

Family Reading.

The September Mood.

The year has spent its brightest hours, Each night gains surely on the day, And Time, which gave in Spring the flowers, Now takes them one by one away; The golden light is passing by, And wintry days are drawing nigh. Some our earthly course rolls by, A sombre autumn time is found, When this world's pleasures fade and die, And few break into bud around; And sober thoughts creep o'er the mind, Our gayest hours are now behind. Yet we the whole of life would know, As planned by Him who placed us here; Nor shrink from aught He may bestow, Nor e'en a coming Winter fear; Both when we rise and when descend, We hold our faith firm to the end. J. HUNT COOK.

Contrary Man.

Some men do write when they do wrong, And some do live who dye; And some are "short" when they are long, And stand when they do lie. A man is surly when he's late; 'Tis round when he is square; He may die early and dilate, And may be foul when "fair." He may be "fast" when he is slow, And "loose" when he is "tight," And "high" when he is very low, And heavy when he's "light." He may be wet when he is "dry;" He may be "great" when small; May purchase when he won't go by; Have naught when he has awl. He may be sick when he is "swell," And hot when he is cold; He's skilled so he on earth may dwell, And when he's young he's sold. —Norristown Herald.

Mistaken Economy.

"We really must economize somewhere," said Obadiah, tugging wildly at his whiskers. "Yes, indeed," said I, wringing my hands, "we must! But I'm sure, Oby, dear, we are neither of us extravagant. We must eat, and we must drink, and we must live!" And Obadiah and I sat and looked at each other in mild despair. We had only been married six months, Obadiah and I. We were very young both of us, and perhaps we had begun the world too early. Our relations told us we had no business to marry; but as their gratuitous opinions were all that they had ever given us, we had not paid much attention to those utterances. We had taken a little one-story cottage, just on the high road, which was to let cheap, because there were only two rooms and a kitchen to it. But what did Obadiah and I want with more than two rooms and a kitchen? I had the furniture which Grandmother Newcomb had given me, and a rag carpet which my poor mother had woven the winter before she died. To be sure, our accommodations were not extensive, but we did not expect to hold fashionable receptions, or give large dinner parties. Obadiah had plenty of work in the woolen factory down by the depot, and I hung out my little sign, "Dressmaking and Millinery," and hoped that some one would see it, and come in and give me an order. But no one came. I had plenty of time after my house-keeping duties were over in the morning, and I couldn't be always beeswaxing the furniture, arranging the china cupboard, or polishing the windows. "I wish I could get some dressmaking to do!" said I, wistfully; for Obadiah's earnings were small, and I did so long for a dollar or two of my own. "Why don't you advertise in the newspaper?" said old Mr. Meggs. Obadiah burst out laughing. "Advertise!" said he. "Why, what on earth do you take us for, Mr. Meggs? It costs a deal of money to advertise!" "It costs something certainly," said Mr. Meggs, thoughtfully stroking his chin; "but then, it calls public attention to the particular sort of iron that you have in the fire." "It's custom that your wife wants, isn't it?" said Mr. Meggs.

"I never thought much of newspapers," added Obadiah. So that settled the question: and afterward, when the foreman of the woolen factory cut down all the wages of the workmen twenty per cent, and coal went up, and the winter set in hard and cold, and we began to consider the question of how and where we could economize, the family newspaper was almost the first thing upon which Obadiah settled. "That, at least, is an unnecessary extravagance," said he. I winced a little. The family paper had been my companion for more lonely evenings than I cared to remember. "It's only a dollar a half year, Obadiah," said I, "and really it is a very interesting paper." "Just a dollar a half year too much," said my husband curtly. "The subscription is just out. I'll tell 'em we won't renew it. If you care so much about it, Josie, you can easily borrow Mrs. Meggs's paper."

I was silent. I never could make Obadiah understand the deep-rooted aversion to "borrowing" which I had inherited from my mother. So we cut down the weekly paper, and left off using butter, and burned candles a penny a pound cheaper, and I sponged, and cleaned, and re-bound and new-buttoned Obadiah's great-coat, instead of buying a new one, and left off going to church, because my old cloak was so shabby, and I couldn't afford anything better. And oh, how I did miss the family paper. "If I could only get a little dress-making to do," said I to myself, "I would subscribe again myself. But I cannot bear to ask Obadiah for a cent of his hard-earned money. I was sitting very sad and lonely, one freezing February day, by the window, trying to mend one of Obadiah's old waistcoats, so that it should last a few days longer, when a traveling pedler, with a huge basket of china on one arm and a bundle on his shoulder, knocked at the door. He nodded in an insinuating manner at me as I answered the summons. "Couldn't I sell you anything this morning, ma'am?" said he, with a liberal display of a very white and even set of teeth. "Anything in the way of elegant mantle vases, statuettes, decorated china match-boxes?" "I have no money," said I, spiritlessly. "And I do not need any of your wares."

"Ah, but you do not know what splendid articles I have here," he persisted, loosening the strap which passed across his shoulders, and lowering the precious package carefully to the floor. "A pair of real Wedgwood vases, Oh, don't shake your head, ma'am; I shan't charge you anything for looking at 'em you know. I'm certain you're an artist—all the ladies are born artists—and this is really something quite out of the ordinary." And with a succession of nods and grins he unwrapped a pair of really very pretty blue vases, nearly two feet high, and ornamented with raised garlands in white. "Only six dollars a pair, ma'am," said he. "Dirt cheap. It's positively giving them away at that price." "I have no six dollars to spare," said I indifferently. "It's a great bargain, ma'am," he insisted. "I do not want them," said I. He was silent for a few seconds. "I'm sorry, ma'am," said he. "They'd be a great decoration for a house like this. But if you really won't buy, it would be doing me a great favor to allow them to stand here until to-morrow. I've got to long tramp before me, and I'm not going to any place where I think they'd be likely to buy anything of this sort. I'll set 'em by the chimney-place, ma'am, where they won't be in any one's way. And I'm very tired with carrying 'em." I felt sorry for the poor, jaded wretch—so I made no objection. And when he was gone, the vases did make the room look wonderfully pretty. I could not but wish that they were mine. Obadiah perceived them at once, when he came home to tea. "Hello!" said he, "what does this mean?" So I told him, adding:

"I only wish I could afford to buy them—they are so handsome." Obadiah walked around and around them, with his hands in his pockets and his brows knit thoughtfully. "Yes, they're pretty," said he. "But they're not perfect." "Not perfect?" I echoed. "Not by any means. Don't you see that lengthwise crack down one? And the end of the little raised rosebud is chipped off on the other. I hope you didn't do it, Josie," with sudden apprehension. "I? Certainly not," I cried. "Why, I haven't so much as touched the things!" "Then I dare say it's all right," said Obadiah. And he sat down to supper. The next day, however, my friend, the china vender, came along, smiling and obsequious as ever. "There are your vases," said I, "just where you left them." "But all at once he broke out into a storm of reproach and obloquy. They had been cracked and damaged in my care. They were perfect—absolutely—when he left them there the day before. I had worked the mischief, and I was of course responsible for the value of the articles! Of course I knew that the rascal was telling a falsehood; but what could I do? I was alone in the house and fairly cowed by the ferocity of the man. "You must pay me for them," he reiterated, again and again, "or I will have you arrested at once!" I burst into tears. "How can I pay you?" said I. "The vases were damaged when you left them here. And, besides, I have not five dollars—no, not one dollar in the house." (Which was also true enough.) While I spoke, he had been glancing furtively around. "I don't want to be hard with you, ma'am," said he. "Of course, a poor man like me has to save himself from loss, and if you'll let me have that set of blue and white India china in the dresser, in exchange, I'll leave the vases and we'll say no more about it."

It went to my heart to part with the India ware, which had been a relic of my mother's housekeeping days, but I was so cowed and terrified by the man's bullying manner that I believe I would have given him the house from over my head if he had asked for it; and he went away leaving the beautiful vases on the floor. How glad I was to see Mrs. Meggs come cheerfully in, half an hour afterward—a good, motherly, old soul, with silver spectacles and an elderly dimple still lingering on her cheek. "Why, my dear," said she, "what's the matter?" "And I told her all. "But, my dear," said she, "how came you to be taken in so? There was an article in the paper last week, warning everybody against this very impostor. Didn't you see it? It was called 'The Vase Swindler.'" I colored deeply, and hung down my head. "We have stopped taking the paper," said I. "Obadiah thought we couldn't afford—"

"And your beautiful old china too?" said Mrs. Meggs. "Why, there was half a column in the paper, week before last, about the value of old china just now. And by what was stated, your set of old India ware must have been worth twenty dollars, at the least." "Twenty dollars!" And I had frittered them away for a pair of wretched cracked, tawdry things, at the very sight of which I was sick already. "My dear," said Mrs. Meggs, "your ideas of economy are altogether misplaced. You should read the papers!" Obadiah went and subscribed for the paper that very evening. And in the first number he saw an advertisement for hands at a new steam factory in the neighborhood, which offered steady work and wages a third higher than he was now receiving. And I inserted a modest little "Dressmaking Wanted," and it was answered within the week, and I am making my own snug little income now, thank heaven! And if anybody tells us now that we can't afford to take a paper, we tell them, Obadiah and I, that we can't afford to do without one.

"My dear old age without being sure of reaching it." —La Bruyere

The Christian Messenger.

Bible Lessons for 1882.

FOURTH QUARTER.

Three prominent ideas in Mark's Gospel are WORK, in the PRESENT, amidst CONFLICT. We have taken these three words as key-words for the three quarters now finished. In the Fourth Quarter we find our Saviour's great work of LIFE THROUGH DEATH—i. e., of procuring, by suffering and death, the salvation of sinners, his own glorification, and the certain coming of his kingdom. Mark, in common with the other Evangelists, makes this prominent; he treats it, however, in his own graphic way, and in a manner to bring out his own particular view of Christ.

Lesson I.—OCTOBER 1, 1882.

THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY.

Mark xiv. 1-11.

COMMIT TO MEMORY: Vss. 6-9.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"She hath done what she could."—Mark xiv. 8.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

- M. The Lesson, Mark xiv. 1-11.
T. Parallel in Matthew, Matt. xxvi. 1-16.
W. Parallel in John, John xii. 2-8.
F. An Earlier Anointing, Luke vii. 36-50.
S. Solemn Warning, 2 Cor. v. 11-21.
Heb. vi. 1-10.
S. Prayer for Sincerity, Psalm 139.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

LESSON OUTLINE.—I. Murderous Plots, Va. 1, 2. II. Devoted Love, Va. 3-9. III. Base Treachery, Va. 10, 11.

QUESTIONS.—What four great ideas in Mark's Gospel? Give "key-words" of the four quarters. What does this lesson indicate? (Topic.) By what three things? (Outline.) Give Golden Text. Of whom spoken?

Vs. 1, 2.—What were the rulers determined to do? Why did they delay? What plan did they agree upon? What was their character?

Vs. 3-9.—Where was Jesus? What qualities did he show in accepting this invitation at such a time? What did Mary do? Describe her act and offering. Why did she understand the words of Jesus better than others? What did she express by what she did? What did Jesus pronounce her work to be? What does he always appreciate? Who had found fault? Why? Who started this? How did Jesus reprove it? What do the cold-hearted and selfish now often think and say? How much had Mary done? What did Jesus predict? How has this been fulfilled? How can we imitate Mary's beautiful act?

Vs. 10, 11.—What had Judas enjoyed? What was his real character? Of what dishonesty had he been guilty? What were his motives in following Christ? Why did he perceive the Saviour's meaning in vs. 8 more quickly than the others? In what was he disappointed? What enraged him? What purpose did he form? Who suggested it to him? How did he carry it out? What did he do after this? In selling his Lord for money, what else did he sell? Special Subjects.—Final, hopeless unbelief. Mary's perception. Judas's. Compare this anointing with the one in Luke, ch. 7. Fault-finding as to Mary's act. Blindness to moral beauty. Satan bids his time. Downward steps of Judas.

Place: Jerusalem and Bethany. Parallels: Matt. xxvi. 1-16; Luke xxii. 1-6; John xii. 2-8. Connections: after the discourse in ch. 13, Jesus went to Bethany to pass the night. The next day (Wednesday) he probably passed in retirement, taking "supper" with Simon on the evening of that day.

Notes.—I. Conspiracy, (Vs. 1, 2.) Vs. 1. Read, After two days was [i. e. was to be] the passover and feast of the unleavened bread.—Other priests, etc.; great Council of the nation; their meeting on Tuesday night or Wednesday morning. Baffled in the conflict of words and afraid of the people, they were fixed in hate and unbelief, and resolved to destroy Jesus. Vs. 2. On the feast day; during the feast, lasting seven days. Vs. 3. Simon the leper; whom Jesus had doubtless healed.—Sat at meat, reclined at table, for the principal meal at evening.—A woman; of John xii. 3. Alabaster: a costly variety of gypsum, white and semi-transparent. Ointment of spikenard: very costly and fragrant—one pound of it. Vs. 5. Three hundred pence [denarii]: about forty five dollars, but money would buy much more than that now. Judas, with evil motive, started the murmuring. A hypocritical sentiment on the part of Judas (John xii. 6), and a superficial one on the part of the other disciples. There is the same cry now, in some quarters, against the expense of giving the gospel to the heathen, under the same pious pretext that the money should be given to the relief of the poor. Murmured against her. Speaking harsh words both about and to her.

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Curious Questions.

435. Here is a word of six letters, What is it? My first is heard in an insect's tone; My third a teamster's expression; My fourth is found in every zone; My fifth is a vowel when taken alone; My second and sixth are in transgression. My whole is turned like a shepherd's crook, Or winding as a running brook.

No. 436. Find the animals whose names have meanings as follows: 1. To support. 2. An insect and to run away. 3. A brave English General. 4. A heavenly body and a fish. 5. To leave a party. 6. A mark of a cane.

437. Put words in the spaces having similar sounds, but spelled differently: 1. They were pleased with the — at first. 2. Jane wore a — upon entering the —. 3. My — was interested in watching a busy little —. 4. "I have —," my friend said, "in a — covered book." 5. — boys didn't enjoy doing the —. 6. The — said, "I am young, I am still a —." 7. James asked me, "— you buy the hard —?" 8. My sister — her girl with the — to buy some —. 9. I found Katie — all about the — attraction at the hall. 10. My little — has already — some wax flowers. 11. The — is a fine animal, but my — chooses the noble horse. 12. The coal — was a — convenience. 13. My — will not go while the — is so obscured.

Find answers to the above—write them down—and see how they agree with the answers to be given next week.

Answer to Scripture Enigma.

No. 189.

Farthing, Oxen, Revelation, Thomas, Hor, Ecclesiastes, Leah, On, Vashti, Elijah, Olives, Figtree, Moab, Onions, Nahor, Esther, Yoke, Isaac, Shadrach, Tiberias, Herod, Elishama, Ruth, Og, Obadiah, Timbrel, Onestimus, Frog, Ahab, Lamentations, Lydia, Elisha, Vinegar, Ithmah, Laban.

FOR THE LOVE OF MONEY IS THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL.

ANSWERS TO CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

432. M O L A R O P E R A L E V E L A R E A L R A L Y

433. S-I-I-e. Slice.

434. Give, Forgive, Bear, Forbear.

REV. SPENCER COMPTON relates the following incident: "During a voyage to India, I sat in my cabin, feeling thoroughly unwell, as the sea was rising, and I was but a poor sailor. Suddenly the cry of 'Man overboard!' made me spring to my feet. I heard a tramping overhead, but resolved not to go on deck, lest I should interfere with efforts to save the poor man. 'What can I do?' I asked myself, and instantly unhooking my lamp, held it close to my window, that its light might shine on the sea as near the ship as possible. In half a minute I heard the cry, 'It's all right.' The next day, however, I was told that my little lamp was the means of saving the man's life; it was only by the timely light which shone upon him that the knotted rope could be thrown so as to reach him. Christian, never think there is nothing for you to do in the dark. Looking unto Jesus, lift up your light; let it so shine that men may see, and in the resurrection morning, what joy to hear the 'Well done!' and to know that you have saved some soul from death."

The London correspondent of the Manchester Examiner reports an epigram written by Emerson on his last visit to England. The lines were inscribed in the album of the firm to whom he had sent for his photograph. "This is the contribution:— The man who has a thousand friends Has not a friend to spare. But he who has one enemy Will meet him everywhere."

"One half of the world don't know how the other half live," exclaimed a gossiping woman. "O well," said her neighbour, "don't worry about it; 'taint your fault if they don't."

A lady who had been traveling in Italy was asked how she liked Venice. "Oh! very much, indeed," was the reply. "I was unfortunate enough, however, to arrive there just at the time of a heavy flood, and we had to go about the streets in boats."

Help for Parents, or for the Teacher of the Primary Class.

Jesus a little while before he died was at a supper in Bethany. Did you ever hear of any friends of Jesus who lived in Bethany? The man who invited Jesus to this supper was named Simon. He lived in the same house with Mary and Martha.

As Jesus sat at the table, a woman came behind him with a beautiful white vase in her hand. The vase was made of alabaster. There was something very precious in this vase; something that was worth about fifty dollars. It was a precious ointment, of the sweetest fragrance. Now, can you think why this woman wanted to break the vase? Read John xii. 3, and question upon it. Who can tell why Mary did this? Because of her great love for Jesus.

There were those at the table who did not like what Mary did. They said she had wasted the ointment. Do you think she had wasted it? Is anything too good to give to Jesus? Judas, that wicked disciple, who afterward betrayed Jesus, said that the ointment should have been sold, and the money given to the poor. Tell why Judas said this. Hear what Jesus said in vs. 6. Didn't Jesus care to have the poor remembered? Listen to what he said about them. Read vs. 7, 8, and question. When did people anoint a body? Jesus knew that he was soon to die, and be buried; and he called this "anointing him for the grave."

Bouth's Department.

Scripture Enigma.

No. 190.

Here is a picture of a scene described in the Old Testament. It may be found in one of the prophets. Try and find the Book, chapter and verses.

A dungeon, dark, deep, and loathsome, its only light proceeding from a grating at the top. Scarcely can we discern its occupant, a man of large proportions, who lies silent and dejected on the damp ground, which evidently yields under his weight. Hour after hour passes away, and now faintness from extreme hunger comes over the frame of the prisoner, and he seems ready to resign his spirit into the hands of his Maker. But now the dim light is still farther obscured, and a dusky countenance peers forward into the gloom. Is he the public executioner, with his guards, sent by vindictive tyranny to cut short the captive's few remaining hours? No; a friendly smile lights up those features; and, hastily arousing the fainting prisoner below, he proceeds with benevolent forecast to make arrangements for his extrication from the horrible dungeon, and also for the lightening of his still inevitable captivity.