

Teachers' Department.

Sabbath School Scripture Lessons.

MARCH 27th, 1859.

Read—LUKE v. 18-39: The paralytic healed. GENESIS xxii. 1-19: Abraham's faith and obedience.

Recite—LUKE v. 12-15.

APRIL 3rd, 1859.

Read—LUKE vi. 1-19: The Sabbath and its claims. GENESIS xxiii. 1-20: Sarah's death and burial.

Recite—LUKE v. 27-32.

MESSENGER ALMANAC.

From March 20th to April 2nd, 1859.

Table with columns for Day, SUN., MOON., High Water at Halifax, and Windsor. Rows include dates from 20th to 2nd of the month.

\* For the time of HIGH WATER at Pictou, Pugwash, Wallace, and Yarmouth add 2 hours to the time at Halifax. \*\* For HIGH WATER at Annapolis, Digby, &c., and at St. John, N. B., add 3 hours to the time at Halifax.

A Madman in a Balloon.

AN EXCITING INCIDENT.—An affair of this nature took place some fifteen days or three weeks ago at the most, on the occasion of the last ascent but one of the celebrated and lucky aeronaut Mons. Godard. M. Godard took with him on that day, as his *compagnon de voyage*, a wealthy private gentleman, who paid 1,000 francs for the privilege of sharing in the perils of the expedition.

This done, furnished with his cord of safety, the madman commenced to climb among the ropes with the agility of a squirrel. He reached the balloon, and placed himself astride the semicircle. Once there, he rent the air with a shout of triumph, and drew his knife from his pocket. "What are you going to do?" asked M. Godard, who feared that he might have the idea of ripping open the balloon. "To make myself comfortable forthwith." Uttering these words, the madman cut slowly the cord of safety which M. Godard had attached to his body.

A Peep at Italy.

RELIGION AND PLEASURE HAND IN HAND.

The following from the Newark Sentinel, affords a pretty correct idea of the happy terms on which carnality and religion contrive to room together in sunny Italy. Through the magical operation of a church whose discipline is its chief boast, the moral fountain is made to send forth sweet water and bitter; and if there is one spot on earth where the well-known lines of the poet—

"And e'en in penance planning sins anew," is more applicable than another, assuredly it is there. The writer dates from Florence, Dec. 18th:

Religion and pleasure are the best of friends in Italy; one never interferes with the other; though Religion, being the humblest, sometimes serves as Pleasure's handmaid. If for instance, early mass or sentimental vespers be made Love's rendezvous, not an un-frequent occurrence. As a general thing, however, it is amicably agreed that Devotion shall have her hours and Pleasure hers. Whatever be the secret arrangement between conscience and the world, it is none the less interesting to the looker-on to see the eagerness with which all religions are observed.

Eating, by-the-by, is not among Italian pleasures, and has with the lower classes at least, no hours for its own. This may be owing to ignorance of what good eating is; a bite of coarse bread, washed down with sour wine, answers as nourishment; and this is what they eat for. Fasting, for them, after all, is not a severe penance. Gormandizing is rare here, even among those who might fare sumptuously every day. No; Italians are not gormands, far less epicures. Nor are comforts reckoned among their pleasures, or as promoting them. Love, with them, is never less ardent for lack of external fire; nor frolic less enjoyed for which a last bed is sold. Nor does religion cool in the unheated church. What devout Romanist feels the chill of the marble floor on which he kneels, or finds his prayers grow long as the season grows colder? Neither cold, nor heat; fatigue, nor hunger; aching limbs, nor a rickety back, shorten or hurry his devotions.

Nor will want of time do it; if the servant, or house-maid may not be allowed the hour of prayer—all hours of the day being working-hours—sleep is cut short for the daybreak-mass, or put off at midnight for the allotted

secret devotions; and should sleep surprise the weary worker in mumbling his task-prayers, there is a self-inflicted penance for this; the task in doubled next day, and all done by working and praying at the same time. A poor maid said the other day:

"I have so many prayers to say, that I can't put them all off for night, lest then I fall asleep before they are half through; so I repeat as many of them as I can at my work through the day."

Who shall deny that this is being "diligent in business, fervent in spirit." This same house-maid took (a holy theft,) from the boudoir of her mistress a rare statuette of Christ; hung it round with tattered drapery—the best she had—and put it in a niche of her chamber, beside a little painted Madonna, to assist her devotions! When detected, in a hunt for the missing image, she was found kneeling before it so devoutly, that her mistress shut the door without accusation, or reclaiming her lost treasure. A lamp was found, too, burning before it, which, on examination of the family oil-flask, was discovered to have been supplied therefrom.

And what will not an Italian do to conciliate the Madonna of his worship? Verily, the gods of Hindostan are not more rapacious than this ideal Virgin! It is only for her favorites that she is the compassionate Mother, though each of the faithful thinks himself her favored child, and never tires of worshipping her—certainly not of teasing her.

On Sundays and fete-days one sees these ruling passions, religion and pleasure, equally illustrated. Watch that church yonder! From daylight till noon, two opposite currents of worshippers move perpetually to and from the steps—some half-dozen masses being said at different hours during the time. No matter how inclement the weather; cold, tempest, rain, never diminish the numbers. Marvellous, of a wet morning, is the show of umbrellas, dragged petticoats and robust ankles! Not less diverting the display of Sunday clothes on a fine day. At any time it is an impressive sight to see such numbers crowding to the house of prayer.

A still more imposing scene is often witnessed here at night, when the sacramental bell, preceding the holy eucharist to some death bed, summons to prayer a whole neighborhood. From the windows round about—curtained by night a moment since—see light after light peering through the darkness, even as the stars one after another light up the windows of heaven. Now the solemn procession approaches; wax lights, like planets, revolve round the centre, where the priest in his sacred robes bears the holy wafer under a glittering canopy; while the sepulchral chant of priestly satellites awes the retiring darkness, and leads the circumambient prayer for the dying. Now the measured tread halts at a certain door where Death waits to enter, but steps back apace to let the priest go in before him. Suddenly the surrounding lights disappear; darkness again advances, and silence reigns for a little space; when the warning-bell once more calls out the stars. The dying is shriven; the wafer frozen on the stiffening tongue! the parting soul ready for its final passage. The whole scene has been daguerreotyped on the beholders' memory!

It may be the following night that another procession is seen going, not to, but from, that same dwelling. A funeral chant now intones the air, and torch-lights glare luridly through the darkness. The dead is borne to his long home! If riches outlive him, his bier is covered with velvet and gold; a cushion, richly embroidered, glitters on the pall; the chant flows willingly from many voices, and the dead-march keeps decorous time. If, on the contrary, only the poor man hath ceased to want, Poverty is his sole mourner; the coarse, undecorated pall hangs irreverently, and the hurried step of the bearers is unmeasured by the mocking tones of the meagre requiem. In this country only paid mourners follow the dead.

Let us change the scene. It is a Sunday or a festa: Church-going over—the hours of promenading come. See, in the multitudes thronging the walks, the same faces that flocked churchward in the morning. Religion's hour now yields to Pleasure's. The organ is exchanged for the royal band, the *misere* for the polka. What a gay scene! Hundreds of liveried carriages—open to display the beauty and fashion within—bring up on the piazza of the Cascine; while thousands of the contented, well-dressed bourgeoisie on foot, surround the musicians, or saunter along the walks, chatting, smiling, drinking in the sweets of leisure and pleasure.

Then comes the evening's amusements. The theatre *a la mode* and the people's theatres are all ablaze with lights, and astir with pleasurable expectation. Fashion is on the *qui vive* for the rustle of the Great Ristori's robes—the tragedy queen—the *Queen of Tragedy*! Look! there she comes—the spirit of classic drama, the eloquent interpreter of the poets, greatest of living tragediennes, consummate *artiste*—whose every pose is a tableau, whose every movement a poetic passage! But, her history is a chapter by itself. Tragedy is not for the people; they cannot give ten, fourteen, fifteen dollars for a box; nor even pay the three paul entrance-fee to the pit and thence look up to the star. No, only heaven's stars shine for them; but they have their compensations. A half-paul's (four cents) entertainment gives them no mean return for their money. They, too, have their theatrical *Sunday*-amusement; it may be an opera and ballet, both well given, for that little price. Where is amusement so cheap as in Florence?

So all classes turn from religion to pleasure—from the church to the theatre. Is it the pageant that attracts to both places? Is it that both alike furnish aliment for emotional nature? Is it that lovers of God and lovers of pleasure are one? Or, is it that religion is a principle, not necessarily implied by fervor in religious worship?

Agriculture.

Sheep Husbandry.

At a recent Massachusetts Legislative Agricultural meeting, the subject for discussion was "Sheep and Sheep Husbandry."

Hon. RICHARD S. FAY, of Boston, occupied the Chair. He apologized, because of ill health and engrossing avocations, for want of preparation in introducing the subject. Sheep husbandry was a most important item in the husbandry of the State. Referring to the system of stock keeping, and the proposition laid down at a former meeting—that no farm could be properly managed unless it kept a stock capable of consuming its produce—he took up the question of what was the best kind of stock to keep, especially with reference to the progressive improvement of the farm. The prominent question is—What shall we do to renovate our worn-out pastures? Cattle had been tried, and the consequence had been failure; for in connection with cattle culture, the true American system was to take all out of the farm and return nothing to it. In the mind of the speaker, sheep husbandry was the best means of renovating the soil. Top dressing was out of the question; for the pastures would have to be brought to a reasonable state of fertility before this could be done with effect. The proneness of cultivated grass lands to go back to a natural state was also a consideration to be thought of, and the means of keeping them in good condition another. Sheep grazing would do this more effectually than any other, as the excrement of sheep, in its nature, and in the manner it was distributed over the soil, restored to pastures what they had lost from feeding, kept down the natural and coarser grasses, and retained the fertility of the lands in a greater measure than by the use of any other description of grazing stock. Mr. Fay said he possessed 200 acres which, ten years ago, would have starved ten cows to death. It was a matter of too much expense to cultivate it—in fact, it was no more in his estimation than a piece of waste land. It was of no use, only as it was liable to call for a tax. On 100 acres he put 150 sheep, four years ago, and now, on the same pasture, there are fifteen to twenty cattle grazed six months in every year. This was through pasturing with sheep. The land was rocky, and could not be brought into cultivation through any other means.

As to winter-keep of sheep, it was an advantage to the farmer, although it was thought to be different. They required less care, did not demand housing so much as other stock—they requiring only a yard, hay-rack, and a shed during storms; they were less liable to disease than any other stock; in fact, all they demanded was the simple attention of feeding, and they improve in condition in the same ratio as cattle feeding for the shambles. Sheep consume two pounds of hay, per day, or its equivalent. Eight pounds of roots would be an equivalent. As compared with cattle, sheep produce much more fertilizing manure than any other kind of stock. Spengel, a German chemist, said that 1000 sheep would produce as much manure in twenty-four hours as would put an acre of land in the best condition. This looked rather strange to Mr. Fay when he first saw it, and he determined to look into it. This would give fifteen well-manured acres out of as many tons of hay—a rather startling statement. Professor Johnston, in an article on the comparative value of manures, ratified it by stating that sheep droppings were as 12 to 7 in fertilizing qualities, compared with the excrements of cows—nearly one-half more. In conjunction with other stocks, and not at all to displace them, all farmers ought to keep sheep. Their droppings are as good as guano, and few farms were independent of the use of such manures—for few were without spots where it could be top-dressed by the use of sheep, when any other means would not prove half so effectual. Sheep, also, had always a ready market, which was another advantage they had over hay, grain or other produce.

As to wool, New England manufactured 40,000,000 of pounds, when Massachusetts, with lands adapted to the support of half a million of sheep, only produced the paltry quantity of 400,000 pounds. In England there were about 44,000,000 sheep; while in the United States, where cheap land and other facilities were superior, we had only 15,000,000. The fact appealed to our patriotism. Gentlemen here wore broad-cloth coats and pants, and not a thread of them were grown within three thousand miles of where they were. Mr. Fay concluded by appealing to the gentlemen of the Legislature to furnish farmers such protection as would protect their interests; and, as he had endeavoured to show, those of the common country.

After addresses from several practical farmers on the subject, The PRESIDENT spoke of the fertilizing properties of sheep manure in the matter of grasses, which showed a large per centage over other manures. He also said that the profit of sheep per annum, as represented to him by a competent authority, was equivalent to the annual value of the flock, independently of the other advantages which had been specified.

The subject for next discussion is, "Fruit, and How to Raise it."