

Youths' Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, December 30th, 1866.

ACTS v. 12-23: The apostles are again put in prison. 2 Kings v. 1-14: Naaman dips himself in Jordan.

Recite—PSALM lxxv 9-13.

Sunday, January 6th, 1867.

ACTS v. 29-42: Gamaliel's advice to the Sanhedrim. 2 Kings v. 15-27: Gehazi's lie and the consequences.

Recite—1 Peter II. 21-25.

Joe Harding's Christmas Morning.

BY MRS. MARY A. DENISON.

"Keep up a stiff lip, Joe. Don't get down in the mouth."

"Yes, Sally, I'm a doing of it," responded the ferry-man, drawing his coat sleeve across his eyes, furtively, that the woman might not see him, while she as busily kept her face away that he might not think she was looking.

Joe flitted out of the dark room into a darker,—a little three-sided apartment, upon whose low bed in the corner lay something that looked unearthly.

It was the attenuated form of a child, a little innocent looking girl of perhaps ten summers. The fever flush had gone out of the wasted cheeks, and its glitter had left the blue eyes, that calmly now, but vaguely, turned from side to side; but the lips were a mingled purple and white in color, and under their parting, the teeth, wont to be so pearly, showed fetid marks of disease.

There was a little lounge in the room, faded and patched, (never a rag dared show itself in Miss Sally's presence,) and on that, a large doll, whose flabby, expressionless face had been the recipient of many and loving kisses, and whose scant garments had been furnished by Miss Sally from her own worn-out wardrobe. There were no other evidences of a childish inmate. Little Pet had talked to the wild sea from the one window opening on the ship-yard; she had prattled to the great ships sailing by on their stately path; she had questioned the stars, and sung her loving little song to the moon; she had petted Joe's old horse whose treadmill round in the circumscribed space on the little boat-deck had worn him to skin and bone, although, as Joe said, he was "powerful strong yet, if threadbare." And these were all the companions she knew; for Sally, in her odd, uncouthly way, was determined that the child should not be brought in contact with the depraved influences of the neighborhood.

The place abounded in filth of every description, except that one comparatively pure spot, the look-out on the ship-yard, where the warm scents of odorous pine carried the mind beyond the sluices, and docks, and crooked, gutter-stained streets of the city, to the beautiful fields of God's planting, and the soft sweet winds that seemed to come direct from heaven.

It had been eight years since Pet had been the light of this humble dwelling. Joe, the ferry-man, rugged and homely, squat in figure, with a walk suggesting the idea that he was impelled by machinery, asking for nobody's friendship, ignorant of the conventionalities of society, yet striving in his rough way to do right, had kept house with his maiden sister now these twenty years. Everybody knew Joe, the ferry-man; yet of his antecedents everybody was in ignorance. Briefly to sum them up, they were—a youth of the most intense and bitter suffering, of squalid poverty, of destitution and beggary, of drunken, furious parents, of blows, oaths, dirt, ignorance and vice; and yet these two had emerged from this slough of despond, made themselves an honest living and a creditable reputation, and were, by their frugality, saving enough to keep their old age from want and suffering.

Poor Sally had, by dint of almost superhuman exertions, taught herself to read, and to write her own name. Further than that, it was impossible for her to go. She was the opposite of her brother in looks and manners, being tall, angular, sharp-featured, and periodically cross or sulky till Pet came—for that was the name they gave her; and then it seemed as if her whole nature underwent an extraordinary change.

It was an ugly night, and Sally was crossing in her brother's ferry-boat. There had been an angry storm, and the sky still retained its leaden hue. The wind wrapped the black water sullenly, and threw it in angry spirals over the boat-deck, sometimes lifting the little craft with a sudden lurch that set the few passengers upon their feet.

Sally, unmoved by fear or any other emotion, sat hugging her old cloth cloak and looking out with expressionless eyes from under her black bonnet at the black wall of the tiny cabin. Beside her sat a man whose large shawl was thrown over a bundle in his lap. Gradually, Sally became interested in his conversation.

"It was an awful wreck," said his companion, an old man, weak in the eyes, who nursed his cane with his chin.

"Awful, you may well say," replied the other; "every soul lost except the first mate and this poor child."

And to Miss Sally's astonishment, the bundle in his lap began to move.

"The mussy!" she cried involuntarily. The gentleman looked round and saw her staring at the bundle.

"It's only a little child, madam, a poor little

child whose parents probably perished off here in that shipwreck you may have heard of."

"Preserve us!" cried Miss Sally, in a voice of pity, as the bundle moved again. "What are you going to do with it?"

"Try to find the poor thing a home," was the response. "Unfortunately, I have none of my own."

"Is it going to cry?" asked Sally, hitching away a little, as the shawl became the victim of a series of shakes.

"No, I think not," said the gentleman smiling, and turning down the shawl; and Miss Sally found herself face to face with the brightest and sweetest bit of humanity it had ever been her lot to meet. Her heart warmed to its unconscious smile; her long, hard fingers wandered to the little golden head, the curls not yet dry from the moisture of its terrible bath which had so nearly been the baptism of death—Some strange influence attracted the child to her,—for she was not pleasing of face,—and it held out its little arms bending yearningly towards her, then, as she took it, nestled in her bosom with a baby sigh of relief.

Poor Sally! the tears were running down cheeks whose furrows had not been so blest for half a score of years. She thought of her own miserable childhood, and of the chances of this innocent wail.

"I don't know when I've had a child in my arms before," she murmured; "and I don't know what Joe'll say, but I feel as if I'd like to take it home."

"You might do so; and give me your address, so that I can call in a few days. Then if you change your mind, I will try again."

At this time the child clung to her, and her heart throbbled under the pressure of its head with a new and great joy, such as she had never before experienced.

"What do you say to it, Joe?" she asked when they sat at home together, the baby asleep on her bed.

"Why, I say do as you like," was the gruff response. "I spose it'll fret an' cry—most babies do—an' p'raps worry the life out of ye; be sick; want clothes an' all that sort o' thing. But please yerself. I ain't home much."

And now she had grown into those two uncouth lives, twining the tendrils of her fresh, innocent love closer and closer about their hearts, till old Joe came to long for the few hours he should pass at home with Pet upon his knees.

And here it was—merry Christmas time; without—light and beauty, even in those evil thoroughfares, for the meagre little shops were as brilliant in their way as the great up-town palatial stores, where fabulous sums were spent lavishly for golden toys; outside, mirth and cheer and jubilee—inside, darkness and gloom, and little Pet dying.

Joe crept out of the dark, three sided room. He sank down on the little wooden cracker he had made for his darling, and seemed to fail together—a heap of woful anguish—nothing of him visible but a shaggy crown of hair and two knotted, toil-stained hands meeting together round it.

"Now, Joe, that aint keepin' a stiff lip," said Sally, in a voice that shook little less than the huddled-up figure before her, and dashing her apron up to her eyes and down again. "Now, Joe, that aint bein' resigned to Providence. She was give to us may be only for a little while, to—to—" and choking sobs swallowed up the rest. The homely, care-worn, unpoetic creature sank into another seat, and throwing her apron over her arms, laid her head thereon, crying bitterly.

"There, Sally, don't, don't; there, don't take on!" essayed the ferryman. "I—I did feel kind o' gone like—I—well, it's hard, at Christmas—it is. If it had a been any other time! But I'd got so kinder used to them little loving ways of hers, and comin' home there was little ones a runnin' 'crest my way, and they so perk an' bright—an' her—lyin' so!" and with a prolonged groan down went his head again, and the two honest, faithful creatures cried together, softly but bitterly.

"Well—I'll go in there;" Miss Sally resolutely wiped her eyes; set back her chair; gave one look at a little parcel that contained a beautiful new dress; another, at a pair of new shoes; another at a package containing a new, large doll; and with one convulsive sob that seemed to swallow a dozen embryos ones that they might not disturb the child, she disappeared.

Presently the latch was lifted and the doctor came in.

"Doctor, I'm dreadful low-spirited," said Joe, sorrowfully, as an apology for his appearance; "you've no idee how I loved that little creetur."

The doctor had children of his own and pitied the woe-begone man.

"I wish I could give her back to you," he said, in a low voice; "but it is only honest to tell you that there is no hope. If I find her living in the morning, I shall be surprised."

Sally sank moaning by the side of the bed. The doctor prepared the medicines that were necessary, and, with an attempt at consolation, left them. Joe threw himself on the lounge, displacing the doll, then reverently took up the wooden caricature, looked in its rapid face tenderly through tears; kissed it with inarticulate murmurings; and laid it softly in the window-seat.

Then all was quiet—O, how deathly quiet! Hour by hour the clocks proclaimed that night was passing, and morning speeding. All over the little, clean pillow, that Miss Sally turned now and then with such tender solicitude, the thick, glistening, golden hair glittered, and at times the child's wan face seemed to catch something of its brightness.

One—two—and the glad morning of Christmas was on its way rejoicingly. Little by little the flame of the small light faded against the

colorless cheeks of the watcher. Many a heartfelt prayer went up to that Jesus whose birth Miss Sally dimly felt, was celebrated by that festive time.

Presently a low cry broke from her almost rigid lips.

"O, Joe! come quick! she's going—she's gone!"

The little room was all alight now with the glow of morning. A sweet, soft radiance fell upon the bed and on the sleeper there. Joe stood holding his breath, his strained glance riveted upon the child. Sally, with hands tightly clasped upon her bosom, moaned softly.

Still and calm and holy seemed the little white face.

"She's gone; aint she, Joe?" asked his sister, in a breathless whisper.

He lifted the little hand, waxen and powerless,—lifted and laid it down gently.

"Yes, Sally, I guess she's gone;" and turned away with heaving breast.

Neither of them had noticed the entrance of the physician till he stood close beside them.

"Why, how is this?" he cried, with a look of wonder that passed from face to face. "Sound asleep! perspiration! Why, bless my soul! the child is going to live, after all!"

Joe gave him one look, and went like a rocket out of the room—out of the house—ran down the ship-yard—back again—caught the old steam-boat horse about the neck—waved his arms—shouted imaginary hurrahs, and then sat down and hugged himself. As for Sally, such a smile as lighted up those hard, rugged and homely features, the doctor thought he had not seen for years. It seemed actually to make her beautiful.

And when as the day wore on, that happiest of all happy holidays, little Pet faintly called them each by name, and Joe in his gush of joy had to rush out and down the ship-yard again, their cup of earthly bliss was full to the brim.—W. & R.

Two discontented girls.

Mary Miller went out to take a walk in the fields, one Saturday afternoon. She had been to school all the week, and she was very glad to have a nice ramble. She soon left the dusty road, and roamed about on the hills. Sometimes she watched the brook, and listened to the singing of the birds. Then she watched the gay butterfly, or ran to pluck some bright flower which met her eye. In a word, wherever her light heart prompted her to go, her nimble feet carried her.

She was near the roadside, when she saw a fine coach pass slowly by. There was in it a little girl about Mary's age. When the young lady wished to stop, the driver checked the horses; and when she wished to go forward, they started at his word. A footman was on the stand behind. If the girl saw a flower in the field, or by the roadside, she had only to speak, and the carriage stopped, while the footman ran to fetch it. Indeed, she seemed to have no wish ungratified.

As Mary looked to the coach, her feet lost their lightness, her spirits their gaiety, and her face its smiles. She walked gloomily along, and with pouting lips she entered her mother's humble dwelling.

"Have you had a pleasant walk, Mary?" asked her mother.

"Oh, no," said Mary pettishly, "I should have enjoyed it very well, but the young lady came along in her carriage, and when I saw how happy she appeared with her coachman, and her footman to wait upon her, and remembered that I was a poor girl, and must always go a-foot and wait upon myself, I could hardly help crying. If she wanted anything she had only to speak, or to point to it, and the footman instantly ran and brought it to her. But when I saw something I wanted, if it was ever so far off, I must go and get it myself."

Her fretful voice was scarcely hushed, when Mrs. Parks called at the cottage.

"How did your daughter enjoy her ride this afternoon," said Mrs. Miller to her rich friend. Here it should be told that Helen was lame. She had not walked for three years.

"She would have enjoyed it very well," said the lady, "but just as she came to where she had the finest prospect, she saw your little girl skipping about the fields. She watched her happy movements, as she ran wherever her fancy led; and when she remembered that she could never enjoy herself thus, she said she could scarcely keep from crying. 'You cannot think,' she said, 'how sad it is to feel that I must be lifted into the carriage whenever I wish to take the air; and when I see a pretty flower, I can never pick it myself, but must wait till some one can go and fetch it to me. I watched the happy girl for a few minutes, as she danced so gaily among the flowers, and then ordered the footman to bring me a few daisies which grew by the wayside; but I soon threw them away, for I could not bear to look at them.'"

"She then directed the coachman to drive home, that her feelings might no longer be tried by the sight of pleasure which she could not share. When the footman brought her in, and placed her carefully upon a sofa, she laid her face on my lap, and wept."

Thus we see that each of these girls had enough to make her happy, if she had only learned one of the best lessons—to be contented with the station in which God has placed us.

The Power of Evil.

I do not know why it is that by the constitution of the universe evil has so much more power than good to produce its effects and to propagate its nature. One drop of foul will

pollute a whole cup of fair water, but one drop of fair water has no power appreciably to improve a cup of foul. Sharp pain present in a tooth or a toe will make the whole man miserable; though all the rest of his body may be suffering, an easy tooth or toe will cause no perceptible alleviation.—Country Parson.

The Lord thinks nothing too good for you, if it will make you holy; or too great, if you can use it to his praise.

WEALTH does not always improve us. A man, as he gets to be worth more, may become worth less.

Scientific.

RUNNING DRILL.—A general order just issued from the Horse Guards directs that men belonging to the Infantry Regiments, except such men as have served over 15 years, or are excused by medical certificates, shall be exercised at "running drill" once a day. For the first fortnight the distance run is not to exceed 300 yards. For the second fortnight the distance may be increased to 600 yards. For the third fortnight the distance may be increased to 900 yards. After the third fortnight's practice the distance may be increased to 1,000 yards daily, with arms and accoutrements carried on alternate days. The pace on all occasions must not exceed six miles an hour, nor must the 1,000 yards distance be attempted before the six weeks preliminary practice has been made over shorter distance.—Where the ground will admit, the men are to run in single rank of from 15 to 20 abreast, and otherwise by companies in fours. When a regiment has been sufficiently trained in running drill, certain movements are then to be performed at "the double," except when the regiment is paraded for drill in marching order.

THE TUNNEL UNDER LAKE MICHIGAN.—The great tunnel under Lake Michigan through which Chicago is to be supplied with purer and better water than any other city in the United States, is finished. The following is a brief description of the great work. Near the lake shore is a shaft seventy-seven feet deep, the diameter of the first thirty being nine feet and of the remainder six feet. The crib which is out in the lake two miles, is an immense structure of wood and iron, ballasted with stone. It is forty feet high and its five sides are each fifty-eight feet long. In it are fifteen water-tight compartments. It is indeed a huge affair, there having been used in its construction 618,625 feet of timber, 6,026 cubic yards of stone, 400 bales of oakum and 65 tons of iron bolts, at a cost of more than \$100,000.

The tunnel commences at the bottom of the shore-shaft, seventy-seven feet below the surface of the lake; measures in the clear 5ft. 2 in. high by 5 feet wide, is laid up with hard-burned brick in the best of cement, the masonry being 8 inches thick. The tunnel is exactly two miles long and has a gradual descent from the crib to the shore, so that if repairs are needed, it can be pumped out. The cost when fully ready to furnish water will be about \$1,000,000; and its supply will be equal to fifty-seven gallons a day to one million of people.

AN INTERESTING EXPERIMENT.—For some time past a few of the shipbuilders of St. John, N. B., have had it in contemplation to test the respective strength of hollow and solid masts. The experiment took place a few days ago in a ship yard at Courtney Bay, in the vicinity of the city.

For this purpose two pieces of masts each 15 feet long, and 6 inches in diameter were constructed and hooped in every way similar to an ordinary mast, the wood used being white pine. One was made from a solid piece, the other was hollow, constructed of staves about 1½ inches thick. To test the strength of the pieces, the ends were rested upon planks, and a weight or pressure brought to bear upon the centre, and the result was highly favorable to the solid mast, which under a pressure of 15 cwt., having bent only 7½ inches, while the hollow piece broke before a weight of 10 cwt., having bent 12½ inches. Quite a number of gentlemen interested in shipbuilding witnessed the experiment, among them Messrs. Laphorne and Bezant, Lloyd's Surveyors, and Messrs. Millidge, Nevins, shipbuilders, and Mr. James Hamilton a practical mast builder.

HEAT FROM THE STARS.—It is a startling fact, that, if the earth were dependent alone upon the sun for heat, it would not keep in existence the animal and vegetable life upon its surface. It results from the researches of Poullit that the stars furnish heat enough in the year to melt a crust of ice seventy feet thick, almost as much as is supplied by the sun. This may appear strange when we consider how immeasurably small must be the amount of heat received from any of those distant bodies. But the surprise vanishes when we remember that the whole firmament is so thickly sown with stars that in some places thousands are crowded together within a space no greater than that occupied by the full moon.

James Lowe, the inventor of the screw propeller, met his death in England recently by being run over by a wagon. He was under the influence of liquor at the time.

There are many who from negligence or criminal delay, put off the use of appropriate remedies till too late. This is wrong. On the first appearance of pain, use Blood's Rheumatic Compound, and you will find relief.