

Youths' Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, February 14th, 1864.

Read—ACTS XXV. 13-27: Paul brought before Agrippa. 1 SAMUEL IV. 1-11: The ark brought into the camp of Israel.

Recite—ISAIAH III. 5, 6.

Sunday, February 21st, 1864.

Read—ACTS XXVI. 1-14: Paul's defence before Agrippa. 1 SAMUEL IV. 12-22: The ark taken by the Philistines.

Recite—1 JOHN II. 1, 2, 12.

FOUND ON THE BATTLE-FIELD.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

Little Ulrich got up, one cold morning in the late autumn, from the heap of straw that he called his bed. A miserable hovel on the outskirts of a poor little town was his home, and of this they had only one room on the ground floor, of which a few broken articles of furniture, that had evidently been once handsome, were the only conveniences.

The little fellow—for he was not yet ten years old—stuffed into the cracked stove the few shavings he had gathered the day before, watched until the flames reared and kindled into a comfortable fire, and then set on an earthen porringer, into which he had put the mixture of flour and water that was to make his invalid mother's morning meal.

By the time his arrangements were all made the poor boy was almost stiff with the cold, but the heat of the flame, and his own warm breath, which he blew on his hands, somewhat warmed them, and at last he began to feel quite right again. Daring now to one side of the room, where it was still perfectly dark, he knelt down and offered up earnestly his simple prayer; then seizing a heavy distaff he brought it back to the stove, laid it down, and going quietly out of the door to the pump in the yard, he washed his face, head, and hands well with the icy water. This done he again returned to his distaff, and sitting down beside the bed he drew out fibres from the rich golden flax and wrapped the fine threads about it, and showed himself no mean hand at his trade.

Presently the mother awoke and called his name. It was but a breath of sound, but he heard it, and in an instant was at her side. A few words of kind inquiry, and the boy handed her the food he had prepared, at sight of which her eyes brightened with gratitude, and while she ate it the child made his own meal of the dry crust, the remains of yesterday's meal, soaked in a cup of water.

"My own dear boy!" said the poor woman, pointing to her little porringer, after she had eaten from it a few mouthfuls, "where did you get the flour for so much of this delicious porridge?"

Drawing up his bare feet from the cold earthen floor, and tucking them under him, the boy smiled and pointed to his spinning-wheel. "Mother," said he, "has not God said that if we will but trust him, bread shall be given and water shall be sure? And don't we trust in him and ask him every day to help us? You know that the merchant who has given me this work has been very slow in paying for it; but yesterday, just as the last spoonful of the flour was used, he sent me part of the money he owed us and promised to pay the rest to-morrow. So you see that we shall have plenty for some days to come, and I think it is God who has sent it."

The poor mother, however, knew much better how far the rich merchant's "to-morrow" was to be trusted than her hopeful boy did. Surrounded by luxury, he had no idea what "want" meant, and to him it seemed a matter of perfect indifference whether the pittance were paid now or a month hence. "Such a trifle," he said to himself, "cannot make much difference any way." Yet that trifle was their all.

Gazing upon the bright though sad face of the child, whose rich black locks now hung in tangled masses over his broad pale brow, she asked: "And, Ulrich, if the merchant should not find it convenient to pay you to-day or to-morrow for the flax you have spun for him, will you not have to go hungry to bed?—for you have given me all, and that hard crust cannot surely satisfy your young appetite."

Ulrich closed his lips resolutely and made no reply.

Ulrich, my child! What are you to do starve?"

"No!" replied Ulrich—"beg! There is no degradation in doing that for my mother!"

The sick mother started, and raised herself in her bed. "Beg? You, Ulrich, beg? And for me, who is not?" "Ulrich, I am not your mother!"

The boy turned his dark eyes upon her in blank astonishment, and almost gasped for breath. "Was he all alone, then? Had he not even a mother?"

She read his thoughts and taking in here his cold and trembling hand, as he now leaned over her, said: "Listen to me my more than child, and I will tell you all about it."

"It is now about seven years since I was travelling with my husband toward Dresden, where an aged aunt of his lived. It was during those dreadful wars with France, that so desolated our beautiful fatherland, and the old lady had written to him to beg that in the disordered state of the country he would come to her, for she was afraid to live longer alone. Arranging his small affairs for he was book-keeper to a mercantile house in Fulda, we set out as soon as possible; but before we could succeed in reaching her, the kind old

aunt, who had been to him like a second mother was dead and buried. We were travelling in a small wagon that we had hired for the purpose, and providentially the old lady, knowing the difficulties of getting along in those times, had left a small roll of gold pieces to defray the expenses of our journey in case we should arrive too late. The contents of the roll amounted to about one hundred thalers, and were to us a most acceptable gift. The kind-hearted master of the house in which the aunt had dwelt handed us the little package immediately, and begged earnestly that we would remain as his guests for a day or two, to recover from the fatigues of our journey and the shock we had received on our arrival. This invitation we gladly accepted, and after a stay of two days, we were just about setting out to return home, when we heard that a severe battle was expected to take place shortly, and our kind entertainer again advised us to delay our departure a little longer, until we could hear something more definite on the subject.

"My sainted* husband thought differently, however, and determined to hurry on as rapidly as possible to Hamburg, where employment had been offered him in a branch of the same mercantile house, and where we were now to live. We met plenty of soldiers on the road, but they did not molest us; our passes were good, and they allowed us to come and go as we liked.—On the second morning, however, in a little town where we stopped over night, we heard at a distance the roar of cannon, and soon found that unless we very much hastened our movements we should be shut in between the contending armies, which were rapidly approaching each other.

"I became now extremely anxious, and begged my poor husband, with tears, to hurry on in an entirely different direction; but he thought that our most prudent course would be to await where we were the result. He thought that perhaps the engagement might not take place as near our present position as seemed probable, and thus the difficulty would not be as great for us as we now feared. The sound of the firing, however, came nearer, and presently a large body of cavalry rushed by us at full speed, cannons and powder wagons came after them, and then regiment after regiment of foot-soldiers, the whole followed by a troop of idlers and lancers on—all Frenchmen.

"They were not long in showing their intentions. Establishing themselves in the houses of the little town, they soon arranged their batteries around it and the ponderous wagons, on which the heavy pieces were drawn; and the glint of the bayonets in the hands of the artillery met the eye everywhere. The frightened townsfolk took refuge in their cellars, where, though the roar of the guns and the noise of the battle came fearfully to them, their lives were tolerably safe. The struggle did not last long: in less than an hour the French were routed, and again fled; the Prussians and Austrians followed them, and in a little while the town was again as still as ever. We crept out of our cellar, and for a wonder found our horse unharmed in the stall, and our wagon untouched where we left it. "Now," said my husband to me, "is our time to move—now the road is open before us."

"The horse was soon harnessed to the vehicle and we started, the roar of battle sounding far behind us.

"Our way led directly over the battle-field, and, O merciful Father! never again let my living eyes rest upon such a scene as was that day spread out before them! Even close up to the town lay the wounded and the dead promiscuously heaped together, and the further we went the more fearful it became. Alas! what a state of things! Dead and mangled men covering the down-trodden grain, that they were deluging with their still warm blood! The butchered victims lay in rows as they had fallen, rank after rank—men and horses all together—nothing but murder, blood, and destruction! It made us faint to look about us, and my husband had to use the greatest care in guiding our horse, lest we should pass over the body of some poor fellow who was still alive. Even upon the high-road, broken-down cannons, crushed ammunition wagons, dead horses, and men lined every step of the way, and while I held my hands before my eyes to shut out the sight, it made my very soul sick to hear the groans and cries and prayers to which I tried in vain to close my ears!

"Suddenly my husband exclaimed: "Greta, see there!" I looked up in terror, and saw a little child scarce two years old, running weeping and screaming amid that scene of death, calling "Papa! Mama!" and its little hands and rich dress red with the blood of the murdered bodies it was trying to turn over in search of a parent's face. As soon as he saw us he came running toward us asking for his papa and mama; and when he found we could not restore them to him he burst again into a wild cry of grief. I took the poor little creature in my arms and with some difficulty quieted him. At last he fell asleep in my lap. "What shall we do with him?" I asked.

"Leave him in the next town," said my husband; "where his relatives, even if his parents are dead, will most probably come to look for him. His dress shows they are great folks.—The town overseers are bound to take care of him until he is claimed, and I hope it won't be long before he is."

"We were three hours from the next town, and on the way we questioned every one we met but no one knew anything about him. In the town they seemed shy about receiving him, and we could not leave him in the streets, so I made up my mind to take him with us. To this my husband readily consented, and we left with the proper authorities our name and address, in case inquiry was made for him. On the way we questioned him, but all we could get was that his father's name was 'papa,' and his mother's

'mama,' but he chattered a good deal about a coach, and his papa's horse, and his own pony that he was to have when he was old enough, and many other things, that, with his handsome dress, showed his family to be one of wealth if not of rank. In Hamburg we renewed our inquiries, and advertised for months, but never was the least notice taken of it.

"That, Ulrich, is all the tale. You were that child. The clothes you wore, a small miniature, and a rich gold chain by which it was hung about your neck, I have carefully kept. You are old enough now to take care of them yourself, and you will find them in that chest.—Thrown, as you seemed to be, by God himself, upon my care, I have tried to do for you the best I could; and while my Franz lived we did very well; but oh, my dear boy, in the troubles that have since brought us to this pinching poverty, a thousand times have you repaid me for all!"

She stopped exhausted, and the boy could only hold her toil-hardened, withered hand in his, and water it with tears. But from that hour he redoubled his efforts to supply her with comforts. By a merciful Providence the grateful boy was, not long after, restored to his equally grateful parents; and in the ease and luxury in which old Greta Volkshim ended her days, she realized the truth of God's faithful promise: "He who giveth to one of these little ones a cup of cold water in my name, shall by no means lose his reward."—Exchange.

INFLUENCE OF HYMNS.

Magdeburg is memorable in the story of hymns, for it was at the cruel sacking of it by Tilly that the school children marched across the market-place singing, and so enraged him that he bid them all to be slain; and from that day, say the chroniclers, fortune departed from him, nor did he smile again. Other hymns were more fortunate, for we read of a certain rough captain who would not bate a crown of the thirty thousand he levied off a captured town, till at last the archdeacon summoned the people together, saying, "Come, my children, we have no more either audience or grace with men, let us plead with God," and when they had entered the church, and sung a hymn, the fine was remitted to a thousand. The same hymn played as merciful a part in another town, which was to be burned for contumacy. When mercy had been asked in vain, the clergymen marched out with twelve boys to the General's tent, and sang there before him, when to their amazement, he fell upon the pastor's neck and embraced him. He had discovered in him an old student friend, and spared the place; and still the afternoon service at Pegan is commenced with the memorable hymn that saved it. Of another, it is said that a famous robber having been changed himself, sang it among his men, so that many of them were changed also. Rough hearts, indeed, seem often the most susceptible. A major in command of thirty dragoons entered a quiet vicarage, and demanded that within an hour more than the vicar could give in a year. To cheer her father, one of his daughters took her guitar, and sang to it one of Gerhardt's hymns. Presently the door softly opened; the officer stood at it, and motioned her to continue; and when the hymn was sung, thanked her for the lesson, ordered out the dragoons, and rode off.—Macmillan's Magazine.

COMFORTABLE.

I married young. My husband was grave, sincere, and of few words; I ardent, excitable, and full of rapture. One day some young friends came in, to whom I eagerly showed the newly-arrived parlor furniture, among which was a spring-bottomed hair-cloth mahogany rocking-chair, a rarer article than nowadays. Everything was "splendid," "elegant," "charming," "magnificent." Their enthusiastic ejaculations delighted me. At last they went away, and my husband came home. "Oh this chair," I exclaimed, throwing myself into it, "is it not splendid, magnificent, enchanting?"

"It is very comfortable," he answered, slowly and gravely, after a short pause. "Comfortable!" I inly said; "how cold! Comfortable! and is that all?" Tears rushed to my eyes. "We can never, never sympathize. Comfortable." I repeated to myself, "comfortable."

Dinner came, but I could not regain my spirits. The meal was unseasonal and soon over, when I escaped to my chamber to brood over our fancied differences of character. "Comfortable! what coldness."

It was not long before footsteps were heard on the stairs, and my husband, whom I had supposed gone, opened the door. Hastily brushing away my tears, I looked intently out of the window. After opening and taking something from a drawer without speaking, his silence confirming my accusations, he approached me, and looking as it were straight into my heart, said kindly: "I do not find in every-day life anything corresponding to what I suppose 'magnificent,' 'splendid,' 'enchanting,' to mean; in fact I do not understand those words as you are in the habit of using them, for they do not express things as they really are. In this plain world, this world of perplexity, trouble, defeated hopes, we can expect little more than to be comfortable. And how much does that sum up of what is within our reach—freedom from ill, the absence of annoyances, ease, rest, tranquillity. What then is like the sober certainty of comfortable?" And then he left me to sober second thoughts, which, like good angels, rushed to the rescue. "How true, and wise, and sensible," they said. "With all your magnificent notions, you are very unhappy, and are likely

to make your husband so." After a pretty uncomfortable afternoon, I began to think there might be something very good and substantial in being comfortable, after all, and I was determined to look into it.

Exaggerated language employed on trivial occasions spoils that simplicity and singleness of mind so necessary to a right judgment of ourselves, ours, and others.—Christian Almanac.

EVERY ONE IN HIS OWN WAY.

A LITTLE FABLE.

"What, no farther!" said the minute-hand to the hour-hand of the time-piece. "Why, I have been all around the dial since we parted; and there are you, just one figure from the place where I left you."

"And yet I have done as much work in the time as you have," answered the hour-hand.

"How do you make that out?" said the other, as he advanced to pass him.

"So," was the reply. "Your journey all round, and mine from figure to figure, are each an hour's value; all are not able to arrive at the same conclusions with the same ease and readiness. But this is no fault on either side; only they who fancy that because they are always in a bustle, they are doing the work of the whole world, are mistaken, they pume themselves on an importance and superiority by no means belonging to them. If you were to creep like me, the day would last, nobody knows how long; and if I were to gallop like you, it would be over before it had well begun. Let us each keep our own pace, and then the business we are both upon will be well done between us."

"All right," said the minute-hand in the distance; "I'm nearly out of hearing now, so keep anything more you have to say till I pass you again."

GREAT PREACHING.—The late Dr. N. W.

Taylor was wont to relate how, at one time, there was a member of the Seminary who seemed so dull and inapt that he felt compelled, out of kindness to him and regard for the church, to advise him no longer to look toward the ministry as his calling, but betake himself to some plain, honest trade. Soon after, the Professor heard that his unfortunate student had been preaching at a place where he himself had officiated. Meeting a member of his congregation, he asked, with a little latent amusement at the expected answer: "You had Mr. — to preach for you last Sunday; how did you like him?" The parishioner did not recognise the person with whom he was speaking, and answered frankly: "We liked him well, and much better than we did Dr. Taylor!" "Since that," said the Doctor. "I have been careful about passing adversely upon the qualifications of young men for the ministry, or predicting that they cannot find a people to be pleased and profited by them."

CONFESSION BRINGS RELIEF.—If your heart be very grieved, do, I pray you, remember that confession is one of the most rapid ways of getting relief. While the banks hold good the lakes swell, let them break, and the water is drained off. Let a vent be found for the swollen tarn up yonder on the mountain, and the mass of water which might otherwise inundate the valleys will flow in fertilizing streams.—When you have a festering wound the surgeon lets in the lancet and gives you ease. So confession brings peace. Would to God without any delay thou who needest a Saviour wouldst go to him and confess thy sins right plainly.—Jesus is no hard-hearted foe, no cruel judge. He loves thee. Awakened sinners, He will love to hear that story of thine; and ere thou hast finished it, He will give the kiss of love and say, "I have blotted out thy sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud thy transgressions." Trust the immense generosity of Jesus infinitely tender heart to give thee thy soul's desire, the complete and perfect forgiveness of thy sin.

THE HISTORY OF THOUSANDS.—Thousands of men breathe, move, and live—pass off the stage of life—are heard of no more. Why? They do not a particle of good in the world, and none were blessed by them as the instrument of their redemption; not a word they spoke could be recalled, and so they perished; their light went out in darkness, and they were not remembered more than the insect of yesterday. Will you thus live and die, O man immortal? Live for something. Do good and leave behind you a monument of virtue that the storm of time can never destroy.

GOOD TEMPER is like a sunny day; it sheds a brightness over everything. It is a sweetener of toil, and the soother of disquietude. A preserved temper is a good preserver.

About ten years since there were living in Great Falls, N. H., two clergymen whose names were M'Collum and Hooper. Their difference of opinion on creeds did not prevent them from being warm friends. Meeting on the sidewalk one summer morning, M'Collum says:

"Come, Hooper, let's take a walk." Hooper, looking up at the sky, answered, "I think I won't; I am afraid it is going to rain."

"What!" replied Mac, "you a Baptist and afraid of water?"

"O, no," replied Hooper; "it is not the water, but the method of application that I object to."

"The best prayers have often more groans than words."

"In times of affliction we commonly meet with the sweetest experiences of the love of God."—Bunyan.