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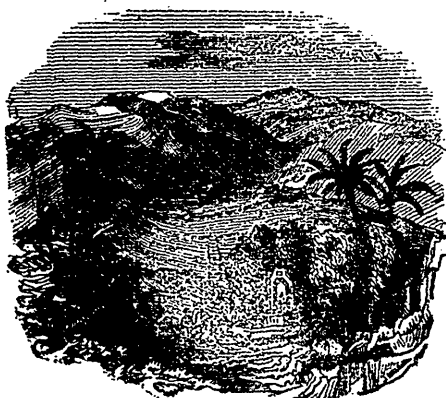
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No. 3



NAZARETH.

Pictures from the Life of Jesus.

PICTURE III.

**THE RIVER JORDAN; OR, THE
PREACHER OF THE WILDERNESS.**

All Judea was astir. From east to west, from north to south, the rumours spread of a strange preacher who, in the garb of the ancient prophets, proclaimed a coming Saviour and a wondrous change. The busy citizens of Jerusalem, the quiet labourers of the

country parts, heard alike of the wild son of the desert, and from all quarters—from village homes, and country towns, and noisy city streets—from the city of David and from despised Nazareth—crowds daily came; and from the rising to the setting of the sun, the people thronged the valley of the Jordan to see the wonderful man, and listen to the wonderful words he uttered.

The deep valley of the Jordan, with its grey lofty mountains shadowing it

on both sides, presented a strange scene of bustle and excitement. Day after day, and all day long, the people came and went—the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the whole families together. It seemed as if every beast of burden had been made use of for that time—long-necked camels, dromedaries, and mules—and thousands trudging bravely on foot; over the wide-spreading plain of Jericho—over the grey high hills—issuing from the groves of palm trees every day, and all day long. We fancy we can almost hear the murmur now of that vast multitude—the tramp of many feet, the thousand voices that suddenly are hushed and stilled, and then burst forth afresh, the questions that are asked, the answers that are given, the cries and groans that sometimes are heard as the words of the strange preacher fall on the guilty consciences of the throng—piercing, burning words, like a shower of fiery darts. We fancy we can hear that terrible voice that wakes up every echo, and that, standing in the Jordan stream, with his robe of camel's hair, and leathern girdle, we can see the baptist preaching to the crowds about him—every day and all day long.

Far away the people stretching on every side, swaying to and fro, and clustering together wherever men can cluster. People of all ranks and conditions are there—the hated publican or tax-gatherer, who grinds the faces of the poor; the haughty Pharisee, with his long robes, his stately step, and his proud look; the rough soldier, who has seen many a hard fight, and who boasteth that he knows no fear; the wily lawyer, and the doubting Sadducee. John has a word for all, as they gather round, each man feels the power of the words he utters.

The bright sun is shining over the mountains of Moab, the river on its course casts back its ray, and looks silver; the strips of verdure on the rocks are green and pleasant to the sight, the tall palms cast a cooling sha-

dow, but the wonted quietness is gone. From the grey dawn, crowds have been gathering, and now, though we can hear his voice, we cannot, for the press, come nigh the preacher, but from the people round about we hear strange stories of the baptist. One old man tells how he remembers well the day when with the crowd of worshippers in the outer court of the Temple, he saw Zecharias the priest, the father of the Baptist, come forth, and when every head was bent, and yet no word of blessing heard, he ventured to look up, and saw the aged priest motioning with his hands, but dumb, quite dumb—speechless as the brazen altar. We hear the story of how it afterwards came out that an angel had appeared to Zecharias and foretold the birth of John; and how, when the child was born, and was to be circumcised, the dumb priest had motioned for a writing-table, and had written "*his name is John*;" and how, in that very hour, his tongue was loosed, and he spake as before. The old man remembers all about it, though more than thirty years have passed.

Others can tell us how strange a life the child has led, and how strange a life the man now leads—far away from towns and cities, alone with God; so strange a life, that many have said he must have a devil; but devils do not preach righteousness, John the Baptist does.

We notice a Pharisee, ever loved to have the chief place at the synagogue, to let men know his piety by praying at the corners of the streets, and having Bible texts fastened on his head-dress, but who now is walking with his eyes cast down. They tell us he was wont to boast that the multitude who crowded to John's preaching went but to look on a reed shaken by the wind—that presently he came himself, and stood on Jordan's bank as proudly as in the synagogue on Sabbath days, but that, when he heard the great fiery words of the man of God, he trembled and wept like a child

Many a rough soldier, and many a crafty lawyer, and many a stern Sadducee, have come to scoff, but stopped to pray; and many have found out that the prophet Isaiah meant John the Baptist, by the voice that should cry in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord; and that Malachi meant none other but he, but Elijah the prophet, who should come before the great day of Jehovah.

How bright the sun shines on the clear waters of the Jordan, for we are nearer now, and we can see it winding onward far away! How strange the preacher looks, with his rough robe and fine sagacious face—how strange the throng that listen to his words! Many a man goes down into the water at the voice of him who preaches the baptism of repentance. One would not easily forget the scene. When the Israelites passed over and clustered round the ark—when Elijah smote the waters and divided them in twain—when Naaman the leper dipped in its waters seven times, and his flesh came again as the flesh of a little child, it was a strange and wonderful scene, but not one half so strange as John the Baptist preaching on its banks and baptising in its waters.

John the Baptist, as stern and true as old Elijah, stands there, and to the eager throng cries out, Repent! He fears God, and nothing beside. His thoughts are on God, eternity, and judgment; and life and death, and heaven and hell, and what are all the crowns, and thrones, and riches of the world to him? You might guess by those strong words of his, by his earnest glance, by the sound of his voice, that he was sent of God. What does he say?

“O Generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” how is it that you, who all your lifetime have been the enemies of God, who have broken his laws, despised his rule, refused his mercy, slighted his promises, scorned his threatenings, should now fly from the com-

ing judgment, from the anger of the great God, and the death that never dies? Repentance is no easy matter: old things must pass away, all things become new, hard hearts must grow soft, stubborn wills must be subdued. “Bring forth, therefore, fruits worthy of repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father, for God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. The axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.”

We hear the questions that are asked by those about—What shall we do? Be charitable, be upright, be honest, be contented. He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Do violence to no man, accuse none falsely. We hear the busy murmur—“Is this the Christ?” The throng that look upon him begin to think that in him they see their long expected King and Saviour. John has heard the question, and answers saying, “I indeed baptize you with water; one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”

And this is the stern true man who is to die—to be shut up in prison by the wicked Herod—that head of his to fall by the headsman's sword.

And so the day proceeds. The people are still listening—many groups are on the mountain side as the twilight draws near; but one who has heard the preacher's voice has come to his baptism. It is a stranger from Nazareth of Galilee—ah no, it is no stranger, for we recognise in him the child who, eighteen years before, had talked with the doctors in the Temple. It is Jesus, now about thirty years old, who has past a peaceful, labouring life, at Nazareth, all that time.

The History of a Plant.

CHAPTER III.—WHAT MAKES THE SEED SPROUT.

INSIDE the seed there is, as you have seen, a "little plant," with the "food" it will want, before it can nourish itself by its own root and leaves. It is not the *miniature* of the full-grown plant; nor has it all its parts wrapped up, ready to be unfolded, when it grows. It is quite different from what the full-grown plant will be; the "seed-leaves" are not of the same shape as those which come afterwards. The bud between them, however closely you may look at it, shows you nothing at all of the stem, and leaves, and flowers, which grow out of it, and there is only a *place* where a root might be. The young caterpillar is not more different from the butterfly than the "little plant" in the seed is from the perfect one.

If you were to see several different kinds of "seed-plants" together, you could scarcely tell one kind from another. And if some of them were cut open, and put under a microscope, which would make them look so much larger, as to show you the exceedingly small cells, of which they are made up (like the inside of a bull-rush), you would wonder, indeed, how they should become different plants when fully grown, and not be all alike. The real difference is in the *life* that is in them, —and *that* is the work of God in each seed; and it is shown as plainly there, if we will but see it, as it was when Jesus, by the same almighty power, made the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and the dead to live again. For God's works are all miracles when we rightly regard them.

But what is it that wakes up this sleeping life, and makes the "little plant" *sprout*, and using up the stores of "food" provided for it, begin to grow into a *real* plant, with perfect parts, according to its kind? What causes this? This is what I shall tell you about now; and, as it is a very curious tale, I hope you will try to un-

derstand it; and I will make it as simple as I can, for I wish you to know what God does in the History of a Plant, from the beginning to the end.

I shall speak only of the "sprouting" of the seed in this chapter, and you must remember this, because there are other causes than those I shall mention here, which have to do with the place and the manner of the life and growth of the plant. These are the four things upon which the sprouting of the seed depends—air, moisture, heat, and light. There must be a certain quantity, or a particular kind, of each, or the "seed-plant" cannot begin to grow.

A particular kind and quantity of *air* is the first thing wanted. Perhaps you did not know there were different kinds of air; but you have seen the gas-lamps lighted in the evening, and have noticed the bright flames which sometimes burst out from the side of a piece of coal between the bars of the fire-grate, and have heard them called "gas." Gas which is burned in the lamps, and which makes the flames in the grate, is a kind of air. The air we breathe, and which is so clear and beautiful, is a mixture of three different kinds of airs or gases. One kind we may call "life-supporting gas," for if we cannot get that, we die. The flame of a candle or lamp, or of the fire, would go out if there were none of this gas to support it. Neither of the other kinds of gas, mixed in the air we breathe, can support life: but here is a wonder—if they were not mixed with the other, as they are, it would not *long* support our lives. And this will shew you why. If a lighted candle were put into a place where only the "life-supporting gas" was, and no other mixed with it, the flame would immediately grow long and broad, and brilliant sparks would shoot out on every side, and in a very short time the whole would be quite burnt out!

There is but a very small quantity of one of the other kinds of gas in the

air we breathe; and though to breathe that unmixed would kill us, it is the most nourishing food to growing plants. I shall soon speak of this again, and of the other kind on which they feed too, I shall have to tell you afterwards. It is the "life-supporting gas" that the seed wants at first, and if it cannot have it, it will not sprout. You know that gardeners tell you not to bury the seeds you plant in your

garden too deeply; for, if you do, they will not "come up;" and to see that the mould over them is *light*, because if it is so close that the air cannot get to them, you might as well not have planted them at all—they will not grow. And when a hole or ditch is dug, and the earth thrown out of it left long enough, plants will often spring on it, of a different kind from those usually growing round; the seeds



of which had been so covered up, that none of the air they needed to set them growing, could reach them. Seeds will grow without being put *into* the ground at all, if they have the other things necessary for their sprouting.

The second of those things is *moisture*. How much plants depend upon this, you do not need to be told; it is as much wanted for the awakening of the life of the seed. I remember that one spring, when no rain fell for nearly two months, the barley-corns lay between the hard, dry clods in the fields, for six weeks and more, just as if they had been on the granary-floor all the time. Different kinds of seeds require different quantities of moisture; those of the plants which grow in the deserts of Africa need little indeed; and those of our common field-plants would be drowned by the quantity the seeds of water-plants require.

Did you ever hear that *water* is a mixture of two kinds of *air*? One of them is the "life-supporting" kind; the other is *a kind that will burn!* This will hint to you some more of the wonders of the works of God; but I must not stay to tell you about them

now, as I have others to relate. When the seed is planted, it soaks up the moisture near it, like a sponge; but it is not because it is thirsty. You have not forgotten that, beside the "little plant," there is a store of provision for it, in the seed. The water is needed, first of all, to enable the "seed-plant" to get at its "food;" it unlocks the larder for it! nay, more, it prepares the food for it; and so *is housekeeper, cook, and nurse, all at once!* The "life-supporting gas" in the water, also, helps to make the seed sprout, just as that in the air we breathe does; and you shall hear about that very soon.

Heat is the third necessary for the seed's beginning to grow. Neither air nor moisture can cause it to sprout, without more or less warmth. But very different quantities are required by different kinds, some being frozen, and some burnt up, and therefore *unable* to grow, where others find enough, or not more than enough heat. But when I speak to you about the countries in which the various classes and kinds of plants are found, I shall mention this; and then you will see how beautifully each has its place,

appointed it; and you will learn why hothouses and conservatories are used, in this country, for some plants.

The last thing wanted for the sprouting of the seed is *light*; and a particular kind, as well as a certain quantity, is necessary. What I mean by a "particular kind" of light, I will try to explain. You all have seen the rainbow; the beautiful arch which appears opposite to the sun, when he shines whilst it is raining. There are seven colours in it,—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. You have seen the same colours, too, on the wall, or the floor, when the sun has shone through a piece of glass, cut like those hung on a chandelier. The bright, white sunshine, is made up of light of those seven colours; and we know this, because, if we take as much of each of those colours, as there is of it in proportion to the others in the rainbow, and mix them altogether, we have *white*!

But this is not all. You will think this chapter is full of marvels; and so it is! Beside the light which is of these seven different colours, there are, in the sunlight, other kinds, which have not any colour, and so cannot be seen, nor help us to see anything; except in the *sun-pictures* which they *actually* make! Perhaps you have seen some of these pictures, — likenesses, landscapes, copies of painted pictures, and others,—which the sunlight has drawn. Those kinds of light, and the light of a blue colour, help very much in the sprouting of the seed: I cannot make you understand *how*; but this will show you that it is so. It has been noticed that these kinds of light are most plentiful in spring, and next that, in autumn; and it is in spring, that most seed begins to grow, and almost all the rest in autumn. But the light must not fall directly upon the seed, or it will scarcely sprout at all.

And I will tell you how these four, —air, moisture, warmth, and light, wake up the little "seed-plant" into life. Warmth and moisture begin the

work, soaking the seed, and swelling up both the plant and its food, till its coverings break, and the air can get to them. There is in the "food" of the plant much that is useful only for keeping both it and the plant itself safely; as soon as the air and the water reach it, it draws the "life-supporting gas" from both, which mixes it, and forms another kind of gas, the same that I told you was the chief food of young plants, and it sends this out; in fact, the seed, or the "seed-plant," *breathes*, just as we do. If sunlight shines brightly upon the seed, it cannot breathe easily; but those kinds I spoke of can reach it, through the mould or dead leaves lying over it; and they help it to breathe. And in this way it begins to grow; for the water can now turn the "food" into *sugar*, and make it fit for its nursing, which sends out a root and a little bud, and before long it has fixed itself in the ground, and is able to take care of itself.—*Teachers Offering.*

Kaffir Children and the Hyenas.

The Mambukis build their huts in the shape of a bee-hive. The ground behind them is thrown up so as to form a wall, while, in the front, about 3 or 4 feet from the door, it is hollowed out into a kind of pit, where the calves are placed for the night, to protect them from the weather and from beasts of prey. One would expect, when the hyenas break in, that they would content themselves with the calves, especially as the natives always have a fire burning at their feet during the night; but instead of this, the hungry beasts spring over the fold, and, without caring for the fires, they drag the children from under the sheep-skins, where they are sleeping. They do this, however, in so careful and quiet a manner, that often the mother does not find out her loss until she hears the screams of her poor babe, as it is dragged away, or torn in pieces by the jaws of the wild beast. You

would be quite tired if I were to tell you all the cases of this kind which I have known about. I will therefore only mention one or two.

The first I will relate happened to a grandson of the king, Dapa. He was ten years old. Before this, the hyenas had seized his younger brother, and had torn a piece out of his cheek. On the next night they again broke into the hut, and dragged a second child away, and, in the morning, only a small part of his body was found. On third visit, they seized the boy I have named by the left shoulder, and dragged him nearly a mile, before the poor child could be snatched from their jaws. Part of his thigh was already torn off, but happily, the bone was not broken. He was brought to us for help, and, by daily care, through the blessing of God, he was perfectly cured.

Another case of the kind was that of a little girl, of eight years old. She had laid herself on the ground in the cool of the evening, when all at once she was surrounded by not less than four of these ravenous beasts. In a few moments, one of the hyenas seized the poor child by the head, a second by the shoulder, and the two others by the thighs. The villagers, hearing her cries, ran with all their might to save her, and, happily, they were able to drag her from their jaws, but she was so much torn and injured, that it appeared to them too late. In a few days, however, they tried all their skill in surgery, but it would not do, and from fever and from the flies the girl assumed so frightful an appearance, that they at length determined to get rid of her, and they left it to her choice, either to be put to death by the young people of the village, or to go into the woods to die, or become the prey of wild beasts.

The poor child chose to go into the woods; for she hoped that she might reach the mission station. She had never been there, indeed, but yet she had heard of the kindness of the Missionaries, and thought that she might

get from them the help and safety which her own parents had denied her. With this desire she set out, and, though she had many miles to travel, over rocky ground, and through mountain ravines, she nevertheless reached our station. When she came, her appearance was frightful, from the injuries and sufferings which she had borne. She was almost naked. There were fourteen large wounds on her body and head. The hyenas had torn her mouth almost from ear to ear, while a large part of the scalp had been stripped away from the skull; but through the mercy of God, we soon had the pleasure of seeing the frightful wounds close up, and, by great care and attention, she got quite well, and scarcely any marks of the injuries are to be seen.

When she had recovered, she would not go back to her father, who had cruelly driven her from his hut, to seek her death in the forest. We therefore kept her at our station, and gave her instruction, in which she made good progress. Her gratitude was great, but we did not know that she was under religious impressions, until one day, as I was walking among the bushes surrounding our house, I heard some one engaged in fervent prayer. I stopped to listen. It was the voice of a child. I went towards the spot from which the sound came, and discovered my little patient in a solitary place in the wood, kneeling on the ground, and pouring out her soul to God, where, as she supposed, no eye saw her, but his alone. I felt, dear young friends, how sweet and pleasant it is to be the means of doing good to the afflicted. Here God has made me the humble instrument of saving both the body and the soul of one who was now glorifying God in the darkest parts of the earth. Who would not delight in and support the work of Missions? It is Heaven's testimony, in these latter days, to the sure fulfilment of all his promises; and happy are all they who

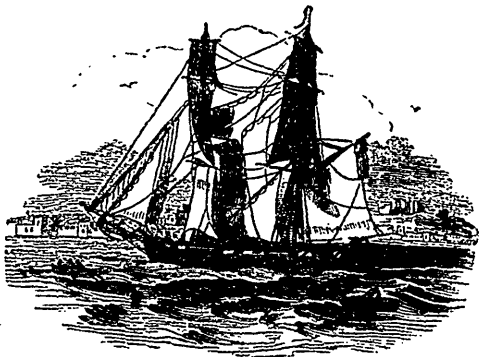
go "to the help of the lord against the mighty!"

The Hindoo Goddess Bhawani.

The fame of the goddess Bhawani is second to that of no god or goddess in Western India. What is she like? You would find in the temple where she is worshipped, a stone image about three feet high, dressed like a woman in India wear. This is Bhawani. But let us go to the temple early in the morning, and see what the priests are doing to this idol, which they teach the people to trust in. First they bathe it, then they apply paint to the body and limbs, to give it beauty; after this they dress it, and then bring it its food. Do you suppose it eats the food which they bring it? Place some food by the stone post at your door; it will soon be gone, but has the post eat it? The food disappears which is set before

Bhawani; what becomes of it? The priests could tell.

Some days she is made to fast, and again she has food enough for two days. Twice a year she is put to sleep for nine days. During this term no worshipper must molest her. What a god that is to worship, that sleeps nine days together! Why, what would a poor worshipper do, who was in distress, and could not wait for help? How greatly they are to be pitied, who trust in such a "lie!" But there is something belonging to her worship which is still worse. Many parents consecrate their daughters, when in their childhood, to her service. These are never permitted to have families of their own. They can have no sweet home. They become miserable outcasts. How sad is their condition. How unlike they are to those, whose parents consecrate them to that Saviour who said "Suffer the little children to come unto me?"



The Runaway's Return.

FOR BOYS WHO WANT TO GO TO SEA.

WELL! here am I, after my night's walk, once more in the village where I was born. The sun is up now, and shining brightly. Things appear the same, and yet different. How is it? There was a big tree used to stand at that corner; and where is Carver's cottage? Three days ago I landed at Portsmouth. It was on my birthday.

For ten long years have I been sailing about on the sea, and wandering about on the land. How things come over me! I am a man now; but, for all that, I could sit down and cry like a child.

It seems but as yesterday since I ran away from home. It was the worst day's work that I ever did. I got up in the morning at sunrise, while my father and mother were asleep. Many and

many a time had I been unkind to my dear mother, and undutiful to my father; and the day before, he had told me how wrong I was. He spoke kindly and in sorrow, but my pride would not bear it. I thought I would leave home.—What is it that makes me tremble so now?

My father coughed as I crept along by his door, and I thought that I heard my mother speak to him; so I stood a moment with my little bundle in my hand, holding my breath. He coughed again. I have seemed to hear that cough in every quarter of the world.

When I had unlocked the door, my heart failed me; for my sister had kissed me over-night, and told me she had something to tell me in the morning. I knew what it was: she had been knitting me a pair of garters to give me on my birthday. I turned back, opened the door of her little room, and looked at her; but my tears fell on the bed-clothes, and I was afraid it would wake her. Half-blinded, I groped down-stairs.

Just as I had gently closed the door, the casement rattled above my head. I looked up, and there was my mother. She spoke to me, and when I did not answer, she cried out loud to me. That cry has rung in my ears ever since—ay, in my very dreams.

As I hurried away, I felt, I suppose, as Cain felt when he had murdered his brother. My father, my mother, and my sister, had been kind to me; but I have been unkind to them, and in leaving them thus, I felt as if I was murdering them all.

Had I been a robber, I could not have felt more guilty. But what do I say that for? I was a robber! I was robbing them of their peace. I was stealing that from them that the whole world could not make up to them; yet on I went. Oh that I could bring back that hour!

The hills look as purple as they did when I used to climb up them. The rooks are cawing among the high elm-trees by the church. I wonder whe-

ther they are the same rooks! There's a shivering comes over me as I get nearer home. Home! I feel that there's no home for me.

Here is the corner of the hedge, and the old seat; but my father is not sitting there. There is the patch of ground that my sister called her garden, but she is not walking in it. And yonder is the bed-room window; my mother's not looking out of it now. That cry! that cry!

I see how it is. There are none of them here, or things would not look as they do. Father would not let the weeds grow in that fashion, nor the thatch fall in; and my mother and my sister never stuffed that straw through the broken panes.

I'll rap at the door, any how. How hollow it sounds! Nobody stirs. All is as silent as the grave. I'll peep in at the window. It's an empty house, that's clear. Ten long years! How could I expect it to be otherwise! I can bear hard work, and hunger and thirst; but I can't bear this.

The elderberry is in blossom as it was when I ran away; and the rose-tree as fresh as ever, running up to the window that my mother opened to call after me. I could call after her now, loud enough to be heard a mile, if I thought she would hear me.

It's of no use stopping here! I'll cross the churchyard, and see if the clerk lives where he did; but he wouldn't know me. My cheek was like the rose when I went away; but the sun has made it of another colour. This is a new gate. How narrow the path is between the graves! it used to be wider, at least I thought so; no matter! The old sun-dial, I see, is standing there yet.

The last time I was in that church, my father was with me: and the text was, "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother" (Pro. i. 8.) Oh! what a curse do we bring upon us when we despise God's holy Word!

My uncle lies under the yew-tree

there, and he had a gravestone. Here it is. It's written all over now, quite to the bottom: "IN MEMORY OF HUMPHREY HAYCROFT." But what is the name under? WALTER HAYCROFT?" My father! my father! "And MARY, HIS WIFE." Oh! my mother! and are you both gone? God's hand is heavy upon me! I feel it in my heart and soul!

And there's another name yet, and it's freshly cut—"ESTHER HAYCROFT, THEIR DAUGHTER AGED 24." My father! my mother! and my sister! Why did not the sea swallow me up when I was wrecked? I deserved it! What is the world to me now! I feel, bitterly feel, the sin of disobedience; the words come home to me now: "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it" (Prov. xxx. 17).

But yet I recollect how my dear father and mother used to point us to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. "There is no refuge beside," said my mother; "Christ is able and willing to save." I paid but little attention to these words once: oh, may I never forget them now!

The days are Shortening.

"How short the days are getting!" "How soon it is dark!" "Winter nights will soon be here!"—are expressions that may now be heard all over the country, from both young and old.

Let all our readers carefully and prayerfully read over that beautiful chapter in the Bible, the last in Ecclesiastes, and they will see that a lesson may be learned from the "short days." If they do not understand the meaning of the "windows being darkened," and the "broken pitcher," let them ask their parents and teachers for an explanation.

Whether we think of it or not, our days are shortening. Let us then improve every hour that God is pleased

to lend us, for our life will soon be ended, and eternity begun.

Our wasting lives grow shorter still,
As days and months increase;
And every beating pulse we tell,
Leaves but the number less.

The year rolls round, and steals away
The breath which first it gave;
Whate'er we do, whate'er we be,
We're travelling to the grave.

Remember the Sabbath,
It's God's holy day;
Remember the Sabbath
Is no time to play.

Remember the Sabbath
Is hallowed by prayer;
Remember the Sabbath,
To God's house repair.

Remember the Sabbath,
God's holy word learn;
Remember the Sabbath,
And bless its return.

"Why Does the Sun Go Down?"

WRITTEN BY THOMAS RAGG, ADDRESSED TO A CHILD, ON HIS ASKING THE ABOVE QUESTION.

"Why does the sun go down?"
Thy infant lips exclaim,
As thou gazest on the departing orb,
While heaven seems wrapt in flame.
It goes to cheer another sphere,
Make other hills look bright,
And chase away from distant realms,
The hovering shades of night.
"Why does the sun go down?"
Perchance thou soon may'st say,
As the fond bright dreams of childhood's years
Are vanishing away.
Those fairy dreams desert thee now,
And their magic charms are riven,
To show the earth is at best but dark
And light proceeds from heaven.
"Why does the sun go down?"
Perhaps thou may'st whisper too,
As the warmer beams of youthful love
Are sitting fast from view,
To bid thee fix thy heart on things
Beyond the gulf of time,
And never expect enduring bliss,
In the earth's ungenial clime.
"Why does the sun go down?"
Thou may'st ask in deeper gloom,
When the hand that writes these verses
Is laid in the silent tomb;
And, O may heaven this sacred truth
Stamp deep on thy bosom then—
It does but quiet the scene awhile,
In glory to rise again!

Dying Girl.

(Communicated by a Glasgow City Missionary.)

"VISITED a girl about twelve years of age, who has been confined to bed for about six months. I found her very ill, obviously dying. On approaching her bedside, I made a few remarks on the kindness of Jesus, and said to her, 'You will much need the kind arm of Jesus to be around you in the hour of death.' 'Yes,' she said, and with the unsuspecting confidence of childhood, 'I have that kind arm around me.' I said, 'Are you not afraid to die?' 'O no,' she replied. 'Why are you not afraid to die?' 'Because I love Jesus, and Jesus loves me.' 'But are you not sorry that your body shall be laid in the cold, lonesome grave; and that you will be separated from your friends and companions?' 'No, I shall be with the Saviour in glory.' 'But are you sure you shall get to heaven?' 'O yes.' 'Why?' 'Because Jesus loved me and died for me, and I love him.' I then said, 'We may never meet again in this world.' With a smile on her countenance, she said, 'But we shall meet in heaven.' She then exhorted her parents to love the Saviour, and attend the meetings on Sabbath. About fifteen minutes after this touching conversation, she breathed her last, and fell asleep, I trust, in Jesus. I have regularly visited this little girl for the last eight months, and often when enduring the severest bodily distress; and have ever found her patient and resigned, with her Testament in her hand, inquiring after the Saviour. Before she became closely confined to bed, when we had a prayer meeting in the land, she was carried in her chair to the apartment in which we met, and with devout attention listened to all that was said of the Saviour she evidently loved so well."

"Seventy-Times-Seven."

The favorite lesson among little boys and girls is usually arithmetic. Here

is a sum. Let some little child reckon it up. But why choose this number? What is there special in seventy-times-seven? Let us see. Peter once asked the Lord Jesus a question which we should wish had been asked, If Peter had not done so. "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?" Perhaps he thought that was a great many. Now mark the answer: it is very weighty. "I say unto you, not until seven times, but until seventy-times-seven." As much as to say, *you must keep on forgiving*. It leaves us no room to harbor ill-feeling against any body.

When people get angry, and will not speak to each other, or talk against or try in any way to injure each other, or lay up "hard thoughts" against their neighbors, or are bitter and backbiting, they forget this rule; and to forget it is a very serious thing, when we remember that petition in the Lord's prayer, asking God to "forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us."

The Bird Missed and the Boy Hit.

A few Sabbath mornings ago, Thomas Bungay and John Moore, of Plaistford, near Sherborne, took their guns, and went to shoot birds. They ought to have been worshipping God. In the sanctuary they would have been safe; but they went astray and broke the Sabbath, by seeking little birds, that they might rob them of their lives by blowing them to pieces with powder and shot. They both fired at the same bird. The contents of John Moore's gun lodged in Thomas Bungay's side. He fell down and died. The shot had entered his heart. He was a corpse! See then, reader, how "the wicked is driven away in his wickedness." Happy is he who, like the righteous man, "hath hope in his death."

Charity Repaid.

A poor beggar in France on receiving a tract, met with a light that never shone on his darkened understanding before. That one short sentence fell on his mind—"God is love;" he felt the blessed truth—the almighty love of the infinite and eternal God, the love of God that mitigates the sorrows of men and communicates joy. He was too feeble to work, and therefore lived upon the alms which his charitable neighbours bestowed on him. The love of God made him feel the same love to his fellowmen. He said, "I cannot repay those generous benefactors who supply my wants; I have nothing to give; yet I can read to them this tract; and if it makes them as happy as it has made me, I shall have communicated to them a better blessing than all their charities have bestowed on me." He read that tract. One Roman Catholic after another listened to it with wonder; and the result is, that an evangelical church has been gathered in that commune, as the result of that beggar's labours among his former benefactors.

Beginning and Ending;

OR, THE HISTORY OF THOUSANDS.

I have heard my dear mother say, that when I was a little baby, she thought me her finest child. I was the pet of the family—I was caressed and pampered by my fond, but too indulgent parents. Before I could well walk I was treated with the 'sweet' from the bottom of my father's glass. When I was a little older, I was fond of sitting on his knee, and he frequently gave me a little of the liquor from his glass, in a spoon. My dear mother would gently chide him with—"Don't, John, it will do him harm." To this he would smilingly reply, "This little sup won't hurt him—bless him!"

When I became a school-boy I was at times unwell, and my affectionate mother would pour for me a glass of wine from the decanter. At first I did not like it; but as I was told it would make me 'strong,' I got to like it. When I left school and home, to go out as an apprentice, my pious mother wept over me, and among other good advice, urged me 'never

to go to a public house or theatre.' For a long time I could not be prevailed upon to act contrary to her wishes, but, alas! the love for liquor had been implanted within me! Some of my shopmates at length overcame my scruples, and I crossed the fatal threshold. I reasoned thus: 'My parents taught me that these drinks were good; I cannot get them here except at the public-house, surely it cannot be wrong then to go and purchase them.' From the public-house to the theatre was an early passage. Step by step I fell. Little did my fond mother think, when she rocked me in my little cot, that her child would find a home in a prison cell. Little did my indulgent father dream, when he placed the first drop of sweetened poison to my childish lips, that he was sowing the seeds of my ruin! My days are now nearly ended—my wicked career is nearly closed—I have grown up to manhood, but by a course of intemperance have added sin to sin. Hope for the future I have not—I shall soon die. A POOR DRUNKARD.

—*Sunday School Advocate.*

Why is the Sky so brightly Blue.

Why is the sky so brightly blue?

Sweet mother tell me this I pray;
While stars so gaily shining through,
Make night more beautiful than day.
Say! are they spirits' eyes which gaze
With radiant lustre here below,
To lure us with their trembling rays
From earth born scenes of guilt and woe?

Or do the friends so long departed,
Within their lustrous orbit dwell,
And bend they o'er the broken hearted
Whose breasts with hopeless anguish swell?

I love not much the noon-day sun,
All glorious though his radiance be;
But when his earthly course is run,
Then night is beautiful to me.
The west wind murmuring through the trees,
Strains of such silvery sweetness woke;
That moving onward with the breeze
Methought some gentle angel spake.

The flowers breathe round their odors rare
Heaven's lamps in cloudless ether move,
And the hushed stillness of the air,
Allures the heart to peace and love.
Sweet mother! should thy gentle breast
Pillow my head when death is nigh,
Oh! weep not! for eternal rest
Must needs be sweet in yonder sky.

H. B. K

Chinese Tradition of the Deluge.

In an address lately delivered in Dublin, by Dr. Gutzlaff, among other things, he made the following statement:—

“Let them now look to the east of Asia, and there on its shores, washed by the Pacific, they would find China, an ancient nation, which has retained its customs for over 2,000 years, with a strictness and attachment that would do honor to better things. In fact, the Chinese had a continual history, even from the deluge up to the present time; they had writers in all times and all circumstances, and they had a language which, in its essential parts, had undergone very little change for the past two thousand years.

“Chinese history stated that there was at one time a great deluge, when the waters rose to the heavens, and that the empire was then converted into a swamp, which a king, called Shun, got drained by means of canals, whose mouth opened into the seas and rivers. The date of this event only differed a few years from that generally assigned to the deluge. It was a confirmation of the truth of Holy Scripture, that so distant a nation as the Chinese, who did not know from the Bible of the occurrence of the great water-fall, should yet record the same event as that spoken of in Holy Writ. There were also many such coincidences in the Indian sacred books; all tending to prove the accurateness of the history of ancient times, as recorded in the Scriptures.”

Not ashamed of Jesus.

THE Rev. Mr. Saffery, in lately addressing a meeting in Glasgow, mentioned the following fact, which had occurred to himself, when passing from York to London in an Exhibition train of 700 persons. At the head of the night, a person in an adjoining carriage commenced singing an exceedingly profane song. He got through one verse, whereupon two or three voices, faint and feeble, began to sing that beautiful hymn, “All praise to Thee, my

God, this night!” When they had got into the second line fifty persons had joined the tune, and at length not less than 500. The effect was spirit-stirring; and fervour was felt even by those who had not joined in the chorus of praise. Two men in the carriage along with him who had been betting, were affected to tears. One of them said such a thing could not have been heard anywhere but in this country. He did not believe that all who joined in the chorus were Christians, or even knew the hymn that was sung; but the few that commenced it were Christians; and it was matter of deep thanksgiving and joy to find that in such an assemblage at the dead hour of night, there was to be found so many voices instantly responsive to the religious feeling of the few who in that impressive manner drowned the voice of the impious blasphemer.

Durham Union Sabbath School.

The examination of the above school took place on Thursday last, in presence of a large number of the parents and friends. The Rev. William Brethour, having very kindly accepted an invitation, was present, and examined the several classes; and expressed himself highly satisfied with the correctness of their answers, and the progress the school had made under the very excellent manner in which the superintendent, Mr. A. McEachern, had conducted it. At the close, the parents, teachers, and children were addressed by the Rev. Mr. Brethour; D. K. Lighthall, Esq., Registrar of the County; Alexander Montgomery and the Superintendent. Afterwards the children were plentifully supplied with cakes, apples, &c., and a collection taken up in aid of the funds of the Canada Sunday School Union. All separated, not only satisfied, but with a determination to renew exertion in behalf of the Sunday School.

Durham, Ormstown, Jan. 3, 1853.

M. M. Braithwaite, Unionville, Markham, is informed that in all cases when a parcel of Records, from four and upwards, when sent to one person, thereby not needing to be opened by the postmaster, cost only about one copper each of postage.

Little Ann ; or the Ticket Prayer.

Having been requested to call on a sick man, I knocked at his door, which was opened by his little girl, a child of four years of age. I asked where her mother was.

"Please, ma'am, she is gone to the shop," was the reply, "and I am to take care of father till she comes back." The sick man was poor and in the last stage of consumption. After a brief conversation I proposed to pray with him, telling the child to remain quiet.

"Ann will not interrupt you," said he, "she is taught to obey." As I turned round, after prayer, I saw little Ann still on her knees, her hands folded together, and her cheeks wet with tears.

After this interview, Ann never neglected the duty of praying for her father, and after his death she became one of my Sunday scholars. The sweetness of her disposition soon won the affection of her school-fellows. Frequent illness interrupted the regularity of her attendance ; but when she was well enough she always came, and her companions joyfully welcomed her, always saying, "Here comes Ann."

Hearing one day that my little scholar was suffering from an abscess, I called to see her. As soon as I entered the house, her mother said, "She is a naughty child, ma'am. She has been playing in the street when I bade her keep within doors, and as soon as I chid her, she sobbed so that I thought she would hurt herself, and so I sent her to bed."

"Is she more composed now?" I asked.

"Yes," replied the mother, "I went up stairs softly, a few minutes ago, and saw Ann on her knees, and when she had ended her prayer, I asked her what she had been saying to God. 'Dear mother,' said she, 'I wanted to ask God to give me another heart, and I did not know what words to say, so I just read this reward ticket, which was given me last Sunday.' These words were 'Create in me a clean

heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.' I took the card from my child's hand to read it, and bade her be watchful lest she should disobey again. She then begged I would forgive her and give her a kiss, and let her have the ticket, as she meant to keep it for her own."

After this Ann became very fearful of doing wrong. At six years of age she was taken seriously ill, and suffered much pain, but was patient and submissive under her trial. She was unable to swallow or to speak, but she prayed to him who hears the prayer of the heart. I saw this dear child the day before she died. She pointed with her finger to the second verse of her favorite hymn,

"Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee,
Leave, O leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me."

With these lines on her mind she fell asleep in Jesus. The following week one of her playmates led me to her grave, saying, "Ann's body is buried here, but her spirit is above." "They that seek me early shall find me."

Irish Stories.

The following notice of the Irish Bible schools will interest those whose kindly sympathies have been awakened in behalf of the children attending these schools, will prove that the seed has been sown in good ground and is already bearing fruit upward, and will add the highest inducements to the continuance and extension of that aid so greatly needed, that in many cases those to whom the bounty comes, are after the household of faith.

"These poor things are supported on the $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of stirabout given in school, with an additional $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. In nearly all the schoolhouses, three or four of these forlorn ones sleep on the floor; others are dispersed among the converts to whom a trifle is paid for sheltering them; and, in many instances, the unbought compassion of their poor neighbours provides for them a home.

The traits of characters and histories of the school children were most beautiful; and, as a specimen, I gave a few from Miss D'Arcy's school, which has always been an interesting

one. The elder girls are particularly pleasing in their manners and appearance; many of these, when the school was established three years ago persisted in coming to it, though certain that harsh treatment daily awaited them on their return home. One whose nice expression made me ask about her, used to be severely beaten by her father; but grace was given her to hold fast that which was good, and to adorn the doctrine she had learnt to believe in as the truth of God. This little light shone mildly but clearly amid the gloom of her father's cabin; and, ere he died, she was permitted to rejoice in the belief that he had received the Light of Life. Two girls were pointed out to me, when the mother of a third was dying, went, for several nights, to be company to their companion during her night watches. Dreary must have been the hours thus spent, as far as outward circumstances were concerned. The cabin had been partly unroofed, a small portion of the thatch was propped up, and beneath its shelter lay the dying woman. In the dark chill night and drenching rain did these poor children seek to fulfil the law of love, and share the suffering they could not mitigate. I noticed two little boys in the school, and on enquiring how they came to be there, was told, that their cabin was near to the school; as the girls passed it, these little things used to stand at the door and curse them. There is something peculiarly awful in hearing such horrid language from the rosy lips of childhood. Every Sabbath after service, when the weather permitted, a number of the Fakeeragh girls went to a quiet nook on the hillside; there, with the everlasting mountains around them, the blue sky above, and the wide sea before them, they praised God who made the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and who loved them and washed them in his own blood: "and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was kept before the Lord." By dint of gentle kindness, the little boys were coaxed to join the party, and learned to sing. Gradually the enmity which had been instilled into their hearts wore away. They learned texts, and listened to Bible stories, which so excited their desire to attend the once hated school, that they gave their parents no peace till they permitted them to go. Their father was very bigotted, and long refused; but as the children wept all day about it, he at last consented, though with such ill will, that, as he afterwards said "It was all I could do to restrain myself from running a knife through every Jumper I met." The Word of God from the lips of his children was eventually sent home with power to his heart; and this man is now one of the most intelligent and consistent of the converts. I must not forget one little hero in the Sellerna School, who, because he had been taunted with going to school merely to get the stirabout, had for months (I believe) come and gone without touching it, though really needing the additional food. Pride might make a determined child do this for a few days; but a higher principle

and a higher tone of character was needed to enable him to persevere in such a piece of self-denial. If the stirabout were to be discontinued, I am certain hardly any would leave the school as long as their strength stood out. They are very fond of singing; and when the teachers are good singers, they soon learn to sing very sweetly. Their parents delight in hearing them; and, by this means, much precious Gospel seed is wafted along the mountain-sides on the wings of sacred song. It was very sweet to hear some well known hymn-tune, such as the "Happy Land," or "O! that will be Joyful," coming from one knew not where, till among the rocks, or along the road, little hands might be seen cheerfully wending their homeward way. There could be no doubt as to the truthfulness of the ready answer always given when asked if they were happier since they had gone to school. They knew they were, and they knew why; for the entrance of God's Word giveth light. Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound.

My Little Girl.

I have a bonnie little girl
Who often climbs upon my knee,
And turns her blue and sparkling eye
In loving glances unto me.

She twines her arms around my neck,
And clasps me in her fond embrace;
And now her fingers catch the pen
With which these simple lines I trace.

Her pattering step I love to hear—
The tripping of those little feet—
They bid my heart with love awake,
And quicker with affection beat.

She talks, and laughs, and sits, and runs,
All other children do the same;
But then, of all the world, I know
I still love best her cherished name.

Her gentle heart is full of love,
Her voice is music to my ear—
Her ringing laugh, joy's golden sound,
More than fine gold to me is dear.

There never was her like I'm sure!
Whoever had so blue an eye?
No little girl has ever spoken
Such loving words—I scarce know why?

And oft I ask with earnest prayer
That grace may all her soul subdue;
May make her spirit pure and fair,
And all her inmost heart renew.

And then, when she and I have passed
Life's changing road with trusting heart,
May we unite in heaven above,
There never, never more to part!

COURSE OF SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR 1853.

FIRST SERIES.

- March 20.**—*Scripture to be read*—Ex. xx. 18-23. *To be committed*—Ps. cvi. 19-21. *Subject*—The Law given and forgotten. *Prominent topics of the Lesson*—People saw thunders, &c.—explain from chap. xix.—the law—people fear—God's design in thus showing his glory, "that ye sin not." His glory employed to enforce the command, ye shall not make gods—yet they made gods, chapter xxxii. Apply Psal. cvi.—special aggravation—they made a calf in Horeb—weakness of our resolutions—O to be strengthened with might by the Spirit!
- March 27.**—*Scripture to be read*—Joshua v. *To be committed*—Heb. iv. 8, 9. *Subject*—Joshua. *Prominent topics of the Lesson*—Glance over the chapter, for the purpose of recalling the principal facts of the preceding history—passage of Jordan—circumcision—the forty years in the wilderness—the passover—the manna. The angel of the covenant appears to Joshua, as to Moses in the bush. Another rest than that of Canaan remaineth (Heb. iv.)
- April 3.**—*Scripture to be read*—1 Sam. viii. 1-9. *To be committed*—Ps. cvi. 14, 15. *Subject*—Samuel. *Prominent topics of the Lesson*—Samuel the last of the judges (name some of the others)—himself a good man, but his sons not like him—the people suffer, and have a right to complain to Samuel—but they prescribe to God—not only ask a king, but ask in order that they might be like all the nations ("come out from among them," &c.)—God displeased, yet granted their prayer—illustrate by it Psal. cvi. 15—also James iv. 3.
- April 10.**—*Scripture to be read*—2 Sam. xxii. 1-7. *To be committed*—Rev. v. 9, 10. *Subject*—David. *Prominent topics of the Lesson*—David when delivered praised God—so did others, as Moses at the Red Sea—the Psalms of David—this the xviii.—his enemies, who—what God was to him, a rock. &c.—how he, though a king, was saved from his enemies, verse 4. In heaven the redeemed sing the praise of their Redeemer, Rev. v.
- April 17.**—*Scripture to be read*—1 Kings v. 1-12. *To be committed*—Ps. xliii. 3, 4. *Subject*—Solomon. *Prominent topics of the Lesson*—Solomon—God had given him peace, and he employs it in serving God—Tyre and Sidon—their situation on the sea—their greatness then—their meanness now—Hiram's friendship for David and Solomon—it was of the Lord, who has the hearts of all men in his hand—the treaty—the design of it—the spirit in which it was concluded. The temple and the altar.

SECOND SERIES.

- March 20.**—*Scripture to be read*—Luke x. 38-42. *To be committed*—Prov. ii. 3-6. *Subject*—The family of Bethany—the two portions. *Prominent topics of the Lesson*—Bethany, the character and history of the family from John xi. Kindness of all the family—Martha's excessive carefulness—Mary, without forgetting hospitality, seeks first the kingdom. Sitting at Jesus' feet, this thing alone needful—good, ever enduring.
- March 27.**—*Scripture to be read*—Luke xii. 22-34. *To be committed*—1 Peter v. 6, 7. *Subject*—God's care—the little flock. *Prominent topics of the Lesson*—Trust in God's care—a lesson from the brutes, from our own frame, from vegetable life—(Solomon's glory)—Those who know God in Christ find him a Father—see Lord's prayer.—If you come to him by the altar, he is an exceeding joy, Ps. xliii.—The little flock—the Father's love—the treasure in heaven.
- April 3.**—*Scripture to be read*—Matt. xii. 14-21. *To be committed*—Rom. viii. 37-39. *Subject*—Chosen of God—the trust of the Gentiles, &c. *Prominent topics of the Lesson*—Then (v. 13) they plotted his death—in his retirement continued the work—Isa. xlii. 1. Characteristics of Christ, servant, chosen, beloved, Spirit upon him—gentle in operation, but the effect mighty—trust of the Gentiles.
- April 10.**—*Scripture to be read*—Matt. xii. 38-42. *To be committed*—Jer. iii. 20-22. *Subject*—The men of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba. *Prominent topics of the Lesson*—Why called adulterous (Jer. iii. 20)—demanding external signs, but resisting the power of the word (Luke xvii. 20, 21.) Exercise in the history of Nineveh (Jonah) and Queen of Sheba, 1 Kings x. A greater than Solomon is here.
- April 17.**—*Scripture to be read*—Matt. xiv. 1-14. *To be committed*—Ps. ciii. 8-10. *Subject*—The Baptist's death. *Prominent topics of the Lesson*—Herod, the son of the Herod mentioned Matt. ii.—His crime—John's faithfulness—firmness of character, see Luke vii. 24, 25.—Martyrdom of John—the uneasy conscience of the murderer.—Jesus retires, Matt. x. 33.—His compassion and power.