

Family Reading.

To-day.

Why do we tune our hearts to sorrow
When all around is bright and gay,
And let the gloom of some to-morrow
Eclipse the gladness of to-day?

The Tap at the Pastor's Study-Door.

BY MRS. CHARLES T. PRESTON.

'I can see no one to-day, unless there is an exceptionally urgent call,' said Pastor Braintree, on Friday morning, as he rose from the breakfast-table.

The pastor's pen had been flying over the white pages of sermon paper for an hour, when he heard a dainty step on the stairs, and a soft, familiar tap, tap, tap, on the study-door.

There was silence for a brief while; then the little feet turned away. Presently the quick ears of the father caught the sound of a subdued sob, sob, sob.

'What can it mean?' he thought; for the child was remarkably gentle, even-tempered, and sunny-hearted, and it was by no means the first time she had been refused admittance to the study when he had been unusually busy.

There, on the top stair, in the soft sunshine from the hall window, sat Ada in her white pinafore, with her shapely, curly head leaning against the railing, and her sweet face buried in her little hands.

'What is it, pet?' he asked, tenderly leaning over her.

'Oh, papa, I feel that I am a great sinner!' said the child, between her sobs.

Mr. Braintree felt an involuntary smile creeping over his face at what he considered merely a sympathetic outbreak on the part of his little daughter who was sensitive and precocious. She was quite a mimic wital, and was inclined to personate in her play whatever had attracted her in real life, or in her books; and the thought now came to him that she was playing the part of an inquirer who had just been refused admittance to his study.

'You know we are all sinners, darling, and you know the little verse you learned the other day for our next Sunday-school concert: 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.' So run away now to mamma,

and be happy; and think no more about sin and sinners to-day.'

'But, papa,' persisted the child, still clinging to his neck, 'I have been praying that I might be one of Jesus' little ones, and I want you to pray with me that he will let me come to him and be his: and I want to come to him, as you and dear mamma have; and be baptized and go to the Lord's Supper, to remember him, with you.'

'You shall, my darling, when you are a grown girl,' he said. 'I would not think about it any more now.'

'Why, papa, I can't help thinking that I am a sinner; and I know that Jesus died for sinners; and I love Jesus; and I want to show that I love him; and I want to do something for him; and I thought you told the children in your little sermon to them that the dearest thing they could do for Jesus, the easiest thing and the best thing, was to give their own hearts to him—and I want to do that. And I want to be baptized, and be one of his children.'

Mr. Braintree was not only deeply touched, but he was sorely perplexed. He had been giving preliminary five-minute sermons to the children of his congregation now and then on Sundays. It had long been his theory that it was better to teach children early to go to God as to a father ready to forgive and save and bless, than to allow them to grow up uninstructed as to the teachings and grace and love of Jesus; and then, when they had had experiences in sin, to seek their conversion. And now here, as the first-fruits of his preaching perhaps, had come to him his own little daughter: and he was attempting to put her off!

'Suffer the little children to come unto me,' he repeated; and, going back into his study, taking the child, he knelt and prayed with her until the little sobs ceased. Quickly rising and standing before him, while he was still upon his knees, she said:

'I am so happy now, papa; I know I am Jesus' child. And when may I be baptized?'

The pastor bowed again, and earnestly prayed to be directed aright. When he rose to his feet, he said, 'Before any one is taken into the church, there has to be a meeting to see about it, as you know. You can trust papa to do what is right and best.'

'Yes,' replied the little girl. 'I can trust papa, and I can trust Jesus; and I am going to be Jesus' child.'

'You are Jesus' child, my darling,' said papa.

'Then can I remember him in the Supper with you and mamma, and the rest of the Christians?'

'No, my dear, not until you are baptized and received into the church, just as others have been. One must believe in Jesus first, and then be baptized as Jesus commanded, and come into the church, and then partake of the Lord's Supper. This is what the Lord wants you to do.'

A few weeks afterwards, when little Ada Braintree's name was read before the church with others who sought membership, there was, as the pastor had expected there would be, much surprise manifested.

'I have been anxious to know just what to do with her,' said Pastor Braintree, tearfully. 'Jesus did not say, "Forbid the little children to come unto me." If he had said that, I should know exactly what to do.'

'Let us talk with her,' said one of the officers of the church. 'My daughter will run over to the parsonage and bring her here.'

'Very well, by all means,' replied the pastor; and the child was brought. She was not precocious, in a pert, unnatural way, nor forward in her replies to the plain and simple questions asked concerning her faith in Jesus Christ the Saviour, and her love for him. She was simply child-like, persistent, and straight-forward in her declaration that she was a sinner, and needed Christ the Saviour—oh, how much! that she had given herself to him, and believed he could save her and would keep her; and that she wanted to be his dear child.

The tearful little assembly of believers were visibly moved indeed; and it was finally decided that the church and Ada would wait until she was eight years old, which would not be long, when, should she be of the same mind, her desire should be granted.

Ada was entirely satisfied with that.

She said so little about it, as the weeks flew by, that her parents and others thought she might be forgetting the matter. But the week before her birthday she said to her father and mother:

'I shall be eight years old next Saturday, and Sunday is the day for the Lord's Supper; and I shall go with you to his table.'

There were no objections made by any one; and on that ever-memorable Sunday, she was baptized and added to the church of the precious, risen Redeemer.

This father, who is one of the most earnest, devoted, and beloved of New England's pastors, and who recently gave me this touching incident, said, in conclusion: 'Since that time, some two years ago, Ada has been of the greatest help to me in my work. Her hope and faith were so bright, her heart so loving, that, as her mind has been maturing, she has been a conspicuous and telling example of the beauty of early conversions, and the propriety of bringing such young believers into the church. Yes indeed children may be brought into the tender Shepherd's fold as soon as they can understand what love for their earthly parents, and faith and trust in them mean.'—Home Circle.

Who is Driving?

We often think we are succeeding by our own foresight or skill. Hence we are keeping a keen look out, and employing all our wisdom; but sometimes the control of a mightier hand and a wiser intelligence is so manifest that we cannot fail to see and to acknowledge it. Who that believes in God and in his providence cannot recall instances in which he has been guided by a wisdom not his own, and been vouchsafed deliverances which he could not have achieved?

A father and his little son were once riding along a familiar road with a gentle horse. To gratify his child the father placed the reins in his hand; but at the same time, unseen, retained his own hold on them. As they rode on, they saw approaching them, at terrific speed a runaway team. The danger was great and imminent. But the father guided his horse so that a collision was avoided, and the danger escaped.

When all was over the little son looked up to his father, and with choked utterance said, 'I thought I was driving, but I wasn't, was I papa?'

So often does the child of God, when some peril has been escaped, or some deliverance has been vouchsafed in ways unforeseen and unthought of, have occasion to say, 'Father, I thought I was driving, but I wasn't.' Oh, it is blessed to feel that the reins are in the hands of One mightier and wiser than we are. And it is blessed on the eve of some signal deliverance to look into the face of our Father and say, 'Thou hast done it. Thy hands held the reins.'—Rev Wm. Lamson.

Ship Canal through the Isthmus of Corinth.

The Isthmus of Corinth has been intimately associated with classical and scripture writings from the earliest ages, long anterior to the Christian Era. Whatever changes are effected in it must be of deep interest to all readers. The following article from the pen of Dr. A. N. Arnold, on this subject, in the National Baptist will be read with much interest:

The late Greek papers describe with much enthusiasm the ceremony of inaugurating the work of cutting a ship canal through the Isthmus of Corinth, to connect the Gulf of Corinth (or Lepanto) on the west, with the Aegean Sea on the east.

This Isthmus is about six miles wide, a rough and rock-ribbed passage between the two seas. A large concourse of people proceeded by railroad from Athens to the Piræus, a distance of five miles, where they took steamers for Kallimaki, the port of Corinth, distant from Athens about fifty miles. The King and Queen of Greece, with their two eldest children, Prince Constantine, the heir apparent, and Prince George, together with a Russian Grand Duke, a brother of the Queen, on their arrival at the Piræus, embarked on board the steam frigate 'Hellas,' and

proceeded a little way out of the harbor, where they were received with a royal salute by the ships of war which awaited them there. The naval procession was there formed, and proceeded to Kallimaki in the following order, the 'Hellas' led the way, flanked on the right by a Russian frigate, and on the left by a French, and followed by several Greek steamers, carrying the Greek cabinet ministers, the members of the National Assembly, the invited guests of Gen. Turr, the superintendent French engineer of the work, and many other passengers, while two other frigates, one English and the other Russian, closed up the rear. On arriving at Kallimaki, they found the place where the work was to be inaugurated elaborately prepared.

A bridge two hundred yards long had been erected over the water, with a large platform provided with seats to serve as a dining-hall and decorated with banners, on which were inscribed in large capitals such mottoes as the following: 'Long live the King and Queen of the Greeks!' 'Long live the Royal Family!' 'Long live the Union of the Greek Race!' Conspicuous seats had been provided for the Metropolitan of Corinth and his Clergy, and when these had chanted a religious service, invoking the Divine blessing upon the enterprise, Gen. Turr approached the King, and presenting to him a small silver spade requested him to inaugurate the work. The King took some earth on the spade, and threw it three times on a diminutive wheelbarrow.

The Queen and the Royal Princes, and the Grand Duke, and the President of the National Assembly, and the Minister of Education, all successively followed the King's example. The Prime Minister then took hold of the wheelbarrow, and drawing it along a few yards, emptied it into a pit, beside which was a large square block of stone, bearing the following inscription:

'In the XIXth year of the reign of George the First, King of the Greeks, on the XXIII day of April, in the year of salvation MDCCCLXXXII, in the presence of the King and Queen, of the Ministers and authorities of the Kingdom, was begun the digging of the Isthmus, long ago planned by the Ancients, but now in the present century proposed to be completed, by the help of God, under the direction of Stephen Turr, for the development of the communication and brotherhood of the peoples.'

After this, the Queen took a match, and communicated the electric spark to about forty mines filled with dynamite, which instantly caused an explosion that threw large fragments of the cliff high into the air. Their Majesties, the Cabinet Ministers and the invited guests then sat down to an excellent dinner, which lasted between two and three hours.

After the dinner, those who had been present at the ceremony embarked, and all the steamers lifted their anchors at the same moment, and set out on their return to the Piræus. They exhibited a splendid pageant; the sea, smooth as glass, ploughed by a dozen steamers, all with banners flying, and several with bands of music playing, while now and then, to add to the general exhilaration they vied with one another in trials of speed. On arriving at the Piræus, the scene was closed by a magical spectacle. As the frigate bearing the royal party entered the harbor, the ships of war were suddenly and simultaneously illuminated with electric lights, and with torches of many colors, while salutes of cannon were incessantly discharged. This brilliant show lasted for about an hour, while the countless throng of passengers were disembarking amid bright glare from the electric lights in the harbour, and in the city of Piræus.

Thus ended the illustrious ceremony of the inauguration of the Isthmus enterprise.

Which Way are you Going?

A little girl named Sarah, went home from church full of what she had seen and heard. Sitting at the table with the family, she asked her father, who was a very wicked man, whether he ever prayed. He did not like the question, and in a very angry manner replied:

'Is it your mother, or your aunt Sally, that has put you up to that, my little girl?'

'No, father,' said the little creature: 'the preacher said all good people

pray: and those who don't pray cannot be saved. Father, do you pray? This was more than the father could stand, and, in a rough way, he said;

'Well you and your mother, and your aunt Sally, may go your way, and I will go mine.'

'Father,' said the little creature, with great simplicity, 'what way are you going?' This question pierced his heart. It flashed upon him that he was in the way to death. He started from his chair, burst into tears, and began to pray for mercy.

Reader, which way are you going?—Bible Banner.

Little Foxes.

Among my tender vines I spy
A little fox, named—By and by.
Then set upon him quick, I say,
The swift young hunter—Right away.
Around each tender vine I plant,
I find the little fox—I can't.
Then, fast as ever hunter ran,
Chase him with bold and brave—I can't.
No use in trying—lags and whines
This fox, among my tender vines.
Then drive him low and drive him high
With this good hunter, named—I'll try!
Among the vines in my small lot
Creeps in the young fox—I forgot.
Then hunt him out and to his den
With—I will not forget again!
A little fox is hidden there
Among my vines, named—I don't care!
Then let I'm sorry—hunter true—
Chase him afar from vines and you.
—Children's Hour.

Sincerity insufficient.

A popular adage says, 'Oh, it makes no difference what a man believes if he is only sincere.'

Let us test this practically. A family was recently poisoned by eating toadstools which they sincerely believed to be mushrooms. Three funerals resulted.

Did it make no difference? A merchant boards a north-bound train, sincerely believing it to be a south-bound train, and is carried opposite to his desired destination, resulting in the breaking of a financial engagement, and the loss of thousands of dollars.

Did it make no difference? If a man sincerely believes a certain thing, while the truth about it is entirely different, will his sincere belief make it all right?

The truth is, the popular adage is a lie—and a very transparent one at that! If a man is sincere in desiring truth, he will take pains to ascertain the truth! Where facts are concerned all the sophistry of the world can not change them.

Hence truth will sanctify the powers of the mind and heart, while error will pervert them. Whether consciously or unconsciously, truth and error entertained will always generate their legitimate offspring of good and evil.

Catholics sincerely believe the pope to be infallible, yet their sincerity does not insure their salvation through papal absolutions.

Sincerity is not the criterion of good, but the Word of God is the infallible guide, and without its truth we stumble in a darkness which never substitutes the virtues of light.

A NEW DOMESTIC ANIMAL.—An animal is found in great abundance in South America of the average size of a pig; this is the Cabiai. Dr. Saec proposed to domesticate the Cabiai, and shows the advantages which could be drawn from it. This animal can be tamed very easily; it quickly recognises its master whom it follows everywhere, and when caressed it eagerly seeks for it; especially likes to be scratched, and, to attract attention, extends itself full length on one side. It is very clean in its habits; in shape the Cabiai realises the normal type of the meat-producing animal, as its body is an almost perfect cylinder were it not for its neck, with its limbs short and slender; tail and ears very short; the head alone is large. Its apathetic character makes all nourishment available which it consumes, so that it is not necessary to fatten it, and it can be kept in a limited space. It is kept in a dry stable, where it is fed on all kinds of vegetables, herbs, and roots; it likes clean water and a soft litter. It eats remarkably little for its size. "It will be," remarks Dr. Saec, "an excellent acquisition for farms and country houses, where, without requiring more care than a rabbit, it will supply as much meat as a sheep. I believe that the Cabiai will take a place between the sheep and the pig in Europe, and that in many ways it can be substituted for this last-named domestic animal."

Educational.

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC will consist of two branches—a foundation and a paying branch, the members of the foundation comprising only persons who attain that distinction by open competition. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales has recently received representations from various localities expressing a desire to found scholarships to be restricted to each locality. His Royal Highness the President has, therefore, decided that scholarships providing tuition and maintenance may be established open to local competition only on payment of a capital sum of £3,000, such scholarships bearing the name of the founder. The candidates must pass an examination before examiners appointed or approved by the College, and if no candidate reaches the required standard of excellence, the scholarship will be applied to the general funds of the College until such time as a sufficiently qualified candidate is offered. Under these conditions, any locality for each sum of £3,000 may have in perpetuity a scholar in the College designated by the name of the locality.

The committee of the Liverpool Ragged School Union, lately devised a novel means for ascertaining how many children of school age were to be found in the streets when they ought to have been at their lessons. A band was engaged to play for a couple of hours during school-time on four days in different parts of the city, and it was accompanied by enumerators, who took down the number of such children as gathered round the performers. On the first occasion the musicians discoursed sweet tunes in eleven streets, and the return was a total attendance of 670 children of school age. The next time there were fourteen separate performances, and the enumerators returned 950 juvenile attendants. On the third time of asking, fifteen performances gave a total of 975 children; and on the fourth, eleven drew together 425 little ones. Every care was taken, it is reported, to guard against the recounting of any children who followed the band from street to street. Coupling, then, the results thus attained with the fact that, out of 82,000 children on the books of the Liverpool elementary schools, the average attendance is only about 21,000 it comes out very clearly that a considerable proportion of the rising generation must be picking up their education in the streets. Why is this allowed?

AN EXHIBITION of plans and models for school buildings in Paris is now being organized by the French Minister of Public Instruction. Already 300 architects and contractors have notified their intention of exhibiting, and every province of France, including Corsica and Algeria, is to be represented. The exhibits are expected to be diversified, owing to the various needs arising from different altitudes and climates. It has been decided to hold the exhibition in the Passy Wing of the Trocadero Gallery, and the plans, models, and drawings must be delivered there before May 15th.

At the recent matriculation examination of the Calcutta University, eight women passed successfully, of whom six are natives of India; and at Bombay seven women were successful, including four from the city of Poona. At the first arts' examination at Calcutta a female candidate obtained a scholarship of the first grade.

A correspondent of the Daily News states that one of the last acts of Mr. Darwin's life was to send in his adhesion to the programme of the recently formed Free Education League, together with a handsome subscription to its funds, and an earnest wish that success might speedily crown the efforts of the League to bring all children of school age under proper educational influences.

The boys have to sing for their supper at the Field Lane Industrial School at West Hampstead, like little Tom Tucker of the nursery rhyme. On a recent Sunday afternoon they were sulky in Sunday-school, and were put on half rations. In revenge for this one of the youngsters took the sheet from his bed, lighted it, and set the house on fire. One is not surprised to find that this youth had been sent to Field Lane because they did not know what to do with him at a truant school; but what will they do with him now?

The Society for the Promotion of Science and Art of Utrecht offers a prize of 300 florins for the best essay on the work of Aristophanes and Thukydides with regard to their respective value for the study of their time. The treatise must discuss the opinions of Herr Muller-Strubing, of London, formulated in his book, Aristophanes und die historische Kritik, and may be written in Latin, Dutch, English, German, or French. They should be delivered on December 1st, 1882.