

AN EXPERIMENT.

BY ANNIE A. PRESTON.

They were talking of the spiritual, and James, who is a collegian, said: "I am a believer, but not a Christian, and I begin to fear that I never shall be one. I attend church and pray—praying regularly, as I was brought up, but as for conviction or conversion or any spiritual light I have had no experience."

"Do you desire to be a Christian, James?" asked his Aunt Hannah.

"I do not object; indeed until quite recently I have been receptive and expected my heart to be reached. Lately I am beginning to suspect that with everyone it is a matter of the imagination."

"Doubtless you are very methodical in the use of time," said Aunt Hannah, with seeming irrelevance.

"From necessity, for I can only learn by close application."

"Can you not find a half hour in the morning for Bible reading, meditation, and prayer?"

"Oh, yes; I could manage it."

"Very well, then. Be honest in your use of this half hour as in that of any other throughout your day. Begin with the Gospel of Matthew, meditate upon it honestly, pray reverently. Do not think about your feelings; just make at one of your faithfully followed pursuits."

"For how long?"

"As long as you live."

The young man made a wry face.

"Is the prospect so unpleasant? Try for a month, then we will talk it over again. Meantime do not make a constant of anyone."

Aunt Hannah did not fail to note that Jamie was a trifle more quiet and thoughtful than usual. He attended all the church services and she fancied him in the singing with unusual fervor. One evening he seemed to surprise himself by repeating, "Knock and shall be opened unto you."

A few evenings later, in the testimony meeting, Jamie arose and said:

"I have been trying an experiment for some time now. Every morning I have given my first half hour to devotion. For a few days I simply gained some knowledge of the Bible and committed a few texts to memory, but soon, when I set to pray, I found my heart moved by a strange joy, and as this increased morning by morning, I could cry out, 'It is of the Lord! It is the power of the Holy Spirit!' and now my whole being is so pervaded by it that I no longer keep it to myself. From having no objection to being numbered among the Lord's followers, it is now my greatest desire of my heart."

It was an experiment," said Aunt Hannah, "and the result is but another proof of that reverent, fervent prayer is always heard, and that he who prays is abundantly blessed by a real experience of spiritual life and strengthened faith."

Chris. Intelligencer.



OIL CURE FOR SQUEAKS.

A gentleman going down the river in a steamer, the engine of which was on the deck, sauntered to see the working of the machinery. Near him, as *Tit Bits*, stood a man apparently intent upon the same object. In a few moments a squeaking noise was heard from the opposite side of the engine.

Seizing an oil can—a gigantic one, by the way—the engineer sought out the spot, and to prevent further noise

of that kind liberally applied the contents of the can to every joint.

All went on well for a while, when the squeaking was heard in another direction. The oiling process was repeated, and quiet restored; but as the engineer was coming quietly toward the spot occupied by the gentleman and the stranger, he heard another squeak. This time, however, he detected the true cause of the difficulty. The stranger was a ventriloquist.

Walking straight up behind him, he seized the astonished joker by the nape of the neck, and emptied the contents of the can down his back.

"There," said he, "I don't believe that engine will squeak again."



CURED.

A young woman was staying in a distant city, where she made few acquaintances. She had money, but homesickness and insufficient occupation were unfriendly conditions to health of mind or body. At length she felt obliged to call upon a physician and ask advice.

It happened that the doctor whom she consulted was a religious man as well as a skillful one. He understood her symptoms, and when she complained that she was a victim to "the blues," he astonished her with his original prescription: "David Sones lives at 140 Dash Street. He is ill, and confined to his bed, and very poor. Call there, show sympathy with him and his family, and read the 'bread and butter' Psalm to him; and when you go away, leave a small sum of money in his hand."

Of course, he had to explain to the amazed lady that the Scripture he had so oddly named was the one hundred and third Psalm, and that the heartening and rejuvenating effect of it—fifth verse and all—made it to him just what he called it. Of its virtue in this case he seemed to have no doubt.

But the very idea of doing as he recommended was as distasteful to the young woman as it was surprising.

"Why, how rude and intrusive the man would think me to break in upon him so, a perfect stranger!" she said; "I could not do such a thing."

She went from the doctor's office disappointed and displeased, but thinking. The very bluntness of the advice had stirred her stagnant spirits, and she was already beginning to forget her own ailments. The storm of protest in her mind gave her a bad hour or two, but finally something—she could hardly tell what—compelled her to surrender to the doctor's orders.

She found the sick man, and, after kindly talking to him about himself, and encouraging him to hope for recovery and for better days, she opened her Bible to the Psalm. Her lips were dry, and the first three or four verses were pronounced like a mechanical exercise, but farther on her voice and mood mellowed. The force and beauty of the words aroused her, and she read the last verses of the Psalm with real feeling.

A woman, who had entered the room and listened, sat in the corner, weeping. She was a recent lodger, had tried in vain to find work at her trade as a dressmaker, and had become discouraged. The young lady had already earned the gratitude of three strangers. With feelings entirely new to her, she remained in the poor tenement conversing with the sick man and his wife and their needy friend, until she had quite gained their confidence, and then left them with encouraging words and a small gift of money.

Thoroughly interested now, she, in a few days, secured orders for the discouraged dressmaker, and work not long after came so abundantly that the family were placed above want. The sick man, relieved of his anxieties, soon recovered. A shadowed home had been brightened by an involuntary kindness. It was a lesson that the complaining young woman never forgot.—*Es.*



THE LOT OF A JAPANESE WIFE.

The young wife when she enters her husband's home, is not entering upon a new life as mistress of a house, with absolute control over all her little domain. Should her husband's parents be living, she becomes almost as their servant, and even her husband is unable to defend her from the exactions of her mother-in-law, should this new relative be inclined to make full use of the power given her by custom. Happy is the girl whose husband has no parents. Her comfort in life is materially increased by her husband's loss, for, instead of having to serve two masters, she will then have to serve only one, and that one more kind and thoughtful of her strength and comfort than the mother-in-law. In Japan the idea of a wife's duty to her husband includes no thought of championship on terms of equality. The wife is simply the housekeeper, the head of the establishment, to be honored by the servants because she is the one who is nearest to the master, but not for one moment to be regarded as the master's equal. She governs and directs the household, if it be a large one, and her position is one of much care and responsibility; but she is not the intimate friend of her husband, is in no sense his confidant or adviser, except in trivial matters of the household. She appears rarely with him in public, is expected always to wait upon him and save him steps, and must bear all things from him with smiling face and agreeable manners.—*Missionary Review of the World.*



OFF THE TRACK.

Several hundred persons, many of them business men, were delayed more than an hour in getting into the city the other morning, because one freight car had got off the track. The derauling of a single car was sufficient to block the traffic of the railroad for hours. It is so when a young man goes wrong; he does more than hinder his own progress, or hurt his own character, for he interferes with the progress of others.—*Wellspring.*

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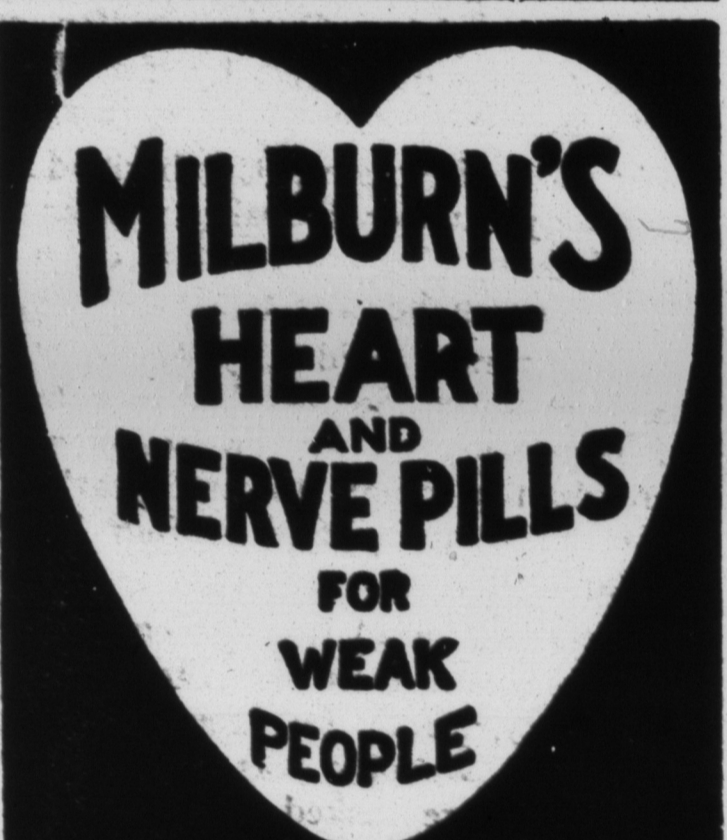
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