

Youth's Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, February 12th, 1865. LUKE XIII. 18-35: Parables of the mustard seed and leaven. 2 SAMUEL I. 17-27: David's lamentation for Saul and Jonathan.

Sunday, February 19th, 1865. LUKE XIV. 1-15: Christ teacheth humility. 2 SAMUEL II. 1-17: David made King in Hebron.

The Golden-crested Wren.

A LEGEND.

Many, many years ago, when there were no railways or telegraphs, when the swiftest things were the wings of little birds, and the passage over the great ocean was left very much to the swallow or the redwing, it happened that, in a tall fir-tree, lived a wren and his family.

The wind often rocked that stately tree, and tossed its branches; the rain, and the snow, and the mist, knew every nook in its thick foliage, and every twist in its red boughs. But some nooks there were where they could not enter. They might run off the resinous pines in silvery drops, or rest on their thick stiff points in icy piles, but no farther could they go.

Very little birds were the wrens, no bigger in those old days than now; but (says the legend) there was one difference—the soft brown heads boasted no golden crown.

Well, it was one sharp morning in early spring; cold east winds had been blowing for many weeks, nipping the few violet buds which had tried to peep out under the hedges, and telling them plainly enough that they had better wait awhile.

The wren and his family had had a hard winter, but they had managed to live on with the help of those warm nooks; and now it was time to think about a nest. The willow wren, who claimed to be a sort of cousin, had been seen once or twice, and that was a sure sign of April; and so Mrs. Wren had been busy for several days hunting for moss and twigs, and had already finished the outside of the nest, and only wanted the blankets and counterpanes inside.

Well, how does the nest get-on? asked a pert sparrow one morning, as—with head cocked on one side—he alighted on the fir-tree. I shall wait a bit for mine till somebody else builds it for me. Ha! ha! that's my way! laughed the sparrow.

Is that very kind—to take somebody's nest? asked the wren. Very wise! replied the sparrow. The wren made no answer. She was off for more wool, to goon with her nest. Work away, little wren!

Somebody else was out this cold morning, long ago. It was a tall, weary-looking man, with a little boy. He was a poor serf, and worked for the baron who lived in the gray castle on yonder hill. He, too, had found the winter long and hard; and as he looked down on the child by his side, and saw how thin he was, and how loosely the sheepskin hung about his sharp little shoulders, he muttered bitter, angry words, for his heart was sad and heavy.

But just at that moment a tiny bird alighted on a branch of the forest overhead and chirped merrily. It seemed as if it said: "Cheer up, brother; better days will come; and as the child caught sight of it, he clapped his hands and ran joyously after it through the rustling leaves, and a little lamp of hope began to glimmer in the heart of the poor serf. If his child could be happy, that was something to live for.

That little bird was the wren, on one of his journeys from the nest. Chirping still, he flew away to a neighbouring hut. It was built of logs from the forest, through the chinks of which you might see the feeble flicker of a fire. The wren peeped timidly in, and there was a poor sick girl crouching on the ground by the side of a few burning sticks. She looked very sad and hopeless, and was leaning her head on her hand.

Then the wren perched on the roof of the hut, and sang a low, sweet song. He told her that he and his dear little family had often been cold and hungry in the long winter, but never quite starved; that they had sometimes seen the fierce jay go by, and had caught the blue gleam of his feathers through the leaves, and yet had escaped falling a prey to his sharp beak; and so he had learned to hope and trust, and to think that some one very strong and kind was watching over even such small weak things as he with an untiring love; and if so, why not ever man also? So sang the little wren, till he felt as happy as if it had been the warmest summer day.

What a pity the poor girl could not understand! Perhaps she did a little; at any rate, she very much liked to hear him. It was like the voice of a friend. The wren thought she knew all about what he was saying, and after that he tried every day to sing to man of hope, and love, and trust.

What a pity if man did not understand! But a bright angel—coming down from heaven on some mission of mercy—heard the song. He heard it a long way off, for it was one he knew well in his own home. It seemed that the little wren had learned one of the songs of heaven; and as the angel listened, he felt full of joy to think that the glory of the Highest could reach even the humblest creature, and light up its innocent heart.

So he came near and touched the bird's tiny head, and lo, at his touch the feathers turned to gold; and ever since, this kind of wren has had a golden crown, because, in his little way, he tried to teach man that God is love. So says the legend.

Would any of the children like a golden crown? Then let them remember that a contented heart which trusts in God is always happy; and that to those who trust him, and live a life of love to him and to their fellow-creatures, he will give "the blessing of goodness." He will "set a crown of pure gold on their heads."

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An Aged Minister's Testimony to the Bible.

A British Standard correspondent mentions an interesting incident of the proceedings of the North-Western London Bible Auxiliary meeting, presided over by the Rev. C. J. P. Eyre, rector of Marylebone. Among the speakers was the Ven. and Rev. James Stratton. When Mr. Stratton rose there was first loud applause, then profound silence while he spoke. In the course of his remarks, Mr. Stratton said—I love the Bible. I loved it in my youth, and in my mature years I studied it with all the strength of my intellect, and now that I am old and feeble, its truths surround me with perpetual sunshine, and, though I speak with a tremulous voice, yet I look forward to the time when, amidst ineffable glory, it will break forth into a seraph's song.—This beautiful testimony produced a lively impression. Both the chairman and the Rev. Charles Dallas Marston addressed the aged gentleman in most affectionate terms, and thanked him for his noble testimony to the value of God's Word.

NOVEL CURE FOR THE TOOTHACHE.—In a certain border town not far from this place, there lived an old woman, who, being almost at her wit's end with toothache, bethought herself of a cure. Knowing the causes of lockjaw, she thought the thumb of the left hand must be connected with the teeth or gums, and therefore resolved to try a mustard poultice on the thumb. Strange to say, it had the desired effect of entirely removing the sting. Such a cure, so cheap and simple, is surely worth a trial by those afflicted with toothache, especially since the discoverer herself was a victim, and can give her own testimony as to the efficacy of the remedy.—Record.

ANTE-DILUVIAN SKELETONS IN BELGIUM.—A discovery of great interest has just been made at Eysden, near Nice, in Belgium. Some laborers while digging the earth, came upon five human skeletons, which appear to belong to the antediluvian period. These bones, which are perfectly preserved, lay immediately on the gravel, that is to say, they were covered by the entire bed of alluvial matter. If the rumor is to be believed, the bones are of unusual proportions, and a medical man who was called upon to examine them said they belonged to a gigantic race. It is also stated that some more skeletons were found next day very near to the others.

A NEW DISCOVERY.—It is stated in an English paper, that a new discovery, that wonderful effects may be obtained by watering fruit trees and vegetables with a solution of sulphate of iron. Under this system beans will grow to nearly double the size, and will acquire a much more savory taste. The pear seems to be particularly adapted to this treatment. Old nails thrown into water and left to rust there will impart to it all the necessary qualities for forcing vegetation as described.

In the body of a whale which was caught in Davis Straits in the 24th September was found embedded, two or three inches beneath the skin, a piece of a harpoon, about 18 inches long. On one side of it was engraved the words, "Traveller, Peterhead," and on the other "1858." This vessel was lost about eight years ago in the Cumberland Straits when prosecuting the whale fishery there, and it is therefore clear that the harpoon must have remained in the fish for that time at least.

HORNLESS CATTLE.—It is the practice of some farmers, to cut off the horns of heifer calves, and rear the wound with a hot iron, to make them fitter companies for sheep. The result is that the horns either do not grow at all, or but very slightly and irregularly. We are informed also, that cows thus made hornless, have repeatedly borne calves upon which no horns ever grew.

No man living, says Judge French, can show a good orchard of grafted fruit which was kept in grass the first ten years of its life. It is a point settled beyond controversy that orchards to be healthy and productive, must be cultivated most of the time.

Pigeons are hatched in eighteen days; chickens in twenty-one; turkeys in twenty-six; ducks and geese in thirty.

Some men are too modest to set good examples, and too vain to follow them.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

By Rev. CHARLES TUPPER, D. D.

CHAPTER IV.

LABORS AS A LICENTIATE.

(No. 10.)

Having determined, in compliance with urgent request, to spend a part of the winter at Five Islands and vicinity, I set out for that place on the 17th day of December, going by the way of Halifax and Truro.

On arriving at Halifax I called on Rev. John Burton, and, being personally unknown to him, as an introduction presented my License. When he saw that it was signed by Rev. Edward Manning, he remarked, "You have a good man's name there." He then immediately directed me to pray. As it was not the usual time for family prayer, the impression on my mind was, that he wished to make trial of my facility in that exercise. I knelt, however, though under much embarrassment, and endeavored to address the throne of grace. It was subsequently ascertained that this venerable man of God was accustomed, in imitation of the pious example of Daniel, (vi. 10.) to pray with his family "three times a day;" and that when I came to his door, a little after noon, he had just read a portion of Scripture, and was about to engage in prayer.

It had been my expectation to enjoy the privilege of hearing Elder Burton, whose praise was in the gospel throughout all the Churches, preach once on the Lord's day; but in the morning he said the people would expect to hear me, as the stranger; he declined to lead in the afternoon, alleging that numbers would come out with the expectation of hearing a discourse from me; and after that meeting, he said the congregation would be nearly doubled in the evening, and they must not be disappointed. As it was a fixed principle with me not to refuse, the pleasure and profit anticipated had to be relinquished.

At that time the number of white people connected with the Baptist Church in Halifax was quite limited; but Elder Burton bestowed much labor on the colored population there, at Preston and other adjacent places; and his efforts were evidently blessed to the present and future welfare of many of them. His affection and kindness to them were remarkable. I saw him meet one from an out-station. He counselled and admonished him with much earnestness and tenderness, and then bade him farewell, with an affectionate shake of the hand. It then occurred to him to give some further advice or admonition; and he closed it in the same manner. From some additional thought presented to his mind, he repeated this several times before they parted.

Though Brother Burton was not a popular preacher, and few white people were accustomed to assemble in his small place of worship, yet he was deservedly held in high esteem by the pious of all denominations, and, indeed, by the community at large.

A Pedobaptist gentleman, who was engaged in teaching a large school, invited me to breakfast with him. He spoke of Rev. Mr. Burton in terms of unqualified commendation. When reference was made to the sentiments maintained by him and his Baptist brethren, my friend remarked, "I know you are right; but," added he, "I think I can do more good where I am." Undoubtedly his candor was commendable; but the consistency of declining to carry out one's convictions of right, and neglecting known duty, with a view to greater usefulness, is very questionable. It says strongly of "doing evil that good may come."

After preaching at the house of brother D. Webber, in Dutch Village, I proceeded on my journey. Being informed that there were no Baptists living near the road between that place and Truro, I inquired for one of the most quiet public houses; and was directed to a Mr. G.'s at Lower Stewiack, and tarried there for the night. The next morning serious indisposition compelled me to remain. Sitting down disconsolately, I noticed, with despair, that as travellers came in rapid succession, each one that entered, or the foremost, if more were in company, immediately called for "a half pint," and that invariably with some profane word, or expression. If this, thought I, is the best tavern on the road, what must the world be? In justice, however, to the landlady, it ought to be acknowledged, that, on being apprized of my illness,

she attentively endeavoured to minister to my relief. When a brother B. DeWolfe, who lived in that region, providentially called at the house, she informed him that there was a stranger there sick and in bed, whom she judged to be a Baptist preacher. As his place was too far distant for me to go thither, he obligingly took me to the house of bro. S. Woodworth. In that Christian family, the utmost kindness was exercised toward me. That house became a welcome and pleasant home for me, in my journeyings to and fro during many subsequent years. By the next Sabbath my health was so much improved that I was able to preach to a few people who met at bro. Woodworth's.

On the day following I reached the hospitable dwelling of the late Deacon David Page, of Truro. At this time a delightful Christian friendship was commenced with this pious and excellent couple, which was continued with mutual pleasure to the close of their lives. The remembrance of it, with the hope of its personal renewal in the bright world of glory, still imparts grateful sensations.

At the termination of the year 1816 the following reflections were entered in my Diary. "The Lord has brought me to the close of this year. His goodness and mercy have followed me through this season, as well as through all the rest of my life. But O! how little do I realize it! I have great reason to be thankful that I have been preserved from open gross vice, which would equal the cause of religion; but alas I have equal reason to bewail my sinfulness before God."

For the Christian Messenger.

FREE SCHOOLS FOR N. SCOTIA.

The new School law is a noble attempt to do a great and much needed work—to improve and elevate Common Schools, and to diffuse Education as far as possible among the people. That the law is not perfect is not surprising, considering the difficult and complicated nature of the subject. Besides, perfection is of slow growth; and Legislative wisdom has heretofore failed to produce at the first attempt so desirable a result. But whatever be its imperfections, the School Law possesses many excellent qualities which should commend it to the favourable consideration of the people. It gives the people a high, but not too high a standard of Education; those who say it is too high, ought on this subject to learn more, or say less. It aims to stimulate and encourage teachers in their important and responsible work; alas to prevent the waste of public money, and the imposition not unfrequently practised on the people by ignorant, or unqualified teachers. This it does by providing for the thorough examination and proper classification of teachers; thus compelling the incompetent either to prepare themselves for their work, or to seek employment, in which, if not prepared, they will be likely to do less injury. In either case a great good is effected. The law also provides for a regular and thorough inspection of Schools, and a competent general superintendence of the Common School education of the country. By those competent to judge, the necessity and utility of both these provisions are neither denied nor doubted. In a word there has, under the law, been wrought out and presented to the people a thorough and practicable system of education,—one that would do no dishonour to any country. Let it be but patiently and faithfully carried out, and the results must prove highly beneficial.

But there is one particular feature of the school law, to which the writer desires to call especial attention, as tending most directly and effectively to diffuse the blessings of Common School Education throughout the entire community—I mean the provision made for rendering schools FREE TO ALL. Proper educational training is essential to the development, progress, protection and happiness of a people; and in proportion as such training has been enjoyed, other things being equal, will be the general advancement and prosperity in communities.

Let this training become, as far as possible, universal in the country, and the capability of her sons and daughters to make the most of their position, to accomplish great things, and thus contribute to the general good, will be greatly increased. If but the right direction is given to these enlarged capacities, the people cannot fail to become prosperous, powerful and happy. Now no method of popular education is so well adapted to promote the proper mental training of the whole youth of the country, and fit them for their position and duties in life as free schools, properly supported and efficiently and judiciously managed. During the limited