed dangerous features, which have happily abated. It is stated that Mr. Thomas Spurgeon's success as a preacher during his tour was very great.

The merry peal of St. Paul's Cathedral bells is now frequently heard. They are twelve in number, the total weight being 271 cwt., and the cost about £4 500. They were dedicated by a religious ceremony, the Bishop of London officiating, on Friday, Nov. 1. Many thousands of people assembled in St. Paul's Churchyard and the adjacent streets to hear the first peal, which stirred up the echoes of the greater part of the city.

At the Exeter Diocesan Conference (Bishop Temple presiding) discussions took place in reference to extempore

preaching. A proposal was made to constitute a new order of voluntary lay helpers, who should preach in churches and perform all clerical duties except the administration of the Sacraments. The general tone was in favour of extempore preaching, and against the reading of sermons in the pulpit.

Our Baptist friends in the metropolis are going ahead with their tabernacles. The Metropolitan Tabernacle of course stands pre-eminently. Following in its wake, and either as offshoots, or in some way the result of the great Newington Butts organisation, are the West London Tabernacle, the East London Tabernacle, and now the Shoreditch Tabernacle. Each, however, is a distinct church, and has no connection with the Metropolitan beyond that of the child to its parent—the presiding pastors of each hailing from Mr. Spurgeon's College. The latest, of which the memorial stones have been laid recently, is the Shoreditch Tabernacle. It will cost £9,000, and is designed to seat 2 000 persons.

It is stated that a committee is being formed in Paris with a view to a permanent International Exhibition at the Crystal Palace. French exhibitors are invited to transfer their productions from the Champ de Mars to Sydenham, and thus realise the original idea of the Crystal Palace as a cosmopolitan museum and warehouse.

The American people seem to have given a warm welcome to Dean Stanley. He has mingled with the various religious denominations without restraint, and has shown the breadth of his sympathies by preaching in their pulpits and taking part in their *soirées*. Speaking at a recent meeting at New York, he said he felt the necessity of hurrying back to England to welcome to Westminster Abbey, and to listen there to the sermon of, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland.

After a brief stay in London, where he took an unostentatious part in one or two of the Rev. W. H. M. H. Aitken's meetings, Mr. Sankey has gone to the continent for a brief rest before commencing his contemplated evangelistic work in this country.

A thieves' supper was held recently at the Mission Hall, Little Wild-street, Drury-lane. About 250 of the unenviable class who were invited sat down to a sumptuous repast, of which they partook with a heartiness of appetite which witnessed to their enjoyment. Mr. Charley, M.P. and Common Serjeant, presided. The superintendent of the mission stated that during the present year 251 criminals had been taken in hand, 61 of whom were now at work, 56 had been sent to sea, 10 had absconded, 10½ had been relieved with money and clothes, 14 had their fares paid to their native place, while the rest had been sent to the various homes in connection with the mission. The Governor of the City Prison, Holloway, and other prison officials gave addresses, and some reformed thieves bore their testimony to the good being done by the mission.

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