

Youths' Department.

Lessons for 1871.

THE WORDS OF JESUS.

SUNDAY, JULY 23RD, 1871.

Waiting for the Lord.—Luke xii 35-48.

THE LITTLE SWEEP'S PRAYER.

Knowing that all the children in my class were constantly occupied during the week, I feared that the duty of prayer was sometimes neglected. I insisted one Sabbath on the importance of prayer. At the close I asked a little boy of ten years of age, who led a very uncomfortable life in the service of a master sweep,—

"And do you ever pray?"

"O, yes, monsieur!"

"And when do you do it? You go out very early in the morning, do you not?"

"Yes, monsieur; and we are only half awake when we leave the house. I think about God, but cannot say that I pray then."

"When, then?"

"You see, monsieur, our master orders us to mount the chimney quickly, but does not forbid us to rest a little when we are at the top. Then I sit up on the top of the chimney and pray."

"And what do you say?"

"Ah! monsieur, very little. I know no grand word with which to praise God. Most frequently I only repeat a verse that I have learned at school."

"What is that?"

My scholar repeated it with fervor, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"—S. S. Visitor.

MY GRANDFATHER'S BARGAIN.

He lived at the foot of a long hill. All the country knew him for a warm-hearted Christian and for a kind and helpful neighbor. Often in the spring teamsters with heavy loads would get mired in the heavy roads; and would add cursing and swearing to blows in a vain endeavor to urge their horses to move the load, which all their energies were unable to start. On such occasions my grandfather would come out of his office, always benignant, with an offer of help that was also a mild reproof.

"My friend," he would say, "I will make a bargain with you; if you will stop swearing, I will get my oxen and take your load up the hill." The offer took off the edge of the reproof without lessening its efficacy. One may "speak the truth in love" so as to rebuke sin and yet not be censorious.—Illustrated Christian Weekly.

THE TOY AGE.

"When," asks an English magazine writer, "does the toy age really cease? Look at the rich man with his establishment; what is it but a bigger box of toys?—the tin coach grown up big; the horses become alive; the box of sheep and cows developed and better made; able to walk, and bleat, and low; the trees able to stand more firmly than those old avenues whose trees were all of one peaked shape, with the green ringlets upon them; the toy ship grown into a yacht; the box of dinner things, with the varnished provisions immovable upon them, exchanged for those grand dinner parties *a la Russe*; the doll passed into a wife; the baby nurse into a nursery. The toy age continues all the life long, though the child's heart goes soon."

THINGS SHORT AND THINGS LONG.

1. Life is short. God speaks of it as a "shadow," a "weaver's shuttle," a "hand's-breath," a "vapour." If it be like these, it must be short.
2. Time is short. It is made up of many lives, yet it is short. "Time is short," says Paul; and says John, "The world passeth away." A few years will end all.
3. The sinner's joy is short. It is "but for a moment." He may laugh, and dance and be merry; but the end soon comes, and what is left?
4. The believer's sorrow is short. This, too, "is but for a moment." It may be heavy and hard to bear, but it is soon over and when it is done, it is joy for ever and ever.

1. Forever is long. It is like God himself, who is "the King eternal, immortal." How important to have such an One for our portion!
2. God's love is long. It never dies. It is "From everlasting to everlasting."
3. The believer's joy is long. At God's right hand are "pleasures for evermore."
4. The sinner's sorrow is long. It is "the blackness of darkness for ever."

THREE O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING.

What do the robins whisper about
From their homes in the elms and birches?
I've tried to study the riddle out,
And still in my mind is many a doubt,
In spite of deep researches.

While in the world is silence deep,
In the twilight of early dawning,
They begin to chirp and twitter and peep,
As if they were talking in their sleep,
At three o'clock in the morning.

Perhaps the little ones stir, and complain
That it's time to be up and doing;
And the mother-bird sings a drowsy strain
To coax them back to their dreams again,
Though distant cocks are crowing.

Or do they tell secrets that should not be heard
By mortals listening and prying?
Perhaps we might learn from some whispered word

The best way to bring up a little bird,
Or the wonderful art of flying.

It may be they gossip from nest to nest,
Hidden and leaf-enfolded;
For do we not often hear it confessed,
When a long-kept secret at last is guessed,
That a "little bird has told it"?

Perhaps—but the question is wrapped in doubt;
They give me no hint or warning;
Listen and tell me, if you can find out,
What do the robins whisper about
At three o'clock in the morning?

THE LORD'S FAT KINE.

BY MISS HOLT.

"What are you doing out this frosty morning, good mother?" said a finely dressed lady, one day last winter, to an old woman gathering shavings in a mean little back yard.

But the good mother only turned her pale-shaking head, to give a wondering look, ending in a low chuckle, which might have passed for a smile.

As she took no farther notice of her questioner, the lady drew nearer.

"It is very cold for an old person to be out. Have you no one to do this work for you?" Here the old woman gave her a more knowing look, then a real laugh as she said:

"And do ye think I'd trust 'em?"

"Well, now, what is it you are doing, that you can't trust to any one else?"

"Why, can't ye see for yourself? only just getting the Lord's fat kine." And now the lady noticed she was tying the shavings from fat pine lumber, with a red string, and those from poor pine, with a green string.

But the good mother had not yet made the curious lady much wiser than before, so she again asked:

"Tell me all about your shavings; what are they for?"

"Ye must ken but a little to be sure; what's your fat kine for?"

"I do not tie fat shavings with a red string, and poor ones with a green one," answered the lady.

"And what ye give Him? Ah, old Elsie mind; ye give gold; Elsie no gold now; gold take wings," and she shook a black bag on her arm; "no sillor or gold now; only fat kine for the blessed Lord: poor kine for old Elsie's milk."

"Ah! now I begin to see it; you give the fat shavings to God, and keep the poor ones to sell for your milk. But how does he get them, good mother?"

"Oh, ye must know; ye see, they warm the temple, and the temple praise his holy name. Elsie in bed two weeks; temple cold. The Master miss Elsie; he bring the old body up again for to get his shavings. Master can't do 'bout old Elsie down here, but he need Elsie up yonder, too; this coming soon; told her so right in here," laying her shaking hand on her breast, and the old woman went shuffling across the yard into her hovel.

The lady looked at her watch. It was now her dinner hour, and she, to tell the truth, did not feel quite so much like going to look at Delaney's new fall silks, as when she left home an hour ago.

She was in the habit of sending her children to the Sabbath-school. Strange to say, the next Sabbath she went with them.

They got there early. The church was cold and damp, which almost chilled the feeling with which she had gone there.

The sexton soon came hurrying in with the coal for the stove, telling the children they would in a few moments be as "warm as toast."

He then laid down a bundle of nice fat kindlings, tied with a red string, and sure enough, it set the coal to roaring.

"Where do you get your shavings?" asked the lady.

"From an old woman they call Elsie,"

replied the sexton. "Some years ago she lost some of her mind, but it seems she kept the best part of it, for poor as she is, she still gives to the Lord. As she remembers something about Pharaoh's kine, she will have it called 'The Lord's fat kine.'"

The old woman's simple question to the lady, "What ye give Him?" made her hand the money for the new silk to her pastor, and carried her to the Sabbath-school.

What do you give him? fat kine, or no kine at all?—Young Reaper.

UNHAPPY MARRIAGES.

We believe that the number of "unhappy marriages" is vastly overrated by nearly every body. There is so much talk on the subject that it is easy to forget that for every instance of complaint there are thousands of beneficent and prosperous unions of which the world never hears. It is natural that wrong and outrage should demand attention, but men and women whose married life is full of good and helpfulness do not often feel an impulse to go up and down the world delending the system under which they live.

Then, we have long been convinced that the fundamental thought or idea of most of these reformers is an error, and a most mischievous one. What is an "unhappy marriage?" What is a happy one? Most people who complain of the present system of marriage show clearly that they think that the chief evils and unhappiness in the lives of men and women who are "not happily married" result from marriage itself or from what is false and bad in it. Their criticisms depend chiefly upon the notion that a proper union, a "happy marriage," would insure a happy and prosperous life for nearly everybody. We think that most people are as "happy" in marriage as they deserve to be, that they have about as much of good in it as they are capable of enjoying. Not everybody, of course, but we think this is true of the great majority of all the married people around us.

It is absurd to think that so much misery and wrong, so much that is low, animal and unlovely in the lives of men and women results from their being "mismatched." In most cases there is no possible mating that could make the joint life much better. These men and women are undeveloped, selfish, exacting. They have undisciplined tempers, and they are accustomed to think of "happiness" for themselves as the chief end of marriage. No magic of "mating" would make the life of such people very high or perfect. In fact, as things now are, marriage is the source and nurse of many of the best qualities in the lives of most men and women. We think there is nothing plainer than the fact that the average tendency and effect of marriage is beneficial and elevating. Looking at men and women as they are, we think it wonderful that marriage does so much for them and has such power to lift up their lives to light and beauty.

Our reformers trust too much to specific treatment for particular evils. The real problem is far deeper and more difficult. There are no short roads to happiness, or to any kind of heaven on earth or anywhere else. The men and women who marry must somehow acquire thoughtfulness, self-control, consideration for others, patience, and other qualities without which life is unendurable in any relation we know of; and we know of nothing so well adapted to accomplish this work of education as marriage itself. It is not by any direct effort to improve marriage that any real reform is to be brought about, but by the gradual instruction and advancement of the people themselves in knowledge and virtue, and in all that makes up excellence of character.—Exchange.

HOW HIS SHIP CAME IN.

I ran across what first struck me as a very singular genius on my road from Springfield to Boston. This was a stout, black-whiskered man who sat immediately in front of me, and who indulged, from time to time in the most strange and unaccountable maneuvers. Every now and then he would get up and hurry away to the narrow passage which leads to the door in these drawing-room cars, and when he thought himself secure from observation, would fall to laughing in the most violent manner, and continue the healthful exercise until he was as red in the face as a lobster. As we neared Boston these demonstrations increased in violence, save that the stranger no longer ran away to laugh, but kept his seat and chuckled to himself, with his chin deep down in his shirt collar. But the changes that those portmanteaus underwent! He moved them here, there, everywhere; he put them be-

hind him, in front of him, on each side of him. He was evidently getting ready to leave, but, as we were yet twenty-five miles from Boston, the idea of such early preparation was ridiculous. If we had entered the city then, the mystery would have remained unsolved, but the stranger at last became so excited that he could keep his seat no longer. Some one must

help him, and as I was the nearest he selected me. Suddenly turning, as if I had asked a question, he said, rocking himself to and fro in his chair the meantime, and slapping his legs, and breathing hard, "Been gone three years!" "Ah!" "Yes, been in Europe. Folks don't expect me for six months yet, but I got through and started. I telegraphed them at the last station, they've got fit by this time." As he said this he rubbed his hands and changed the portmanteau on his left to the right, and the one on the right to the left again. "Got a wife?" said I. "Yes, and three children," he returned, and he got up and folded his overcoat anew, and hung it over the back of the seat. "You are pretty nervous over the matter ain't you?" Is id, watching his fidgetty movements. "Well, I should think so," he replied; "I haven't slept soundly for a week. And do you know," he went on, glancing around at the passengers and speaking in a low tone, "I am almost certain this train will run off the track and break my neck before I get to Boston. Well, the fact is, I have had too much good luck for one man, lately. The thing can't last; 'tain't natural that it should, you know. I've watched it. First it rains, then it shines, then it rains again. It rains so hard you think it's never going to stop; then it shines so bright you think it's always going to shine; and just as you are settled in either belief, you are knocked over by a change, to show you that you know nothing about it."

"Well, according to that philosophy," said I, "you will continue to have sunshine because you are expecting a storm." "It's curious," he returned, "but the only thing which makes me think I will get through safe, is because I think I won't." "Well, that is curious," said I. Yes he replied, "I'm a machinist—made a discovery—nobody believed in it; spent all my money trying to bring it out—mortgaged my home—all went. Everybody laughed at me—everybody but my wife—fine little woman—said she would work her fingers off before I should give it up. Went to England—no better there; came within an ace of jumping off London bridge. Went into a shop to earn money enough to come home with; there I met the man I wanted. To make a long story short, I've brought £30,000 home with me, and here I am." "Good for you!" I exclaimed. "Yes," said he, £30,000; and the best of it is, she don't know anything about it. I've fooled her so often, and disappointed her so much, that I just concluded I would say nothing about this. When I got my money, though, you better believe I struck a bee-line for home." "And now you will make her happy," said I. "Happy!" he replied, "why, you don't know anything about it. She's worked like a dog while I have been gone, trying to support herself and the children decently. They paid her thirteen cents apiece for making coarse shirts; and that's the way she'd live half the time. She'll come down there to the depot to meet me, in a gingham dress, and a shawl a hundred years old, and she'll think she's dressed up. Oh, she won't have no clothes after this—oh, no, I guess not!" And with these words, which implied that his wife's wardrobe would soon rival Queen Victoria's, the stranger tore down the passageway again, and, getting in his old corner, where he thought himself out of sight, went through the strangest pantomime, laughing, putting his mouth into the drollest shapes, and then swinging himself back and forth in the limited space, as if he were "walking down Broadway" a full-rigged metropolitan belle. And so on till we rolled into the depot, and I placed myself on the other car, opposite the stranger, who, with a portmanteau in each hand, had descended and was standing on the lowest step, ready to jump to the platform. I looked from his face to the faces of the people before us, but saw no sign of recognition. Suddenly he cried, "There they are!" and laughed outright, but in a hysterical sort of a way, as he looked over the crowd. I followed his eyes and saw some distance back, as if crowded out and shouldered away by the well-dressed and elbowing throng, a little woman in a faded dress and a well-worn hat, with a face almost painful in its intense but hopeful expression, glancing from

window to window as the coaches glided in. She had not yet seen the stranger; but a moment after she caught his eye, and in another instant he had jumped to the platform with his two portmanteaus; and making a hole in the crowd, pushing one here and there, and running one of his bundles plump into the well-developed stomach of a venerable old gentleman in spectacles, he rushed toward the place where she was standing. I think I never saw a face assume so many different expressions in a short time as did that of the little woman while her husband was on his way to her. She didn't look pretty. On the contrary, she looked very plain, but somehow I felt a big lump rise in my throat as I watched her. She was trying to laugh; but, God bless her, how completely she failed in the attempt! Her mouth got into the position; but it never moved after that, save to draw down the corners and quiver, while she blinked her eyes so fast that I suspect she only caught occasional glimpses of the broad-shouldered fellow who elbowed his way so rapidly towards her. And then, as he drew close, and dropped those everlasting portmanteaus, she just turned completely round, with her back toward him, and covered her face with her hands. And thus she was when the strong man gathered her up in his arms as if she had been a baby, and held her sobbing to his breast. There were enough gaping at them, heaven knows, and I turned my eyes away a moment, and then I saw two boys in threadbare roundabouts standing near, wiping their eyes and noses on their little coat sleeves, and bursting out anew at every fresh demonstration on the part of their mother. When I looked at the stranger again he had his hat drawn down over his eyes; but his wife was looking up at him, and it seemed as if the pent-up tears of those weary months of waiting were streaming through her eyelids.—The Capita.

THE IRISHMAN'S NEW TESTAMENT.

A farm laborer, in the county of Cork, Ireland, understanding that a gentleman had a copy of the Scriptures in the Irish language, begged to see it. He asked whether he might borrow the New Testament in his own tongue, that he might take a copy from it. The gentleman said he could not obtain another of the books, and he was afraid to trust him to take a copy in writing.

"Where will you get the paper?" he asked.

"I will buy it."

"And the pens and ink?"

"I will buy them."

"Where will you find a place to copy it?"

"If your honor will allow me your hall, I will come after I have done my work in the day, and take a copy by portions in the evening."

The gentleman was so struck with his zeal, that he gave him the use of the hall and a light, in order to carry out his wish. The man was firm to his purpose, finished the work, and produced a copy of the New Testament in writing by his own hand. A printed volume was given to him in exchange, and the written one was placed in the hands of the late noble President of the British and Foreign Bible Society, a monument of the desire of the Irish to know the Scriptures.

THE GOLDEN PENNIES.

A little boy who had plenty of pennies dropped one into the missionary-box, laughing as he did so. He had no thought in his heart about Jesus, the heathen, or the missionary. His was a tin penny. It was as light as a scrap of tin.

Another boy put a penny in, and as he did so looked round with a self-applauding gaze, as if he had done some great thing. His was a brass penny. It was not the gift of a "lowly heart," but of a proud heart.

A third boy gave a penny, saying to himself: "I suppose I must, because all others do." That was an iron penny. It was the gift of a cold, hard heart.

As a fourth boy dropped his penny in the box he shed a tear, and his heart said: "Poor heathens! I'm sorry they are so poor, so ignorant, and so miserable." That was a silver penny. It was the gift of a heart full of pity.

But there was one scholar who gave his penny with a throbbing heart, saying to himself: "For thy sake, O loving Jesus! I give this penny." That was a golden penny, because it was the gift of love.—Spirit of Missions.