

Youths' Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, April 21st, 1867.

Acts xiii. 16-43. Paul preaching. 2 Kings xiv. 1-14. Amaziah's good reign. Rev. Gen. 1. 26-28.

Sunday, April 28th, 1867.

Acts xiii. 44-52. Many Gentiles believe. 2 Kings xiv. 15-29. Jeroboam's wicked reign. Rev. Mat. x. 12-16.

Kindness of heart.

A WINTER STORY.

The charity of the rich is much to be commended, but how beautiful is the charity of the poor.

Call to mind the coldest day you ever experienced. Think of bitter wind and driving snow; think how you shook and shivered, how the sharp, white particles were driven up against your face; how, within doors, the carpets were lifted like billows along the floors, the wind howled and moaned in the chimneys, windows creaked, doors rattled, and every now and then heavy lumps of snow came thundering down with a dull weight from the roof.

Now hear my story. In one of the broad, open plains of Lincolnshire, England, there is a long, reedy sheet of water, a favorite resort of wild ducks. At its northern extremity stand two mud cottages, old and out of repair.

One bitter, bitter night, when the snow lay three feet deep on the ground, and a cutting east wind was driving it about, and whistling in the dry frozen reeds by the water's edge, and swinging the bare willow trees till their branches swept the ice, an old woman sat spinning in one of these cottages before a moderately cheerful fire. Her kettle was singing on the coals; she had a reed-candle, or home-made rushlight on her table; but the full moon shone in, and was the brighter light of the two. These two cottages were far from any road or any other habitation; the old woman was, therefore, surprised, as she sat drawing out her thread, and crooning an old north-country song, to hear a sudden knock at the door.

It was loud and impatient, not like the knock of her neighbors in the other cottage; but the door was bolted, and the old woman rose, and, shuffling to the window, looked out, and saw a shivering figure, apparently that of a youth.

"Tramp, tramp," said the old woman, sententiously, "tramping folk be not wanted here."

So saying, she went back to the fire without deigning to answer the door.

The youth, upon this, tried the door, and called to her to beg admittance.

She heard him rap the snow from his shoes against her lintel, and again knock as if he thought she was deaf, and he should surely gain admittance if he could only make her hear.

The old woman, surprised at his audacity, went to the casement, and with all the pride of possession opened it, and inquired his business.

"Good woman," the stranger began, "I only want a seat at your fire."

"Nay," said the old woman, giving effect to her words by her uncouth dialect, "thou'lt get no shelter here; I've nought to give to beggars—a dirty, wet critter," she continued wrathfully, slamming to the window, "it is a wonder where he found any water, too, seeing it freezes so hard; a body can get none for the kettle, saving what's broken up with a hatchet."

On this the beggar turned hastily away.

And at this point of his narrative, the person who told it me stopped and said—

"Do you think the old woman was very much to blame?"

"She might have acted more kindly," I replied; "but why do you ask?"

"Because," said he, "I have heard her conduct so much reflected on by some who would have thought nothing of it if it had not been for the consequences."

"She might have turned him away less roughly," I observed.

"That is true," he answered; "but in any case, I think, though we might give them food or money, we should hardly invite beggars in to sit by the fire."

"Certainly not," I replied; "and this woman could not tell that the beggar was honest."

"No," said he, "but I must go on with my narrative."

The stranger turned very hastily from her door, and waded through the deep snow to the other cottage. The bitter wind helped to drive him towards it. It looked no less poor than the first; and when he had tried the door, found it bolted, and knocked twice without attracting attention, his heart sank within him. His hand was so numbed with cold that he had made scarcely any noise. He tried again.

A rush-candle was burning within, and a matronly looking woman sat before the fire.

She held an infant in her arms, and had dropped asleep; but his third knock roused her, and, wrapping her apron around the child, she opened the door a very little way, and demanded what he wanted.

"Good woman," the youth began, "I have had the misfortune to fall into the water this bitter night, and I am so numbed that I can scarcely walk."

The woman gave him a sudden, earnest look, and then sighed.

"Come in," she said; "thou art so nigh the size of my Jen, I thought at first it was him come home from sea."

The youth stepped across the threshold, trembling with the cold and wet; and no wonder, for his clothes were completely encased in wet mud, and the water dripped from them with every step he took on the sanded floor.

"Thou art in a sorry plight," said the woman, "and it be two miles to the nearest house; come and kneel down afore the fire; thy teeth chatter so painfully, I can scarce bear to hear them."

She looked at him more attentively, and saw that he was a mere boy, not more than sixteen years of age. Her motherly heart was touched for him.

"Art hungry?" she asked, turning to the table; thou art wet to the skin. What hast thou been doing?"

"Shooting wild ducks," said the boy.

"Oh!" said his hostess, "thou art one of the keeper's boys, then, I reckon?"

He followed the directions of her eyes, and saw two portions of bread set upon the table, with a small piece of bacon upon each.

"My master be very late," she observed; for charity did not make her use elegant language, and by her master she meant her husband. "But thou art welcome to my bit and sup, for I was waiting for him. Maybe, it will put a little warmth in thee to eat and drink."

So saying, she took up a mug of beer from the hearth, and pushed it towards him, with her share of the supper.

"Thank you!" said the boy, "but I am so wet I am making quite a pool before the fire with the drippings from my clothes."

"Ay, thou art wet, indeed," said the woman; and, rising again, she went to an old box in which she began to search, and presently came to the fire with a perfectly clean checked shirt in her hand, and a tolerably good suit of clothes.

"There!" said she, showing them with no small pride, "these be my master's Sunday clothes, and if thou wilt be very careful of them, I'll let thee wear them till thine be dry."

She then explained that she was going to put her "bairn" to bed, and proceeded up a ladder into the room above, leaving the boy to array himself in these respectable and desirable garments.

When she came down her guest had dressed himself in the laborer's clothes; he had had time to warm himself, and was eating and drinking with a hungry relish. He had thrown his muddy clothes in a heap upon the floor, and as she proceeded to lift them up, she said, "Ah! lad, lad, I doubt thy head has been under water; thy poor mother would have been sorely frightened if she could have seen thee a while ago."

"Yes," said the boy; and in imagination the cottage dame saw this said mother, a careworn, hardworking creature like herself; while the youthful guest saw, in imagination, a beautiful and courtly lady; and both saw the same love, the same anxiety, the same terror at sight of a lonely boy struggling in the moonlight through breaking ice, with no one to help him, catching at the frozen reeds and then creeping up, shivering and benumbed, to a cottage door.

But even as she stopped, the woman forgot her imagination, for she had taken a waistcoat into her hands, such as had never passed between them before; a gold pencilcase dropped from the pocket; and on the floor, among a heap of mud that covered the outer garments, lay a white shirt sleeve, so white, indeed, and fine, that she thought it could hardly be worn but by a squire!

She glanced from the clothes to the owner. He had thrown down his cap, and his fair, curly hair, and broad forehead, convinced her that he was of gentle birth; but while she hesitated to sit down, he set a chair for her, and said, with boyish frankness, "I say, what a lonely place this is; if you had not let me in, the water would have all frozen on me before I reached home. Catch me duck-shooting again by myself!"

"It's very cold sport that, sir," said the woman.

The young gentleman assented most readily, and asked if he might stir the fire.

"And welcome, sir," said the woman. She felt a curiosity to know who he was, and he partly satisfied her by remarking that he was staying at Dean Hall, a house about five miles off, adding that in the morning he had broken a hole in the ice very near the decoy, but it had iced over so fast, that in the dusk he had missed it and fallen in, for it would not bear him. He had made some landmarks, and taken every proper precaution, but he supposed the sport had excited him so much, that, in the moonlight, he had passed them by.

He then told her of his attempt to get shelter in the other cottage.

"Sir," said the woman, "if you had said you were a gentleman—"

The boy laughed. "I don't think I knew it, my good woman," he replied, "my senses were so benumbed; for I was some time struggling at the water's edge among the broken ice, and then I believe I was nearly an hour creeping up to your cottage door. I remember it all rather indistinctly, but as soon as I had felt the fire, and drank the warm drink, I was a different creature."

While they still talked, the husband came in; and while he was eating his supper they agreed that he should walk to Dean Hall, and let its inmates know of the gentleman's safety; and when he was gone they made up the fire with all the coal that remained to that poor household, and the woman crept up to bed and left her guest to lie down and rest before it.

In the gray of dawn the laborer returned with a servant leading a horse, and bringing a fresh suit of clothes.

The young gentleman took his leave with many thanks, slipping three half-crowns into the woman's hand, probably all the money he

had about him. And I must not forget to mention that he kissed the baby, for when she tells the story, the mother always avers to that circumstance with great pride, adding, that her child being as "clean as wax, was quite fit to be kissed by anybody!"

"Missis," said her husband, as they stood together in the doorway, looking after their guest, "who dost think that be?"

"I don't know," answered the missis.

"Then I'll just tell thee, that be young Lord W—; so thou mayest be a proud woman, thou sits and talks with lords, and asks them in to supper—ha, ha!" So saying, her master shouldered his spade and went his way, leaving her clinking the three half-crowns in her hand, and considering what she should do with them.

Her neighbor from the other cottage presently stepped in, and when she heard the tale and saw the money, her heart was ready to break with envy and jealousy. "Oh! to think that good luck should come to her door, and she should have been so foolish as to turn it away. Seven shillings and six pence for a morsel of food and a night's shelter, why, it was nearly a week's wages!"

So there, as they both supposed, the matter ended, and the next week the frost was sharper than ever. Sheep were frozen in the fenny fields, and poultry on their perches, but the good woman had walked to the nearest town and bought a blanket. It was a welcome addition to their bed covering, and it was many a long year since they had been so comfortable.

But it chanced, one day at noon, that, looking out at her casement, she spied three young gentlemen skating along the ice towards her cottage. They sprang on to the bank, took off their skates, and made for her door. The young nobleman informed her that he had had such a severe cold he could not come and see her before. "He spoke as free and pleasantly," she observed, in telling the story, "as if I had been a lady, and no less; and then he brought a parcel out of his pocket, and I've been over to B—," he says, "and brought you a book for a keepsake; and I hope you will accept it."

And then they all talked as pretty as could be for a matter of ten minutes, and went away. So I waited till my master came home, and we opened the parcel, and there was a fine Bible inside, all over gold and red morocco, and my name and his written inside; and, bless him, a ten-pound note doubled down over the names. I'm sure when I thought he was a poor forlorn creature, he was kindly welcome. So my master laid out part of the money in tools, and I've rented a garden, and he goes over on market days to sell what we grow; so now, thank God, we want for nothing."

This is how she generally concludes the little history, never failing to add that the young lord kissed her baby.

"But," said my friend, "I have not told you what I thought the best part of the anecdote. When this poor christian woman was asked what had induced her to take in a perfect stranger, and trust him with the best clothing her house afforded, she answered simply, 'Well, I saw him shivering and shaking, so I thought, Thou shalt come in here for the sake of Him that had not where to lay his head.'"

Now I think we must all have read many times of such rewards following upon little acts of kindness. Hundreds of tales are founded on such incidents, but in real life they are not common. Poetical justice is not the kind of justice that generally comes about in the order of God's providence. We ought not to expect such; and we ought, indeed, to be the disappointment of those who do kind actions in the hope of receiving it.

The old woman in the other cottage may open her door every night of her future life to some forlorn beggar, but it is all but certain that she will never open it to a nobleman in disguise! Therefore, let neither man, woman, nor child, found false hopes upon this story; for, let them entertain as many beggars as they will, they need not expect that they have gold pencilcases in their pockets—unless they stole them.

These stories are, as I said, very common, and their moral is sufficiently obvious; it is, "Do good, and you shall have your reward." I would not quarrel with the maxim, but I should like to see it differently applied. I think it arises from a feeling which has done harm rather than good. We are, indeed, quite at liberty to use the Scriptural maxim, "He that watereth shall be watered also himself;" but then we should give the term "watereth" its scriptural sense—an extended and beautiful sense.

The act of charity is often highly valued, while the motive, which alone can make it acceptable, is overlooked and forgotten; it is not hope that should prompt it but gratitude. Not many, even of the Lord's people, can always say in simplicity, "I did it for the sake of Him that had not where to lay his head."

We have strangely reversed the order of things. We sometimes act as if our feeling was "Let us do good and give, that God, who loveth a cheerful giver, may be good to us;" but our feeling should be, "Christ has died; let us do good, for his sake, to his poor brethren, as an evidence that we are grateful for his inestimable gift."

Let us do good, not to receive more good in return, but as an evidence of gratitude for what has been already bestowed. In few words, let it be "all for love, and nothing for reward."

—The Church.

PAGAN AND PAPAN ROME.—Paul could preach two whole years in his own hired house, in pagan Rome. But papal Rome forbids the Protestant follower of the apostle to worship God with his friends, in his own hired house. Pagan Rome was more tolerant in Paul's day than papal Rome is ours.

Agriculture, &c.

TURNIP AND OTHER ROOT CROPS.

The cultivation of the turnip, carrot, and mangold, cannot be too highly recommended. They cleanse and mellow the soil. They feed on a different class of substances from most other crops, and if the soil in which they grow has been well manured, they leave it rich, and in the best order for other products. Beside these advantages, they form valuable articles of food for stock. Though they contain a large percentage of water, they are also made up of such nutritive elements as albumen, sugar, gum, (pectin), and starch. These constituents vary in proportion according to the character of the soil in which the roots are grown, and the description of manure applied to them. Well-rotted composts, bone dust, superphosphate of lime, and guano, are the best fertilizers for crops of this sort. They require potash, soda, lime, bone-earth, gypsum, and some vegetable matter, and hence the manures that supply these are best for roots. Manures rich in nitrogen and comparatively poor in phosphates promote the growth of the leaf rather than that of the bulb, and the heaviest crops will not be obtained by such treatment. Land enriched by previous high-culture, or dressed with well-rotted manures or concentrated fertilizers, and those in which roots yield the most satisfactory returns, and are farmers who have had no experience on the subject will be astonished to find what results may be obtained from this kind of husbandry, when properly performed. The culture of turnips and other roots is largely on the increase in this country, but as yet it is only to a very small extent that their beneficial effect on our agriculture has come to be felt. When a system of rotation shall be established on every farm, and root crops take their proper place in that rotation, a revolution of the most pleasing kind will have been brought about. We shall hear no more complaints about worn-out soils, want of manure, scarcity of money, or farming being a bad business. Root culture, chiefly that of the turnip—has wrought just such a change in British agriculture, and is capable of effecting a similar improvement in this country.

To induce farmers to grow root crops, it should be sufficient to show the important place they occupy in a well-managed rotation. One of the greatest practical difficulties encountered in farming is that of obtaining a sufficient supply of good manure. This is partly surmounted by a well-arranged succession of crops, and partly by the increased production of manure, and that of a better quality, which results from growing root crops. For by the help of these more stock can be kept, and while the animals are being fattened they produce the best description of manure, and so help to maintain the fertility of the farm.

Whether your farm be new or old, large or small, you will find root culture profitable. Do not be deterred by the idea that it requires an enormous amount of labor to raise roots. Thinning the plants is the most tedious part of the work, but this is quickly performed by a man expert with the hoe. A one-horse cultivator, or even a plough driven between the rows, will leave but little to be done with the hand-hoe. If the work requisite be promptly done at the proper time, it will not be found so very arduous as many people imagine. A good crop of roots is well worth all the trouble it costs, even if it were much more than it is.

The carrot is a valuable food for horses, cattle and sheep. Horses are especially fond of it. It keeps up their condition, gives them a fine glossy coat, and helps greatly to supply the want of the juicy food so much relished in the summer time. Fed to cows it improves the quality of the milk, and is thought to give a richer colour to the butter, while it has the advantage of not imparting an unpleasant taste to the milk and butter. It is also a valuable food for sheep and lambs. The mangold is a desirable article for stock feeding, and cattle of all kinds are very fond of it. Toward spring it is considered especially beneficial for milch cows. The parsnip is more nutritive than the carrot, and is even better than that root for milch cows. The farmers in the islands of Jersey and Guernsey are noted for the excellent winter butter they make, and it is said to be owing to their extensive use of the parsnip. This root endures the severest cold, and may be left in the ground all winter, so as to be dug up fresh in the spring and used for feeding stock.—Canada Farmer.

HEBREW BOOKS.—The catalogue of the Hebrew books in the British Museum, printed by order of the Trustees, has just been issued. The collection, it appears, has grown from a single book which it possessed in 1759, to a total of 10,000 volumes, and we are told in the preface, by Mr. J. Winter Jones, the Principal Librarian of the Museum, that our national collection of Hebrew books is now the largest in the world.

We would by no means recommend any medicine which we did not know to be good, particularly for infants. But of Mrs. WIZLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP, we can speak from knowledge. In our own family, it has proved a blessing indeed, by giving an infant, troubled with colic pains, quiet sleep, and its parents unbroken rest at night.—Boston Christian Freeman.

AN ARTICLE OF TRUE MERIT.—Brown's Bronchial Troches are the most popular article in this country or Europe for Throat Diseases and Coughs, and this popularity is based upon real merit, which cannot be said of many other preparations in the market which are really but weak imitations of the genuine Troches.