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PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XVII.]

TORONTO, APRIL 24, 1897.

[No. 17.]

QUICK.

Oh, how many hearts are breaking!
Oh, how many hearts are aching
For a loving touch and token,
For the word you might have spoken!
Say not in the time of sorrow,
"I will soothe their grief to-morrow."
Prove your friendship, lest they doubt it!
Go at once; be quick about it!

A TALK WITH THE GIRLS.

Do not toss your head and thrown down the paper when you have read the heading of this article, my pretty one, and say, with a curl of the lip, "There's another lecture," for you are mistaken. I dislike personal lectures, too, but I would like to gather you all around me for a little chat about some things of interest to you and me. Having lived a few years longer than you, I have learned some things which perhaps might do you good.

The world needs bright, cheerful, Christian girls. There is enough of gloom and sadness. Faces become clouded, because of the heartache beneath, and too many turn to the vain amusements of the world for relief. Let your life be a ray of sunshine, warming and brightening everything it touches. A smile is contagious, and there are few persons who can resist its influence. Your mission is to be good and do good; while you are fulfilling your mission you can have a good time. Crowd every day with pleasure. The world is full of beauty for eyes that are open to it. God loves the beautiful. Why should not you enjoy it? But do not abuse it, or it will become like apples of Sodom in your hands.

Now, girls, there is one thing I do not want you to do. Do not give your best to strangers, leaving the dear ones at home to take as a matter of course. Your love to them. Too often there are

"Smiles for the sometime guest,
And for your own the angry tone,
Though we love our own the best."

Let father, mother, brother, and sister, feel that you are the dearest, most helpful girl that ever lived, whose very presence is restful. Have you never seen the tender, mellow light in a mother's eyes as she talked about the daughter who had been her staff and comfort till another had taken her to make a home for him? Richer than a crown of jewels is a mother's blessing, and more to be desired than wealth or fame a father's benediction. They are worth all the time, patience, and labour you can give.

THE SAILOR'S YARN.

There are few things that old sailors like better than to tell their adventures to an interested audience of young people. And such an audience the ocean salt in our picture seems to have. The boy and girl are eagerly drinking in his story of perils by sea and by land. Indeed, sailors often fear the land more than the sea, and in a storm are said to often express their pity for "them unhappy folks ashore." The boy is in a fair way to become infatuated with the sea. But probably a voyage before the mast would take a good deal of the romance out of it.

Diner—"Waiter, how long will my omelet be?" Waiter—"I can't tell exactly, sir; but they average about nine minutes."

A COW'S MOO.

Harper's Round Table picks up a good many interesting stories about children. A recent number has the following:

A very small girl was learning to write. Her teacher ruled the slate and set her "copies," and Lucy took great pains with the pot-hooks and round o's with which she began. One day the teacher set down something new for Lucy to copy—M-o-o—Moo.

"What is it?" asked Lucy, with a puzzled look.
"That is 'Moo.' The noise a cow

CAN YOU GRASP IT?

The newspaper is a wonderful enlightener in these modern times, but the good in it is often like a grain of wheat in a bushel of chaff. Read this, and think of the amount of chaff a newspaper reader devours.

A statistician has learned that the annual aggregate of the circulation of the papers of the world is estimated to be 12,000,000,000 copies. To grasp the idea of this magnitude we may state that it would cover no fewer than 10,460 square miles of surface, that it is printed on

A WIDOW'S ONLY CHILD.

A poor widow had a son, whom she loved dearly, for he was her only child. Her love met with no kind return, nothing that she said was heeded by him. He would do just what he liked, in spite of his mother's wishes and entreaties.

When about sixteen years of age, this stubborn lad left his mother without bidding her good-bye. Many an anxious tearful night did she pass, wondering what had become of him. About a year afterward he was brought home very ill. He had fallen from a scaffold,

fever had seized his brain, and for several days his life was in great danger. His mother was ever near him doing all of which her loving heart could think. At the end of a fortnight his senses returned. At first he wondered where he was and such was his weakness that he did not wish to open his eyes but lay very still, trying to call to mind what had taken place. He soon thought of the fall by which he had been stunned, then called to mind what he had been doing some time before this, and felt a little ashamed of himself. "But where am I now?" thought he. While thus thinking he heard his mother's voice saying very softly, "He has had a fine sleep; I think he is better." The sick lad then said to himself, "I find that I am at home. In my own little room, with my mother to nurse me; and she still loves me." Next came such thoughts as these: "I ought to love my mother for all her love to me, and try to make her happy. I do love her, and feel very sorry that I have caused her so much sorrow.

At that moment he felt his mother was leaning over him. Her gentle hand was laid on his still aching head; a warm tear fell on his cheek, and a soft kiss was impressed on his forehead. He could contain himself no longer. He opened his eyes, which were filled with tears, looked up in his parent's face, as he had not for many a long day, and said, "My dear mother!" His look, his words, his tears, his pressure of the hand, all went to the mother's heart, and made her weep tears of joy. This was the beginning of many happy days; for the mother loved God, and she had the pleasure of seeing her son love Him too as well as love herself. Now was it not true that this mother loved her son before he loved her? And was it not the knowledge and belief of her love to him that led him to love her? Was not her love very strong? And was not his love quite reasonable? And did it not make him very happy? Now apply this to yourself. God loves his children wherever they are far more than that mother loved her child. Well may the Christian exclaim, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins."

Oh, what love the Father bore us!
Oh, how precious in his sight!
When he gave his Church to Jesus—
Jesus, his whole soul's delight.

Though our nature's fall in Adam
Seemed to shut us out from God,
Thus it was his counsel brought us
Nearer still, through Jesus' blood.

For in him we found redemption,
Grace and glory in his Son. (Col 3:3)
Oh, the height and depth of mercy!
Christ and we, through grace, are one.

In Russia only one-quarter of the men can read and write, and only two women out of every hundred.



THE SAILOR'S YARN.

makes, Lucy. See, it is made up of pot-hooks and round o's, just what you have been learning on."

So Lucy sat down and prepared to copy "Moo." But she did it in a queer way. She made an M at the beginning of each line and followed each M with a whole string of o's across the slate, like this—Moooooo.

"But that isn't right, Lucy," said the teacher, when the little girl showed her the slate. "You must copy the word as I have written it. So—Moo."

Lucy looked at the teacher's copy, and then at her own attempts, and then she shook her head decidedly.

"Well, I think mine is right, Miss Jones," she said. "For I never saw a cow that gave such a short 'Moo' as you wrote down!"

781,250 tons of paper, and, further, that if the number (12,000,000,000) represented, instead of copies, seconds, it would take over 333 years for them to elapse. In lieu of this arrangement we might press and pile them vertically upward to gradually reach our highest mountains. Topping all these, and even the highest Alps, the pile would reach the magnificent altitude of 490, or, in round numbers, 500 miles. Calculating that the average man spends five minutes reading his paper in the day (this is a very low estimate) we find that the people of the world altogether annually occupy time equivalent to 100,000 years reading the papers.

Do the duty that lies nearest thee.

The Seven Sisters.

Seven sisters came my way,
Crowned with gold and shod with gray,
Travelling in single file,
Each abode with me awhile,
Each brought nothing in her hand,
Save a passport to the land,
And the promise soon to bring
Each a present to her king.

When the first one left the door,
In her gracious hand she bore
Fair gift of all the seven,
Incense made of prayers to heaven,
After her another sped
With a gift of wheat bread,
Two a little garment took;
One a poem, one a book,
Over which an ailing child
Half forgot his grief and smiled,
So in turn the sisters passed,
Each one laden save the last,
She stalked sullenly away,
Clad from head to foot in gray.

Seven sisters came to seek
Each a good gift from the week,
Six returned with what they sought
Something said, or something wrought;
But the sister clad in gray,
Was a little wasted day.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, APRIL 24, 1897.

"AT THE PARTING OF THE WAYS."

BY REV. SAMUEL GREGORY.

"The king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways.—Ezek. 21. 21.

TRAVEL TRACKS IN AFRICA

How does an explorer travel in Africa? I have no doubt some of you have supposed (as I did), that an explorer holds a mariner's compass in his hand, and makes his course like a bee or a wild stag straight across the country, treading through the long grass and bushes and between forest trees. That is, the explorer has no roads on which to travel.

Now in reality it is all very different. Africa is full of ways about a foot wide, like those by which you cross English fields. The natives of Africa have made those paths by simply treading the ground with their feet, and not as the Romans used to make their wonderful paved roads. These narrow African travel-ways, zig-zag through valleys, forests, open grassy lands, over hillsides; and that great country is filled with a net-work of such pathways. What the explorer has to do is to select which path he wants.

Sometimes a traveller in Africa comes to the parting of the ways—a place where paths fork away in different directions, and he stands puzzled unless he has a good guide. One of those paths may lead him to where he will have to spend the night in a dark forest where lions roar for prey; another would take him to where black people of some village could give him food and shelter.

In English country districts when you come to a parting of the ways, there is a white post with boards like arms pointing down the different roads, and the boards bear on them names of the places to which those roads lead. You, perhaps have seen that picture of an old

gentleman whose sight was not good, standing up on the saddle of his pony trying to read the pointing board, and learn which way he ought to go.

THE TWO PATHS OF LIFE.

Now life has many paths. There are all sorts of ways of going through the world—all sorts of ways of living and behaving. Some of the ways are right, some of them are wrong.

If you open the Book of Psalms you find that the first psalm is a poem on this subject. Over it you might write for a title—"The Two Ways." That psalm tells us there are ways that lead to happiness; and to prosperity. It also tells us that there are ways which lead to certain destruction. That psalm says, that a man who chooses that good way, is like a grand tree growing by a river, and that a man who chooses the bad way is like chaff which the wind blows to nowhere.

In the same way Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount, spoke about the Two Ways. He tells us there is a broad bad road full of people, and that there is a narrow way—straight as a rule can make it—which is the right way, though there are not so many people travelling on the narrow way.

SWITCHES ON THE RAILWAY.

As you travel by rail, you know that in some places the train gives a sudden jerk. It has come to a switch on the rails. From that point the lines of metal lie in different directions. The pointsman is watching, and when the train is due he pulls a handle, and puts the train on one set of metals or on the other according to its destination. It is his business to stand at the parting of the ways, and give right direction to the train. Sad mistakes are sometimes made—carriages full of people are mis-directed, and there is accident and trouble.

COMPANIONSHIP.

Jesus once told a story about a Farmer's Son, at the parting of the ways. He was well-off at home, but he was not contented. He thought village life dull and work hard. He had heard of life in other places, and wanted to see it. Should he stop at home and work at the farm business? or should he go wandering? He often thought about it, and one day off he went. He was merry as a grasshopper at first, but was soon in trouble among strangers and in want. Then he thought of those old days at home and wished he had stayed there, and one day started back and found welcome home again.

Jesus wanted to teach us by that story how we mistake the road, and what to do when we find out our mistake. Go back again to God our Father.

What brought that young man wrong at the parting of the way—was bad companions. You have heard of the Scotch poet, Robert Burns. He had a good father, and the boy's heart was good. But he went for two years to a neighbouring town, and found a youth older than himself whose ways were bad. Robert Burns stood at the parting of the ways. At first he was shocked by the wickedness of his new associate. But in a while he was going along the same road. Then his life instead of being noble and good was not good, and his story is a story of mistakes. He used to say he had not good aim for his life, and had therefore gone all wrong.

Sometimes when a boy goes to school he is in similar danger. He is at the parting of the ways. He may fall into a good set of boys, or become one of a set not so good. And in our companionships it is as in our walks. We keep moving on without thinking much about it, and before we know it, are surprised to find how far we have moved.

It is more dangerous still when youths go to business. They are again at the parting of the ways. Some of their new companions are probably not good to associate with, and some are of a spirit to help them to noble life. On the sort of companionship which you form how much depends!

CONVICTIONS.

But you are put at the parting of the ways by those convictions which the Spirit of God works in your minds. This is what I mean: You go along anyhow, and one day something makes you think, "What am I going to be and do?" You feel you would like to be a follower of Jesus, and you hesitate, and as it were stand at the cross-roads.

It was so with John Bunyan. He was not a good boy. I am sorry to say he used bad language. One day a woman spoke to him in the street about something she heard him say, as he stood among his companions. And he hung his head with shame, and began to wish to be better.

He lived, as you know, to write a lit-

tle book about the Way of Life—a book called The Pilgrim's Progress. It is a wonderful book, and one of the most interesting in the world. And that book, better than any other I know of, tells of the ways of this life, and where they part from the true, and where they lead those who set their feet upon them.

One Sunday a boy was in the street just passing away time. He thought about nothing and cared for nothing. A lady came along, looked at him and said: "Are you going to spend the evening about the street? Come with me to the place of worship I am going to!" He hesitated. He stood at the parting of the ways. Then he went as he was asked to do. The boy listened to the sermon which was preached and to the hymns, and went again and again. He grew up and became a missionary. His name was John Williams. He went to the South Sea Islands, and the story of his work for the Lord Jesus Christ, is one of the most wonderful of all such stories.

Now as you grow older, these calls of God will sound in your hearts. You will seem to have God's hand gently laid upon you, and to hear God's voice speaking to you. Mind at such times. That is to be at the parting of the ways. So the Parting of the Ways means those times and places when temptation tries to pull us in the wrong way, and the Spirit of God is striving to lead us in the right way. All through life we keep coming to where two ways meet.

THE COASTLAND PATH.

By the sea in Cornwall there are paths which run over the cliffs. Below you lies the great sea so wide in its spaces, so lovely in its colour, and between you and the water, far below, are vast walls of jagged rock. You are safe on the path. It is a path made for coast-guardsmen. It is narrow, and here and there beside it lies a stone dashed with whitening, so that you can catch sight of it in the dusk of the evening. Those white stones are to guide when the path itself cannot be seen. Look for those white stones, and you cannot get lost, however far you walk.

Well, life has deep dangerous places, but you may, if you will, walk along as safely and joyously, as you walk on those grand heights by the blue sea. But you must keep the proper path—Christ's narrow way. It is easy to find. God has set the white marks all the way along. Verses of the Bible and lives of good people are the white marks, which help to make us sure which is the true path. It is the path we talk of when we read that verse in the psalm: "They go from strength to strength till every one of them appears in Zion before God."

HARRY'S DIARY.

Harry's face was radiant with delight when Aunt Bessy gave him a pretty little diary on New Year's morning. He loved to write, and he was sure that he would spend many happy hours in filling its pages with a record of his daily doings.

Upon the first page he wrote in a plain, round hand a list of the resolutions he had made for the new year; and he determined to record the broken ones as well as those he succeeded in keeping.

Aunt Bessy was surprised, one afternoon, to discover Harry sitting in his room, mournfully turning over the pages of his diary.

"Why, Harry, my boy, what is the matter?" Aunt Bessy asked, sitting down beside the manly little fellow, and putting a loving arm on his knee.

"It's my diary. There are so many bad things in it that I can't bear to look over it. I've broken all my resolutions ever so many times, though I've tried to keep them, and I'm so discouraged. I don't mean to keep a diary any more. I don't want all the wrong things I do to be written down in a book, and I've been trying to rub them out."

"Did you ever think of that other Book where every word and thought and deed of your life is continually being recorded?" asked Aunt Bessy, as she smoothed his tumbled hair. "If your diary is so full of wrong-doing that you cannot bear to look over it, what must the record be in that other Book?"

The tears almost started, and Harry said, with a little show of effort in his voice:

"Oh, aunty! that must be nothing but sins. I can rub things out of my diary, but I never can take anything out of that Book.—can I?"

"No, darling, you cannot blot out one wrong deed; but do you know what will make it pure and white?" asked Aunt Bessy, tenderly.

"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin," she repeated softly, as Harry looked up with a questioning face.

"That will blot out all our transgressions; for we have God's own promise for it. We might well be discouraged, and give up in despair, if we had only our own righteousness to depend upon; for not even an hour is sinless, but we can trust ourselves to Christ's righteousness. You may rub the record of your failures out of your little diary, and no one will know of them but yourself; but the page will not be pure and white as it was before, for it will show the marks of the rubbing. It will not be so with the pages of that other Book; for the Saviour's blood will blot out all the dark records of sin, and make it spotless. Are you trusting in him, Harry, or are you trying to walk in your own strength?"

"I am trusting Jesus," said Harry, as he straightened himself up with manful determination.—"I am trusting Jesus."

JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.
PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

MAY 2, 1897.

Jacob into Egypt.—Genesis 46. 1-7.

CHANGE OF NAME.

Israel was formerly known as Jacob. The words are very significant. Jacob means supplanter, but Israel means "a prince." Jacob gained a memorable victory, when he wrestled all night in prayer, and conquered the angel, for which he received a new and illustrious name. His life had been one of great sorrow, arising from the loss of his favourite son, Joseph, whose remarkable career in Egypt was a clear indication of the Divine hand in the affairs of life. This same Joseph, whom he supposed to have been dead for many years, was not only alive, but was actually making provision for the declining years of his venerable father, and had now sent conveyances to carry him and his household into Egypt.

ISRAEL'S COURSE.

He acknowledged God by offering sacrifices. The place where he presented the worship was memorable in the history of his family, as there both Abraham and Isaac had been accustomed to worship. His father and grandfather had both set good examples to their descendants, which he, Israel, was now imitating. What a grand thing it is to have a pious ancestry. Are not some of our young friends the children of pious parents? You can doubtless call to mind seasons when your parents have been made special prayer on your behalf.

WORTHY EXAMPLE.

Jacob prayed for divine guidance. He was entering upon a new mode of life. He was surprised at its occurrence, but he took counsel from God, which was a wise plan. Never be afraid to consult your heavenly Father. He will guide you into all truth. Talk to God about all your affairs. I knew a little boy who was accustomed to pray to God to help him in his studies, and he declared that he could always study better after praying.

HOW GOD ANSWERED.

Verse 3. God renewed the covenant which he had made, first with Abraham and then with Isaac, and promised to go with him into Egypt. This would be inspiring to the old man, for Jacob was now 130 years old, and he would necessarily be more or less anxious respecting his journey, and what he might have to encounter in Egypt. But when God thus made known himself, and reaffirmed his promises, Jacob would feel a degree of confidence which he did not have before. God always takes care of those who trust in him, and though he may not answer every prayer in the same identical manner, he will fulfil his promises, and care for his own. Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you if he does not answer every prayer as you would desire, he will give you grace to bear every disappointment.

Claus Harnes, one of the most useful preachers in Germany, once met a friend to whom he told how many times daily he was obliged to speak. His friend presently asked: "But, Friend Harnes, if thou hast so much to say, when art thou still? And when does the Spirit of God speak to thee?" That simple question so impressed Harnes that he resolved from that time to devote a portion of each day to retirement and silent study.

He is convinced of it.—"This is a hard world," said one labourer to another. "Yes. O! do be thinkin' av that! Every time O! put me pick-axe in it."

A Girls' Prayer-Meeting in Japan.

BY MARGARET E. SANOSTER.

"The dear little girls," said the lady, in the letter just sent from Japan, "Take ten minutes out of their play-time To pray to the Saviour of man; To the Saviour who died to redeem them. Whose love sheds a light on their way. They cease from the pleasure of play-time For the pleasure of kneeling to pray."

"I heard this all read in a letter," said Rosa; "twas sent to mamma; And I thought of the dark-eyed and slender

Small maids in that country afar, Afar over blue-rounding waters, Where idols are worshipped in dread; I was glad that the dear little daughters Were coming to Jesus, instead

"Of bowing to Buddha, and of living Like slaves who have never a thought Beyond the swift hour of the present And the task they in meekness have wrought.

But I wondered how many of us girls, Whose mothers have taught them to pray, Ever think of a ten-minute meeting In the hour of our play-time so gay;

"Or go from the fun and the frolic To stand for a moment alone, And lift up a silent petition To him who is King on the throne, Who once was a child with his mother, And knows just how children can feel; Who is near us, our strong elder Brother, With grace all our sorrows to heal.

"Dear girls," said my sweet little Rosa, "Dear, precious young girls of Japan, I think you are teaching a lesson That we all ought to learn if we can. To find some time always for praying, No matter how cumbered with care; In working, in resting, obeying The Master, whose servants we are."

GIVING.

THE OBLIGATION.

Every one recognizes the obligation to give of our substance unto the Lord. The obligation grows out of the fact that we receive everything from him, and are only entrusted with what we have as his stewards, and are bound by all the considerations of dependence, responsibility, and gratitude to use it as he directs. It is our duty to give. It is commanded in the Word of God.

THE MOTIVE.

A person may give largely and yet be as intensely selfish as one who gives penuriously, the object of the gift being to win favour or applause. A person may give freely and yet be utterly lacking in true generosity, their liberality springing mainly, if not entirely, from indifference to the value of what they give. A person may give in a way that fosters pride, ambition, vanity, envy, or lust; and in this way the motive may make the seemingly virtuous act a crime. All true Christian giving should spring from a sense of obligation to God and a sincere desire to glorify him. When this motive prompts the act it becomes at once both the exponent of a noble character and a ministry of good to the giver as well as those who receive the gift.

THE PLEASURE OF GIVING.

Perhaps every one who has given anything from a proper motive understands from experience how true the saying is that it is better to give than to receive. It ministers a higher pleasure. It promotes a nobler feeling. It creates a keener sense of joy. It confers a richer reward. Every right-minded person experiences a happiness in making other people happy that is peculiar in its nature and unequalled in its moral helpfulness. God has ordained that it shall be so in the eternal order of things. Deluded thousands spend money in a myriad different ways, seeking happiness by gratifying selfish desires, who are disappointed in their search, and after a few fleeting sensations of inferior pleasure, find themselves tortured by ennui, their vitality impaired, their thirst increased by the salt waters of which they madly drink.

A NOTABLE EXAMPLE OF GIVING.

Moses and the children of Israel set us an example of how to build a church while they were camping in the wilderness. They wanted to erect a "tabernacle," a temporary and portable temple, in which to worship God. It was to be a magnificent pavilion, a costly and splendid tent. Such only was befitting the service of Jehovah. They didn't get up a festival, or have a show, or set an oyster supper, or have tableaux, or amateur theatricals, with Miriam as an

"eloquent" reciting the wonderful Red Sea Act. But "they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the Lord's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold; and every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the Lord." That is the way to build a church and to support it yet. There is no other right way. The people offered more than was needed, and Moses had to stop them from giving.

THE WIDOW AND HER MITE.

One day Jesus went into the temple and saw the people putting in their contributions; and many that were rich made large gifts, but a poor widow woman came along and put in two mites, which was all she had. Jesus called his disciples' attention to it, and told them that she had given more than all the rest. He commended her liberality. But it is a mistake to think he meant that everybody should do what the poor widow did; that every one should give all to the treasury of the church. Perhaps this poor woman had only herself to care for; perhaps would find employment to support herself, or already had. What Jesus did intend to teach was that the two mites of the widow, being her all, though it was as nothing compared with the larger gifts of the rich, was in the sight of God a really greater sum. God looked at the motive behind it. That was the measure of the gift. We are niggardly or liberal, not according to the amount we give, but according to our ability and the motive that prompts us.

THE RICH YOUNG MAN.

Jesus told a rich young man one day that if he would be perfect he must go and sell all he had and give it to the poor, and come and follow him. Jesus perhaps saw that it was the only way for this young man to be saved. He may have seen that this young man, sincere as he undoubtedly was then, would be ruined by his money; and if this was so, all would agree that it was best for him to sell all he had, give it to charitable purposes, and devote himself exclusively to the service of Jesus. But such a rule, if it were carried out generally, would make human society impossible. Or Jesus may have meant simply to test this young man as he did Abraham when he commanded him to offer up Isaac, his son, as a burnt sacrifice. Had he, like Abraham, promptly obeyed, it is very likely that Jesus would have checked him, and bade him use his fortune for the glory of God. One who is willing to give all at the command of God can be trusted to use all. One who is not willing to give all when God calls for it is safer without any.

THE TENTH.

The tenth of our increase belongs to God as our duty. If a man makes a hundred dollars, ten dollars belongs to God. If he makes a hundred bushels of corn, ten bushels belong to God. If he has a hundred sheep or hogs or cows, ten in every hundred belong to God. If we want to be happy and prosperous, we must be obedient and live according to God's order. What an abundance there would be for the support of all the institutions and enterprises of the Church if Christians would bring the tithes into the treasury of the Lord! We would have thousands where we now have hundreds of dollars for the work of the kingdom. And yet giving does not beguile until we have paid the tenth. We owe the tenth: we don't give that. It belongs to God already. Nine parts are ours, given us by God. According as we love him and appreciate his goodness, and desire to carry forward his glorious kingdom on earth, we will give as he has prospered us. Some after they have paid the tenth are able to give large amounts to the cause of Christian benevolence, education, or missions; and the liberal soul shall be made fat.

SYSTEMATIC GIVING.

It is far better to give a regular part of our income, whether much or little, than to give simply according to impulse. Most people are able to give a weekly contribution, and that was Paul's plan. He wrote to the Corinthians: "Now concerning the collection for the saints. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." That looks as if Paul didn't like to take collections. If so, some of his modern successors share his sentiments. It is our opinion that much harm has been done to the spirit of liberality and the

whole matter of Christian giving in the church by emotional benevolence. Some stirring appeal has awakened a momentary impulse to give by arousing the sympathies of an audience in behalf of a good cause. This is all right, provided there is behind it the moral force of a conscience trained to systematic and regular benevolence.

WESLEY'S FINANCIAL PLAN.

We have not improved on many of Wesley's plans. We need to go back to him to learn something we never knew, or have forgotten. It was lucky for Wesley that he came so early. If he were here to-day, the probability is that we would turn him out of the Methodist Church; he was too advanced for us. He adopted the class-meeting, not, as many think, as an agency for spiritual culture, so much as a method of financial work. The leader was to see each member of his class, collect his weekly contribution, and give such advice as he might think proper on religious matters. Wesley's idea was to subdivide the membership into these small circles, with lay leaders, who should personally attend to the collections. Gradually "the penny a week and shilling a quarter" idea gave place to that of religious instruction, and the class-meeting became a school of spiritual culture unequalled by anything that Methodism has known since for promoting the religious life of its people. But the fundamental idea of the original class-meeting, as Mr. Wesley designed it, was systematic and regular benevolence.

CHEERFUL GIVING.

The Lord loveth a cheerful giver. To give grudgingly is to wound the Holy Spirit. It indicates a total lack of the true motive. Better not give at all than to give reluctantly. Remember Ananias and Sapphira. Do not trifle with the obligations of property. Beware of covetousness. It is idolatry, and no idolater can enter the kingdom of God.—Epworth Era.

"AS WHITE AS SNOW."

BY REV. EDWARD A. RAND.

"How fast it snows!" exclaimed a boy, standing in the door of the big red barn on the McDonald place.

John McDonald was looking out across the field by the grove, "a wide, level stretch of green in summer with the exception of a small, miry pond in the centre. Beyond the field was the green grove of spruce that gave the field its name.

"It snows faster and faster, faster and faster," said John.

As he spoke, the flakes seemed to grow as separate tufts of snow and also as a big whole coming down everywhere, everywhere, crowding faster, thicker, hanging a beautiful veil between the boy in the barn door and the green grove, hiding the latter altogether.

"How beautiful!" exclaimed John. It was a relief to him to watch the spectacle, for it diverted his thoughts from a subject that was necessary and that we must notice, and yet it gave him and gives any one else reflections of an unpleasant nature. He had taken a very sensible course—that of reflection upon his spiritual state. He saw that his life was unworthy before God, and how could he become better?

"Oh, dear!" he sighed, "the more I think about my sins, the bigger a sinner do I see myself to be, in my talking, in my thinking, in my acting. Oh, dear! It is not a pleasant thing to look at myself—and yet I ought to, I know."

Now, instead of those reflections, came this spectacle of a great multitude of tiny white wings flying down through the air.

"Beautiful! beautiful!" he said. And look! That old black bush is growing white! And the mud around the pond—that will be covered with white. And there is a heap of old weeds—why, the snow will cover them! Oh, look!"

He was watching this fairy-like scene of the descent of the snow upon the earth covering it and whitening it, when there flashed through his mind the minister's text the previous Sunday morning: "Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow."

The watcher in the barn doorway kept saying to himself, "White as snow! White as snow! Yes, he—he can forgive everything! How the snow covers everything!"

And then a voice seemed to say, "Cannot God cover your sins? Stop thinking about them! Think of his mercy, think of the Saviour. Go to him!"

The voice was really memory speaking to him, memory calling back the minister's sermon. He had been so busy

thinking about his sins and how bad his heart looked, that he had forgotten the wise counsel in the sermon to think of God's forgiveness in Jesus Christ. That forgiveness covers the past—goes all over the past like the snow covering the field.

"I don't want to stay here," John now murmured, and turned away from the vision of the white snow-flakes. "I want to pray, and I will go!"

Here he looked up toward the roof of the big red barn.

"I will go up on the hay-mow and pray," he said.

He climbed the tall ladder leading up the side of the hay-mow, sought a corner away at one side, and there a troubled boy knelt down, and, looking toward the cross of the Saviour, yielded up his heart to him whose mercy comes down abundant as the winter flakes, and his word is: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow!"

HOW A BEAUTIFUL HYMN WAS WRITTEN.

One day Mr. Wesley was sitting by an open window, looking out over the bright and beautiful fields. Presently a little bird, sitting about in the sunshine, attracted his attention. Just then a hawk came sweeping down toward the little bird. The poor thing, very much frightened, was darting here and there, trying to find some place of refuge. In the bright sunny air, in the leafy trees of the green fields, there was no hiding-place from the fierce grasp of the hawk. But seeing an open window and a man sitting by it, the bird flew, in its extremity, toward it, and, with a beating heart and quivering wing, found refuge in Mr. Wesley's bosom. He sheltered it from the threatening danger and saved it from a cruel death.

Mr. Wesley was at that time suffering from severe trials, and was feeling the need of refuge in his own time of trouble, as much as did the trembling little bird that nestled so safely in his bosom. So he took up his pen and wrote that sweet hymn:

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high!"

That prayer grew into one of the most beautiful hymns in our language, and multitudes of people, when in sorrow and danger, have found comfort while they have said or sung the last lines of that hymn.

A BRAVE MOTHER.

Anna Campbell, a mountaineer, was a brave woman. A flood came down the Engadine from the melting of two hundred glaciers, carrying some twenty bridges along with it; when over the bridge of wood that in the narrow gorges separated the town from the pastor's house, Anna dared for her husband's sake to cross; and, the two side piers being just then swept away, she was left standing in the raging flood and storm, alone on the midmost. They heard her clear, musical voice singing, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit"; when suddenly remembering that she had the keys of the cupboard at her girdle, and the children would need their supper, she stopped her prayer and shouted, "There's the keys!" and threw them ashore, disappearing at the same moment down the ravine.

THERE WAIN'T NOTHING.

The following story of excessive zeal is told by a young minister who spent last summer in missionary work among the Green Mountains. The two maiden ladies with whom he boarded kept no horse, and were wont to rely upon the courtesy of neighbours to bring their mail from the post-office.

As the ladies and their boarders were sitting on the piazza one evening, a neighbour passed in the direction of the village, and one of the sisters called out, "Are you going to the village, Jonas?"

"Yes," replied Jonas, pulling up his horse; "can I do anything for you?"

"You might get our mail at the office, if would be so kind," said "Aunt Clara." Jonas drove on, but did not return from the village until after the household had retired. Shortly before midnight the whole house was aroused by a thumping at the door, and calls of "Clara,—Clara,—Aunt Clara!"

Aunt Clara arose hastily, lit a lamp, and slipping a wrapper over her night-robe, descended and unlocked the door. "Why it's you, Jonas!" said Clara. "What a turn you gave me!"

"There wain't nothing," said Jonas, as he turned to go, full of the happy consciousness of duty performed.

LESSON NOTES.

SECOND QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE ACTS AND EPISTLES.

LESSON V.—MAY 2.

PAUL BEGINS HIS FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

Acts 13. 1-13. Memory verses, 2-4.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.—Mark 16. 15.

OUTLINE.

1. The Call, v. 1-3.
2. The Field, v. 4, 5.
3. The Foe, v. 6-13.

Time.—A.D. 45 or 46.

Places.—Antioch, Seleucia, the port of Antioch; Salamis and Paphos on the island of Cyprus; Perga in Pamphylia.

HOME READINGS.

- M. Paul's first missionary journey.—Acts 13. 1-13.
 Tu. Sent of God.—Isa. 6. 1-8.
 W. The good tidings.—Isa. 40. 1-11.
 Th. The living breath.—Ezek. 37. 1-10.
 F. Called.—Rom. 1. 1-7.
 S. Mission of the twelve.—Matt. 10. 5-16.
 Su. Prospect of harvest.—Luke 10. 1-9.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. The Call, v. 1-3.
 Who were these first missionaries?
 What other prophets and teachers were in Antioch?
 Who selected these two for special service?
 How was the church engaged?
 How were the missionaries set apart?
 What was the last command of our Lord? Golden Text.
2. The Field, v. 4, 5.
 Where did Saul and Barnabas first go?
 From thence where? How?
 Where in Cyprus did they begin preaching?
 Who went with them as a helper?
 By what name is he more commonly known? Chap. 12. 25.
3. The Foe, v. 6-13.
 What things are said of this prophet?
 Where was he found?
 To whom had he attached himself?
 What did the deputy do?
 What did Elymas do?
 Who rebuked him?
 How did Saul rebuke him?
 What prophecy did Saul utter?
 What at once followed?
 Who was this convert?
 What led him to believe?
 Where did the missionaries go?
 Where did their helper go?

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

- Where in this lesson are we taught—
1. That God chooses his own messengers?
 2. That he gives his messengers success?
 3. That he will punish his enemies?

RUM AND RUIN.

Sound the slogan: The saloon must go!
 The saloon-keeper is a defiant law-breaker.

The saloon is a direct attack upon little children.

Personal protection is of more value than personal liberty.

The saloon breathes a moral pestilence in every neighbourhood where it is located.

Evidence accumulates showing that the liquor men are much alarmed at the situation in Ohio.

"A postage stamp with every drink" is the notice posted in the window of a Chicago saloon.

The saloon is the instigator of most of the violence, and the mother of nine-tenths of the crime.

Philadelphia has 1,355 retail liquor licenses, a decrease of 3,000 since the high license law went into operation.

License means saloons, saloons mean drunkards, and drunkards mean crime, poverty, misery, starvation, hell.

An Anti-Saloon League in Ohio has headquarters in Columbus, and branches in nearly every city and town in the State.

The saloons bring sorrow to thousands of homes where peace and plenty would have reigned if these dens of infamy were closed.

The Ohio State Board of Pardons has recommended that abstinence from intoxicating liquors be required as a condition of pardon.

The saloon-keeper says defiantly: "If we may not sell liquor on the Sabbath with the consent of the law, we will do it in defiance of the law."

Saloonists of New York city are excited

over the statement of Mayor Strong that the number of saloons in the city should be reduced nearly one-half.

If prohibitory laws and laws for Sabbath observance are "sumptuary laws that vex the citizen," the citizen is sadly in need of being thus vexed.

The National Watchman says that England has \$91,000,000 invested in breweries in the United States, and last year she took out of the country, as beer receipts, \$8,102,000 in gold.

In Santa Anna, Cal., an ordinance has been adopted requiring saloons to remove the screens from doors and windows and seats for loungers, and raising the license fee to \$800.

It has often been said: "Let liquor alone and it will not touch you." But this is not by any means true. It touches the drunkard's wife and children in spite of all their efforts to prevent it.

Judge Logue, of Cleveland, declares that four-fifths of the 40,000 cases which have come before him as judge of the police court during the past four years were the result of intoxication.

Even a small quantity of alcohol affects the acuteness of vision. Dr. Richardson proved by experiment that a man, after drinking a glass of beer, had to be placed at least a foot nearer the type before he could see it as well as he did before.

The official returns show that the Prohibition vote is about the same as a year ago. In some States a few hundred votes are lost, in others there is a gain. The persistence of the Prohibition vote shows that the principle has a strong hold on the people.

A BRAVE POOR BOY.

Mr. Edison, who is known all over the world as a great electrician, was a poor boy. He sold newspapers, he ran errands, he did everything an honest boy could do to support himself. The following story relating an event in his boyhood shows he was a brave boy:

One summer forenoon, while the train was being taken apart and made up anew, a car was uncoupled and sent down the track with no brakeman to control it. Edison, who had been looking at the fowls in the poultry yard, turned just in time to see little Jimmie on the main track throwing pebbles over his head, utterly unconscious of danger.

He dropped his papers upon the platform, seized the child in his arms, and threw himself off the track, face downward, in sharp, fresh gravel ballast, without a second to spare. As it was, the wheel of the car struck the heel of his boot.

"I was in the ticket office," says the child's father, "and, hearing a shriek, ran out in time to see the train hands bringing the two boys to the platform."

Having no other way of showing his gratitude, the agent said: "Al, if you will stop off here four days in the week, and keep Jimmie out of harm's way, until the mixed train returns from Detroit, I will teach you telegraphing."

"Will you?" said Edison.

"I will."

He extended his hand and said: "It's a bargain," and so Edison became a telegrapher.



The members of a church in Davidson County, Ga., notified a whiskey distiller that he must move his still to a proper distance from their edifice. He agreed to do so if the church would furnish the means of transportation. The brethren conferred together, hitched up nine teams, and carried the outfit twenty miles away.

SANDWICH ISLANDS SPORTS.

The Sandwich Islands are among the most beautiful in the Pacific Ocean. Groves of palm trees climb the lofty hills and spread out along the shore, and flowers of brightest colours and fruits of rarest flavours abound. The islands are largely volcanic, and hot springs burst out beneath the sea, so that one can have a hot and cold bath alternately by swimming a short distance. A favourite amusement of the people is bathing in the tumbling surf.

Through the influence of American missionaries, these islands have become almost entirely Christian. Large quantities of sugar are grown for export, and at Honolulu one would think himself in a Canadian or American town to see the street railway, telegraphs, churches, schools, parliament buildings, and other institutions of Christian civilization.

A thousand Armenian refugees are now at Varna, Bulgaria, under the care of Miss Frazer, of Nova Scotia, who was the chief helper of Lady Henry Somerset and Miss Willard in the refuge at Mar-sellias.

GOOD FRIDAY OBSERVANCE.

That Good Friday, the most solemn and sacred day in the whole year, should be regarded by a large number of our people as a common holiday, a day for racing, for sports and games and general merry-making is nothing less than a national disgrace. It would be many degrees less objectionable if these events should take place on Sunday rather than on Good Friday, a day when everybody who makes any pretence of being a Christian refrains from participating in events not in keeping with the solemnity of the day. In announcing their "special attractions" for Good Friday the managers of our theatres loudly proclaim their contempt for Jesus Christ and his death and passion. Associated with these amusement-vendors are the clubs who arrange for races and matches and games and other events. Apart altogether from the religious aspect of the question the open defiance of Good Friday is in execrably bad taste.

Barber—"I want a motto from Shakespeare to hang up in my shop. Can you give me one?" Patron—"Of course; how will this do? 'Then saw you not his face.'" "

BITS OF FUN.

A Costly Venture—"Why do you think it would be a costly venture to give the ballot to woman?" "Because she would insist that her vote was worth as much as her husband's."

Then She Could Carry the Basket.—Daisy (getting tired)—"Auntie!" Auntie—"Yes, darling." Daisy—"S'posin' you could manage to carry me. I—I think I could carry the basket then."

In the Near Future.—Old Friend—"And so both of your children are studying professions?" Hostess—"Yes; my daughter is in a polytechnic college, studying mechanical engineering; and my son is in Paris, learning dress-making."

Little Boy—"I wish I could go off and discover a country." Proud Father—"Do you, my boy? and why?" Little Boy—"I think it 'ud be a good deal more fun sailin' around than sittin' in school an' studyin' about wot others discovered."

Doctor—"Why, how is this, my dear sir? You sent me a letter stating you had been attacked by measles, and I find you suffering from rheumatism." Patient—"Well, you see, doctor, it is like this: there wasn't a soul in the house that knew how to spell 'rheumatism.'"

SEEN IN OUR STREETS.

While waiting for a friend on Yonge Street recently, our attention was drawn to a young man and a youth who had just come out of the saloon close by. The man was about "half-seas over," but the boy—only about sixteen—was drunk enough to be stupid, and stood on the pavement in front of the saloon, a cigar in his mouth, and, just able to keep on his feet, holding his older companion's hand in an idiotic manner, mumbling out some foolish utterances, the thoughts of his beer-muddled brain. Who was he? We do not know, except that he was somebody's boy, and not a street Arab either—just one of the army of two thousand boys who will take the place of one of the army of two thousand men who drop into drunkards' graves every year. And yet there are thousands of voters who would tell us that the saloon-keeper that sold that youth the liquor which made him act the fool is in a respectable business!

Here is another incident, seen on Bloor Street West. A tall, well-built workingman, having the appearance of being none too well provided with wearing apparel, came down Brunswick Avenue, his little ten-year-old-boy, dressed in poor clothes also and no overcoat, running by his side. Upon reaching Bloor Street, the father made direct for the saloon near by, bidding his little son wait outside for him in the cold and slush of a stormy day. What an example to set before his son! How long will it be before that boy responds to the desire to know what is inside the saloon that has such an attraction to his father? Where is that boy's overcoat? The price of more than one overcoat has doubtless been dropped into the till of the saloon-keeper by that workingman during the past year.—The Work.

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