

Youths' Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, November 29th, 1868.

LUKE xii. 1-21: Jesus discourses to his disciples and the multitudes.
Recite.—JAMES iv. 13-15.

Sunday, December 6th, 1868.

LUKE xii. 22-40: Jesus discourses continued.

For the year 1869.

We have in reserve for the Coming Year a large quantity of material for our youthful friends, comprising, besides a continued Story by a popular writer, Scenes, Pictures, Anagrams, Enigmas, &c., &c., which will appear from week to week, and give a constant supply of subjects for thought and enquiry.

The very interesting pieces by Jean Ingelow, we have before had in this Department, have been so acceptable to our young friends that we have been induced to take another one, which we think will be found to possess no less of interest than the others. These charming pictures of domestic life give us new acquaintances, and bring us into connection with fresh characters, which tend to relieve the monotony of life, and to make us more contented and happy with the arrangements of Divine Providence on our behalf.

Widow MacLean; or, lending to the Lord.

BY JEAN INGELow.

CHAPTER I.

"That's just my opinion," Mrs. Anderson observed; "and therefore I have done my best, ma'am, to keep things handsome about him, that I may not be blamed, nor the family put to expense, when he brings a wife home. I short, it's more than a year ago now that I wrote to Mrs. Dixon about the drawing-room carpet, and she sent me their second-best linen floor-cloth. I made one up out of the best parts of it, and boiled it in hay-tea, to make it a good brown-holland color. Very neat it looked, and I got it laid down when he was out of the way. I hoped that, being used to ways of his mother, it might come natural to him to see it. Instead of that, 'What's this?' said he, coming in; 'I hate to see rooms with pinafores on. It's to save the carpet, sir,' said I; 'it won't last much longer at this rate.' 'Won't it?' said he, considering. 'No, sir,' said I, very firmly, 'it won't.' 'Then, says he, 'take the pinafore off; let it last as long as it will, and after that I'll walk on the boards.'"

"I call that rather aggravating," said the widow.
"He does not mean it," replied the housekeeper; "but I may say that it all comes from not caring enough about outsiders, and the way of putting things. If I had a handsome shawl, and carried it with me to church tied up in an old duster, instead of on my shoulders, who would believe I had it? We ought to put the best on the outside, that is the way to be true to ourselves. And yet, dear me, Mrs. Maclean, there is nothing like living with a real good, religious, and, as one may say, innocent young man, to make an old woman feel wicked."
"We're all sinners, Mrs. Anderson," observed the widow, as if she would convey to her friend her own conviction, that beyond her being a partaker in this universal fault of our nature, there was no call for her to appropriate special wickedness to herself.

"And that's Bible truth, ma'am," said the housekeeper; "but a straight stick may shame a crooked one, that never knew how crooked it was till the other was laid beside it. I have wished to be a manager, Mrs. Maclean, to—as one may say—to go to heaven, doing a little business for myself by the way. That's what puts me out now."

"Indeed, ma'am," said the widow, doubtfully; for though she felt it to be a compliment to herself that her friend should thus make confession to her of her faults, she did not see the whole dritt of these remarks.

"I am as I was made," proceeded the housekeeper, "and I am not to quarrel with the Almighty, and say, 'Why hast Thou made me thus?' I've got a managing head, and why am I not to manage? Why, because Mr. Dixon won't let me. I've no encouragement to labor: he wastes all. Fruit was very plentiful last year, as you know. I made a quantity of jam, and my jams are never a discredit to me. Now, I thought, there'll be plenty of preserves in the house for puddings, and to appear at breakfast, and what not, when his college friends come to stay with him. If you'll believe me, ma'am, not half a dozen pots of the sixty have I had the pride of seeing on his table. The measles broke out among those families by the gravel pits, and then there were fevers down by the mere; and between the two my jams were all taken from me, pots and all,—they might have given me back the pots. I don't deny that black currant drink is a comfort to the sick; but that they want the best of preserves, made with loaf sugar, to take their powders in, I never will believe; treacle would do just as well, and many of them never heard of preserve; therefore they would not have thought they wanted

it, unless he had put it into their heads that such things were good for them."

By this time the widow had begun to think that her friend was hardly treated, and she remarked that Mr. Dixon did not seem to know his own interest.

"Ma'am," remarked the housekeeper, significantly, "fruit is not so plentiful this year, and if I make but little jam it will be *parily* because I have so few pots to put it in. I am not complaining—far be it from me—but I ask this, does not the Scripture declare that we are to be wise as serpents? It does. It says in another place, 'He that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none.' Well, if I took that text literally, which I don't, I would use the wisdom of the serpent, as I am told to do, and I would take care to give away that coat which was of least use to me. But what Mr. Dixon does is the clean contrary. It was put before him that he must give away one of two coats, and if one of the two was threadbare and shabby, and the other was handsome and a good fit, ten to one that he would put the shabby one on his own back; and I should not be in a proper mind to receive the sacrament the next time it was given in consequence of not being in charity with the man that was wearing the better one. I never did approve of selling old clothes, Mrs. Maclean. I consider that they are the rights of the poor when we are done with them; but to wear the shabby and give away the good is to turn everything upside down; and that, so to speak, is my Mr. Dixon's fashion."

"Perhaps," said the widow humbly, for this allusion to the sacrament had reminded her of the two-shilling piece; "perhaps he considers that in giving to the poor he is lending to the Lord."

"No doubt, no doubt," said the housekeeper; "those words are often in his mouth; but, Mrs. Maclean, I put it to you as to a sincere woman who does as others do, and has no reason to be ashamed of it,—don't you, when you feel that you ought to give away something in charity,—don't you consider what you can best spare?"

"To be sure, to be sure," replied the poor woman, "it is not much that I have to give; but when I give it is chiefly what I have done with, what I don't want, or anything that won't keep, such as a drink of milk to a beggar's child, or windfall apples that I cannot sell."

"And very right too, and very prudent. Prudence is a virtue, isn't it?"

"Yes," said the widow doubtfully, "and yet if I really felt that it was giving to the Lord, I should wish to give of the best."

"Ah, but that is only a figure, ma'am; we are not to take the Scriptures too literally. I've often heard so in sermons, and yet," proceeded the housekeeper, "and yet, as I said before, to live with a man like Mr. Dixon, often makes me feel that I am a wicked old woman. Not but what there is a natural carelessness about him, too, which makes it easier for him than for many others to give away his things. Now, that which I told you about the carpet had nothing to do with his religion, but it has to do with his not caring how things look, which is such a trouble to me. When he has a shabby dinner, and folks come in and see him at it, he feels nothing, and I feel a great deal."

"Well, Mrs. Anderson," said her hostess, "you should consider that whatever folks may think about his furniture and his dinners, any one may see with half an eye that he is a perfect gentleman, and they may perhaps think that it's his way to go on as he does; just a singularity, you know, and not a notion that it's his duty. They may think he does it to save money."

"They may," replied the housekeeper, much comforted by this speech. "Well, well, I hope they do! For I've noticed that people don't think the worse of those that are a little singular, if they see that they are studying their own advantage in what they do. It's singularity that is not for advantage, but that comes from an over religious mind, or an over tender conscience, that people dislike. There was old Sir Henry Lofton, when he had the misfortune to turn teetotaler,—how everybody laughed at him, and said he did it to save his wine, and said he need not have troubled himself, for it was none of the best. There is ten times as much said about him as about Squire Hillary of Castle Casey, who is so mean with his wine. The worst I've heard of him was, that his son would inherit a fine cellar full when he came into the property, and that he had the finest taste in old port of any one in the county."

"But," said the widow, "Mr. Hillary is a very hard man to the poor. I don't think, Mrs. Anderson, that the Almighty has much money of his to pay him again. He hasn't lent much to the Lord."

"Well, ma'am, we must not judge him," replied the housekeeper; "he has had a very expensive family. They do say that his son, who ran away for a sailor, has cost him a great deal; and you know a man that has an old property to keep up, and several sons to put out in the world, cannot spend as an old bachelor might."

"You are best off to be with Mr. Dixon, ma'am," said the widow. "It will all come back to him one way or another. I've heard of a man of whom it was said that he transported his goods into heaven before him, and was sent for there to enjoy them. Perhaps Mr. Dixon is one of this sort."

"No doubt, ma'am," replied the housekeeper; "but there are many good Christians that are every bit as fit for this world as they are for the next. And I wish he was one of them. I must be going now; and I think you kindly for a good cup of tea."

"Don't mention it," said the widow; "I thank you kindly for your good company. It's

a great thing for a lone woman to have a friend now and then to speak to."

"Ay, indeed. So, you have nothing for me to do at the savings bank?"

"Well, no, I thank you," said Mrs. Maclean; and she felt the color rise in her face, for she thought of the two-shilling piece. This money having been lent to the Lord, she could not at present send any to the savings bank; but, though she was glad it was where it was, she hoped Mrs. Anderson would not find out anything about it, or she might think her less fit for this world than even the young vicar."

So, Mrs. Anderson, having hurried on her shawl and taken leave of her friend, pursued her way through the dingle alone. Her mind was full of love for the young clergyman, whom she had nursed and tended in his childhood; but she gave way to a little feeling of wrath also against him, when she reflected how he stood, as she thought, in his own light, and neglected his own interest.

She was a little, stout body, with a determined mouth and a keen, shining eye. All the people in the parish feared her,—she was so quick at finding out imposture.

If the united desires of most of the poor could have prevailed to turn her out from among them, Mrs. Anderson would not have held her own in the hamlet for a day; as it was, she ruled and reigned in a certain sense, because she had Mr. Dixon's ear. It was she, when Mr. Dixon had visited a poor woman for some weeks, and had been much touched by her habit of shedding tears when he read to her—it was she who, coming in once with a pudding that he had desired her to make, had looked about her with significant shrewdness, and finally had put her hand under the pillow and drawn out a bottle of gin; then, while the patient scolded, had remarked to her that tears sometimes came of drinking, and that she had better not deceive herself into thinking them a proof of piety. She was much too discreet at the time to say any more; but while Mr. Dixon sat by, discomfited, she fed the old woman, and setting the gin bottle on a table, went her way.

Afterwards, while Mr. Dixon dined, and she waited on him, he said to her, "How came you, Anderson, to think of feeling under the pillow?"

"I smelt gin, sir, as plain as possible," she answered; "and I knew Molly was bedridden; so where could it be but close to her hand?"

"You smelt it?"

"Bless you, sir, yes. Those sprigs of mint that lay on her bed could not disguise it."

"Well," said the parson, with a sigh, "I really did think the old soul was a sincere penitent."

Charity believeth all things—Mrs. Anderson knew that; yet, she was a little astonished when he added, "Perhaps she takes it as a medicine."

"Perhaps she does," answered the housekeeper, after a pause; for, with the quick instinct of affection, she was willing to spare her sometime nursing the pain of thinking that he had been ignominiously cheated by an ignorant, vicious old woman,—taking her drunken sobs for the blessed tears of repentance. "But, sir, might I inquire whether you are in the habit of giving her money?"

"Yes; I often give her a shilling or two," was his answer; "and I generally see that she has her share of all the parish charities."

"I should think, on the whole, sir," said the housekeeper, with such an air of cogitation, as if she would have had him think that her forthcoming remark had that moment entered her mind,—"I should think, on the whole, sir, that if you could get in the habit of spending the money for her,—say in bread, or in tea, or rice,—it might be a good thing; for, if she requires gin as a medicine, the parish doctor is bound to provide it. What is he paid for, indeed, but for attending to her, and to such as she is?"

To be continued.

For the Christian Messenger.

A DREAM.

BY S. T. RAND, MISSIONARY TO THE MICMAC INDIANS.

It requires some courage to tell a dream. But we cannot altogether throw away dreaming without some serious charges against both theology and philosophy. Certainly God in former days spoke sometimes to men in dreams and visions of the night. And the greatest philosophers of these days, as well as those of ancient times, are free to admit that there may be something sometimes in dreams. The pious Dr. Doddridge once had a dream, which, it is said, he could scarcely ever relate without tears, for he had been 'Caught up into Paradise,' and had seen and heard unutterable things. Dr. Watts told this dream of his friend in verse; and a late writer, in recording the dream, remarks, that it was not wonderful that a man who lived so near heaven as Dr. Doddridge did, should occasionally dream of being there. I have heard individuals say they are never conscious of dreaming; but I cannot say this. I always dream, always did dream, and hope I always shall, while the necessity of sleep lasts. But I never had more than half-a-dozen dreams which particularly impressed me. One of these have many times related, and have often been assured that its relation has had a tendency to quicken the devotional feelings of others, as well as my own; and with the hope that its personal may have the same effect, I now write it.

It was in the winter of 1867. I was from home, in a place called 'Forest Glen,' near

Stewiacke, where a dear daughter—now I trust in heaven—was teaching school. It was Monday night (Feb. 18th); and I had had a sweet season preaching Jesus in my daughter's school-house, and had preached three times the day before, to as many congregations. I was very peaceful and happy in the Lord; and I dreamed of seeing Him—the Lord Jesus Christ himself—and awoke with an ardent desire that it might not be long before I should really see Him. 'And before the morning dawn, the pleasant sight was twice presented to my gaze.' First I saw an image of Him. The face seemed beautifully carved out of wood, but the coloring was bad. The image stood in the corner of a small, high, square room. All but the face seemed as though intended to be covered, as there was no beauty or form about the body and legs. Several persons were in the room; and when my attention was first directed to the image, it made no impression upon me, and none even after I was informed that it was an image of the Saviour. But directly it began to move and to speak. This arrested the attention of all present. We approached it. It bent forward and kissed us. Every person present seemed to have a very marked and significant countenance; but they were all strangers to me. One short, elderly-looking man presented in his face a somewhat revolting appearance. He seemed bloated by intemperance. But as soon as he noticed that the image bent forward and kissed all who came up to it, he looked very serious, approached reverently, and received a kiss. I instantly felt differently towards this man. In good old *new-light* phraseology, I had a 'fellowship' for him. I seemed to think: "Poor fellow! you may have your infirmities, and may be struggling against besetting sins, but if the blessed Redeemer loves you, I will love you too."

I then rushed out into the street, and called to every one I saw to come in and behold the wondrous sight—an image of the Lord animated by the Lord himself, so that it both moved and spoke. Among those to whom I made the announcement, there was a small company of Indians. They looked wild and war-like, thoroughly copper-colored, and not one of them did I know, but called out to them to come. 'I can show you an image of Christ,' I said, 'that can move and speak.' Many a time, thought I, they have looked on images of Christ; but never before have they seen one that was animated by a living spirit. Instantly, they assumed a look of impressive solemnity, and came in to look at the wonder.

In a short time he told us he must leave. We felt sorry to have him go; but clustered round to assist him, as the wooden image seemed after all to need human help in order to move. A ladder was procured, and we ascended all together to the top of a large flat-roofed building. Here I immediately lost sight of the image and all the other attendants. It seemed to be night—a summer night—all calm and still, but cloudy. But there were some openings in the clouds, and bright glory beyond was visible through those openings. I was immediately borne up from the earth, and floated calmly through the air towards heaven. Whither I was going, or what was about to happen I seemed neither to know nor care. All was peace within. A firm reliance on the arm of the Lord seemed to dissipate all fear and all care.—Presently my ear caught strains of the most heavenly music. The air seemed filled with thousands of intelligent, happy beings, all singing in harmony, and uttering the same words in the same strain; and I heard the words and remembered them, and I learned the tune. They sang the high praises of God and the Lamb; and I heard it as we sometimes hear sounds in gradually awakening from our sleep, when some of the senses are aroused before the others. The sense of hearing seemed awake, and the words were, 'Glory! glory! glory!' and the reader has only to strike these two syllables to *one* and *three* of the musical scale (*do, mi*), and make the first a *half-note* and the second a *quarter*, and he has the *strain*. But can he conceive of the rapturous melody? Oh, how I struggled for a voice to sing! but no words would come. Finally, I succeeded in uttering a shout; but this awoke me, and, lo! it was a dream.

But I slept again, and again I dreamed. And the same face exactly was again before me; but now it was no longer an *image*, but a *living person* that I saw. It was the Lord himself. So I thought, and the impression was immediately confirmed; for there stood by a young man, with more of heaven than of earth in his countenance, though there was nothing peculiar in his dress. And I asked him what it meant. 'It is the Master,' said he, in soft, subdued accents; and my heart seemed to thrill at the sight. I have just dreamed, thought I, of seeing His image, but now I see Himself. I approached him. He looked at me with a look—shall I say of indescribable sweetness and love? 'Lord,' said I, 'I have been trying to serve Thee for the last three years, haven't I?' [For I did not feel disposed to go back beyond that period, though I have been now a professor of religion for nearly forty years, and a preacher for thirty-five years; but in 1863, the Lord was pleased graciously to arouse and quicken me. 'The angel that talked with me came again (at that time), and awakened me as a man is awakened out of his sleep' (Zach. iv. 1.); and since then I really have been endeavouring to serve the Lord more faithfully than for many years before.] I thought he replied, 'Yes, you have.' Then it rushed over me, "But, oh! how far short I have come in every thing!" and I replied, "But with a great deal of imperfection and many shortcomings." 'Yes,' he answered, 'yes.' 'But,' said I, 'I have been accepted notwithstanding, haven't I?' Oh, how his answer thrilled my soul! 'Yes,' said