

Sunday Reading.

How the Minister's House was Saved.

There was trouble in the minister's family. A stranger would have known it by the way his voice trembled in the prayer that morning, but even the children and black Dinah knew what the matter was, for this father and mother believed that it was right for the children to share in both the joys and the sorrows of the household. So, when the night before a letter had come written in a strange hand, and saying that the house in which they had lived so long was not really theirs, but belonged to a man in New York, who said he held a mortgage on it which was given long before the minister bought it—when the letter came, the minister read it aloud before them all, and they talked it over together.

There seemed no help, for the stranger had inclosed a copy of the mortgage, and when the minister went to look at the town records, he found it was a true one. There was no help. Unless he could raise the \$2,000 within three months, they must give up their home. He might have hired a lawyer to pick a flaw in the paper, but he had no money to pay lawyers' fees, and then, too, he would not have thought it right to try to avoid paying what he believed was an honest claim, even though the burden of it had by some one's carelessness fallen upon him who had never had any advantage of the money.

His parish was large, but his people were poor, and he knew that although they loved him and his work, they had given all that they could when they had paid him his little salary. The money which he had paid for his house had been the savings of a good many years, added to a little bequest which his wife had received from a distant relative.

All this the older children knew as well as their parents, and even little Tom and Elsie, the ten-year-old twins, had a vague idea that their house had a mortgage on it, and that if they did not get \$2,000 in some way, they would all have to go away and live out of doors, or perhaps in a tent, they were not very sure which it would be.

Tom and Elsie talked it over as they went to school that morning hand in hand. Tom thought they might ask the man to wait awhile until he could earn enough to pay the \$2,000, and at first Elsie thought so too; but when they remembered that almost all the money Tom had ever earned came from his father, who paid him for weeding the garden-beds, and for shoveling paths in winter, they knew that this would not do, for their father would not have any money to give Tom now, or else he would pay the man in New York himself.

Then Elsie remembered that she with some other girls had once given a children's fair for a sick girl in a hospital, and had earned \$20, and she thought they might earn some money in that way; but she had forgotten that they were more than three months getting ready to give it. She and Tom sat down on a big rock just before the turn in the road that led to the school-house, and talked about the fair. They were very hopeful at first, but suddenly Tom said, "Why, Elsie, you made \$20, and that would be only \$80 a year if you gave four fairs!"

"Is it?" said Elsie, half choking.

"Yes, it is," said Tom, "and it would take twenty-five years before we could pay the man."

"Twenty-five years!" echoed Elsie, "and we should be thirty-five years old!"

"Yes," said Tom, "and I should be an old man, and you'd have to wear a cap like grandma's. I am sure grandma must be as much as thirty-five years old."

They were badly disappointed, and Elsie wanted to cry, but she was ashamed to do so before her brother; and as for Tom—well, he found it necessary to tie his shoe, and it took him so long that Elsie was afraid they would be late. She never thought that perhaps Tom might want to cry too. Then they hurried on to school, for it was almost nine o'clock. They did not have very good lessons that day, but this so rarely happened that

their teacher did not find any fault, but only looked at them a little anxiously, and said to Elsie, "Are you sure that you are feeling quite well this morning?"

At last it was noon-time, and they went out under the great beech-tree to dinner, for the school-house was so far away that they did not go home at noon. Some way, things did not taste as good as their mother's nice cooking usually did, and Tom began to restlessly crumble a bit of bread, and when that was gone, he took a piece of newspaper that the wind had blown under the tree, and began to tear that into little pieces.

"Tom," said Elsie, "father always said that God loved us, and was taking care of us. Don't you suppose that he could send us the money if he wanted to?"

"I suppose he could," said Tom, "but if he wouldn't do it for father, I don't believe he would do it for us."

"How nice it would be if we could find it right beside that rock, or under that piece of paper," said Elsie, looking very wistfully and half-expectantly at the torn scrap of newspaper which Tom had thrown down.

"Well, it isn't there, or anywhere," said Tom, as he half-absently took up the paper and twisted it around his finger. All at once he started and said, "See here, Elsie, here's a man that really wants to lend some money! Just see!" and he read these lines from the torn paper: "\$50,000 to loan in sums to suit on Mortgages of Real Estate at six per cent., and 'real estate' means houses, the teacher said so one day, and our house has a mortgage, and that man will lend us some money. We'll write and ask him. I don't know what six per cent. has to do with it, but that isn't much, six cents isn't."

"What a good man he must be," said Elsie. "Do you suppose God told him what to put in the paper? I did not know that God told people what to print in newspapers."

"I don't know," said Tom; "let's write the letter."

"Well, you write it," said Elsie.

"No, you," said Tom; "you spell better than I do."

"I failed in spelling this morning," said Elsie, "and you didn't!" But she was prevailed upon to write it, and this is what they sent:

DEAR MR. GODFREY—I know that you are a good man, or else you wouldn't have put it into the paper. And we want some money ever so much. We want \$2,000, and our house has got a mortgage just as you said. Tom and I will work real hard to pay you, and if we don't have the money we'll have to go away from our own house that we have always lived in, and maybe we won't ever have another one to live in. We don't know what the six cents means. Our house cost more than that, and it's got a mortgage, too.

TOM AND ELSIE RICHARDS.

This was their letter, and they put it in the office. They never thought of a stamp, so when the postmaster looked over the letters that night, so they should be ready for the early mail in the morning, he found one letter without any stamp. He was just going to send it to the dead-letter office in Washington, but he put on his glasses and looked at it again, and noticed that it was in a child's writing. "I suppose some little child, and perhaps its grandfather, too, would be disappointed," said he. "I guess it won't hurt me to do a kind thing once in a while," and he put a three-cent stamp on it, so the letter went to New York, and in a little while some one carried it with fifty others away from the office to a little room with a desk and a high stool, and not much other furniture in it. After awhile it was the turn of Elsie's letter to be read. The man who was opening the letters was Mr. Godfrey's agent, who did all his business for him. He read the letter twice, and then he whistled and made some very comical wrinkles in his forehead. "It's that old mortgage of Wilton's, in Belshire," he said to himself. "I guess this is a case for Godfrey himself; I'll send it down to him just for the joke of the thing." So he put it into a large envelope, sealed it, and sent it to Mr. Godfrey, who was in Washington with his wife and little daughter.

So the letter really went to Washington after all, and the postman brought it to Mr. Godfrey one evening just after tea. His little daughter al-

ways thought it was her right to open all the letters, and tell her father which to read first, and so it happened that Elsie's letter was left till the very last, because the envelope was so big and ugly. Mr. Godfrey read it more easily than his agent, for he had a little girl himself, and knew better how to read a child's writing. Then he unfolded the copy of the mortgage which his agent had sent him, and read that very carefully; then he said, "Just see here, Marion," to his wife, who had just come into the room, and read them both to her.

"The dear little things!" said she. "Couldn't you do it, Will? We should never miss it."

"Why, the mortgage is mine as it is," and then he read the copy which his agent had sent. "Adams says he bought it for a mere song with a lot of old papers. The face of it in the first place was not much over \$500, but it seems to have been utterly forgotten, and no interest has ever been paid, until now it amounts to nearly \$2,000. And, Marion, there's one thing more, perhaps this is what we call a put-up job, that the parents have gotten up that letter and had the children send it, or perhaps there are no such children as Tom and Elsie."

"I don't believe it," said Mrs. Godfrey, promptly. "No one but a child ever wrote that letter, and it's an Elsie, too, the same name as our child."

"If that isn't just a woman's reasoning," said Mr. Godfrey, laughing. "Well, Marion, there's one way to fix it. If you really care so much about it, we might go there for a little while, or rather you might take Elsie and go. It is too warm to stay in Washington any longer, and I have always heard of Belshire as in the midst of lovely scenery. You might go now, and I would come as soon as I finish up this case, and bring Fletcher and Adams for the trout-fishing. You could get acquainted with this mythical Tom and Elsie, and find out if the family are really deserving help."

They talked it over a little more, and then it was really decided to do as Mr. Godfrey had proposed, and in a week or two from that night Elsie and her mother set off for Belshire. You can guess how it ended, for Mr. Richards called upon them, as they were strangers in town, and then Tom and the two Elsie's met, and became so fond of one another that Mrs. Godfrey said she must either adopt the twins, or their mother must adopt her Elsie.

Tom and Elsie were for a little while much disappointed that no answer came to their letter, but after a while they were so busy playing that they forgot all about it, until a few days before the three months were to be over, and then Elsie Richards told Elsie Godfrey about their writing, it out under the beech-tree, and sending it to a man whose name was the same as hers, and who had said in the newspapers that he would lend people money, and that he had never answered it. Elsie was just going to say, "Why, that's my papa, and he'll give you the money, I know," but she remembered in time that she had no right to promise what her father would do, so she kept still then, but told her mother all about it when she went home, and her mother said, "It was just right of you not to promise that your father would do anything until you had asked him. Be patient, little girl, papa will come tomorrow or next day."

It all came out well, for Mr. Godfrey came very soon, and the minister liked him so well that almost before he knew it he was telling him about his trouble. Mr. Godfrey went home, and in a little while sent his Elsie over to the minister's with a note which said that the mortgage was all burned up, and would never trouble them any more, and then Elsie told the twins that it was all right, and that her father was the Mr. Godfrey to whom they had written the letter, and Tom shouted, "Hurrah for Mr. Godfrey! I wish I was old enough to go home with him now," for Mr. Godfrey thought Tom was a very bright boy, and had promised to take him into his office when he was a few years older. Elsie sat very still and did not say much until the other Elsie had gone away, and then she whispered—although they were all alone under the trees—"Tom, God does tell people what to print in the newspapers, doesn't he?"

"I—guess perhaps he does—sometimes," said Tom.—*Ec. & Chronicle.*

God Sees.

BY W. H. PORTER.

Thou shalt see me. (Gen. 16:13)

The Lord looked from heaven, he beheldeth all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. (Ps. 33:13, 14.) His eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. (Job 34: 21.)

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do. (Heb. 4:13.)

Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord. (Jer. 23:24.) If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. (Ps. 139:11, 12.) There is no darkness nor the shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves. (Job 34:22.) Hell and destruction are before the Lord; how much more then the hearts of the children of men, (Prov. 15:11.) For the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. (1 Chron. 28:9.) I the Lord search the hearts, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways; (Jer. 17:10.) In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. (Rom. 6:16.) Who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, (1 Cor. 4:5.)

For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. (Eccl. 12:15.)

Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it all together. (Ps. 139:2, 4.)

A Buried Soul.

Two students were travelling together from Pennafel to Salamanca. Being tired and thirsty, they sat down by a wayside spring. While they refreshed themselves, they caught sight of a stone upon which was cut the following sentence in the Castilian tongue, 'Here is buried the soul of the licentiate, Peter Garcias.' 'A good joke,' laughed the younger of the two, 'here is buried the soul—the soul buried! How I should like to know the character who could writesuch a comical epitaph, and here rose to go away. 'There is some mystery in the affair, I will stay to unriddle it,' said the other. Accordingly, allowing his companion to depart, he began to dig with his knife all around the stone. At length he succeeded in raising it up, when he found, in the ground beneath a leather purse containing a hundred ducats, and a card on which the following sentence was written in Latin, 'Thou who hast had wit enough to discern the meaning of the inscription, inherit my money, and make a better use of it than I have.' So the student replaced the stone and resumed his journey, carrying with him the 'soul' of the licentiate.

With the above story a famous writer has introduced his famous book. Might it not also serve to point an important Christian lesson? Though, of course, a man's soul can never be changed into a sum of money, or a piece of property, may it not be buried with his treasure, and share its fate? Was not this the reason why Christ advised men to choose the heavenly store-house for their possessions?—'For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' The heart that is exalted with its treasures to the heavens, will be safe from all danger; but the soul that is buried with its treasure in any spot on earth, will be open to all the attacks of the moth, the rust, and the corruption which threaten the treasure itself. And is it not a fact that there are many souls buried with the possessions, and rusted, moth-eaten, or corrupted along with these? How many men are literally buried in business; and how many more are buried in anxiety and care on the one hand, and thoughtless pleasure on the other. What a degradation is this to the soul that was made by God,

and might sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus, and hold constant fellowship with things eternal and divine. What sorrow, what ruin, what folly! The soul that is worth more than a world, to be buried in the world's dross! The soul that God could lift so high, upon which Christ could work such wonders throughout a glorious eternity, to be corrupted or rusted like any piece of perishable goods! How can a man submit to this who has heard the inspiring words of Christ? Who need stoop to this who has been told of a mighty Redeemer, raised so high that He may lift up to His side the lowliest of those who believe in his name? John Bunyan triumphed in the miserable den into which his body had been thrust, that no prison bolts could fetter his soul, or keep it from mounting above the stars. There is not a soul so exalted on the pinnacles of earth that it is not degraded and impoverished, if it suffers itself to be so chained down, either by golden or iron bands, that it cannot reach those heavenly heights. There is not a soul so buried in poverty, so plunged in care, or so sunk in sin, that it may not, by the help of Christ, wing its flight where He has gone, bearing all its best treasures with it.—*Scottish Baptist Magazine.*

Some good friend sends us the following from New York. The 'Rules' may afford a valuable suggestion or two, for some of our brethren who may beneficially make use of them as far as circumstances permit.

Sanitary Rules for Regulating a House of Worship.

During the last twenty years I have known hundreds of persons, some of them the most devoted Christians, and many of the unsaved, who were entirely deprived of the privileges of God's house, by the mismanagement of that house. Many have suffered severe attacks of illness, and some have lost their lives, from the effects of sharp draughts that fell upon them while sitting perfectly quiet; and many a congregation has been permanently depleted thereby. Thus it appears that the proper care and regulations of the house have much to do with retaining a congregation, and building up the cause of God in preaching the Gospel.

The proper rules, or laws of health, for caring for a house of worship are very simple, and when understood and promptly applied, never fail to secure the desired end; and are as follows:

1. Every Saturday, throw open every window and door for two to four hours—the higher the better—to carry out the stagnant air.
2. While thus open, sweep and dust the house. If the weather be too cold for this, sweep before opening; and open one hour each day there is an evening meeting to be held.
3. In summer, open all the windows at daylight on Sunday morning for an hour then close up till time for opening.
4. Before opening for service in Summer, pull down the top sashes a few inches, and partly close the blinds—turning them upwards—and do the same at all seasons when fresh air is required during services. Never raise a lower sash while people are in the house.
5. On all occasions when there is service, keep the doors, windows and registers shut that are behind the audience, and all the blinds turned upwards sufficiently to throw the draft up, off the heads and shoulders of the people.
6. When more light is needed, open the top blinds to admit it.
7. When the house is closed, leave the upper sashes down a little. Basements should never be closed up tight when empty.

Well-Built Christians.

A well-built Christian is harmonious in all his parts. No one trait shames another. He is not a jumble of inconsistencies, to-day liberal to one cause, to-morrow niggardly toward another; to-day fluent in prayer, and to-morrow fluent in polite falsehoods. He does not keep the fourth commandment on Sunday and break the eighth on Monday. He does not shirk an honest debt to make a huge donation. He is not in favor of temperance for other folk and a glass of toddy for himself. He does not exhort or pray at each of the few meetings he attends, to make up arrearsages for the more meetings which he neglects. He does not so consume his spiritual fuel during revival seasons that he is as cold as Nova Zembla during all the rest of the time; nor do his spiritual fervors ever out-run his well-ordered conversation.—*Cuyler.*

MISSIONARY INTELLIGENCE.

Baptist Mission to Central Africa.

In July, 1880, Mr. Robert Arthington of Leeds, England, wrote the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society in London. The following is an extract of his letter:

"DEAR SIRS AND CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,—I believe the time is come when we should make every necessary preparation to carry out the original purpose of the Congo Mission—to place a steamer on the Congo River, where we can sail north-eastward into the heart of Africa for many hundred miles uninterruptedly, and bring the glad tidings of the everlasting Gospel to thousands of human beings who are now ignorant of the way of life and immortality. I have, therefore, now to offer your Society one thousand pounds towards the purchase of a steamer of the best make and capacity, every way suitable for the purpose, and its conveyance and launch on the river at Stanley Pool; and three thousand pounds to be carefully invested, the interest only to be used for the perpetual maintenance of such steamer on the Congo and its affluents, until Christ and His salvation shall be known all along the Congo, from Stanley Pool to the first cataract of the equatorial cataracts of the Congo, beyond the mouths of the Arawimi and Mburu Rivers."

The Committee proceeded to send out two brethren to visit Stanley Pool. Two stations have been formed on the route, and three additional men have been appointed. It is proposed to appoint three more. The Committee now say in the *Missionary Herald*, (March):

The time has arrived when it appears to be the duty of the Committee to carry out the first part of Mr. Arthington's proposal, and to take measures to secure a steam vessel of the character specified.

Steps have been taken for this purpose and a contract made to build a boat suitable for the work. It is proposed that the steamer shall be of steel, having twin screws for her more easy control and management amid the currents and sand-banks of the river. Her length will be seventy feet, and she will draw only twelve inches of water. This lightness of flotation is secured by a singularly ingenious arrangement of the screws, of which Messrs. Thornycroft & Co. are the patentees. The contract price of the vessel, complete and packed for transmission to the Congo, with a steel boat and duplicates of the most important portions of the machinery and gear, has been fixed at the extremely low sum of £1,760. To this will have to be added about £150 for sundry stores, so that the entire cost of the vessel will not exceed £2,000. Mr. Grenfell has come home, at the request of the Committee, to watch its progress, and to make himself thoroughly acquainted with its management. He will thus be able to superintend putting its parts together when they shall arrive at their destination.

In forwarding his generous gifts, Mr. Arthington said:—"I have considered that the proposed steamer may cost much more than £1,000, and that in that case the friends of the Society may like to contribute towards the needful outlay." As seen above, the steamer will cost within a fraction of £2,000; besides which there will be the heavy cost of conveying her to her destination.

The Leeds Auxiliary have already, at their annual meeting in the autumn of 1880, resolved to furnish £500 of the cost; the vessel will be ready for transport to the Congo about the month of August.

The Committee in their appeal say: "We cannot better close this brief account of the plans and purposes of the Committee than in the striking words of Mr. Arthington:—

"Let us be simple and courageous, acting ever in constant faith, and according to our consciousness of what is right and for the best."

Caste in India.

There is one special difficulty that meets us in India which renders mission work there, in a certain sense, unique; it is summed up in the word *caste*.

There are three main rules of caste, which we may call the trade rule, the marriage rule, and the food rule. The trade rule makes all the people of one caste to be of one occupation, which, of course, is thus hereditary. The weaver's son must be a weaver, the potter's son must be a potter, the barber's son must be a barber—so must his grandson and great-grandson, and so was his own father, and grandfather, and great-grandfather. However far we go back, they all were barbers, and however far we go forward they all will be barbers; and so on with all occupations. This rule is being slowly treached upon by English influence; thousands of people have taken service in the railways, thousands of many castes have become clerks, and so forth.