

Youth's Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, January 15th, 1865.

LUKE xii. 12-21: The Parable of the rich man.
1 SAMUEL xxx. 1-20: David pursues, overtakes
and defeats the Amalekites.
Recite—JAMES v. 1-4.

Sunday, January 22nd, 1865.

LUKE xii. 22-40: Worldly care reproved. 1 SAM-
UEL xxx. 21-31: David takes and divideth the
spoils.
Recite—MATTHEW vi. 33-34.

Better than Diamonds.

I was standing in the broad, crowded street of a large city. It was a cold winter's day. There had been rain; and although the sun was then shining brightly, yet the long icicles hung from the eaves of the houses, and the wheels rumbled loudly as they passed over the frozen ground. There was a clear, bright look, and a cold, bracing feeling in the air, and a keen north-west wind, which quickened every step. Just then a little child came running along—a poor, ill-clad child: her clothes were scant and threadbare; she had no cloak, and no shawl; and her little bare feet looked red and suffering. She could not have been more than eight years old. She carried a bundle in her hand. Poor little shivering child! I, even I, who could do nothing else, pitied her. As she passed me, her foot slipped upon the ice, and she fell, with a cry of pain; but she held the bundle tightly in her hand, and jumping up, although she limped sadly, endeavored to run on as before.

"Stop, little girl, stop," said a soft, sweet voice; and a beautiful woman, wrapped in a large shawl, and with furs all around her, came out of a jeweller's store close by. "Poor little child," she said, "are you hurt? Sit down on this step and tell me." How I loved her, and how beautiful she looked!

"Oh, I can not," said the child, "I can not wait—I am in such a hurry. I have been to the shoemaker's, and mother must finish this work to-night, or she will never get any more work to bind."

"To-night?" said the beautiful woman—"to-night?"

"Yes," said the child—for the stranger's kind manner had made her bold—"yes; for the great ball to-night; and these satin slippers must be spangled, and—"

The beautiful woman took the bundle from the child's hand, and unrolled it. You do not know why her face flushed, and then turned pale; but I, yes I looked into the bundle, and on the inside of the slipper I saw a name—a lady's name—written; but—I shall not tell it.

"And where does your mother live, little girl?"

So the child told her where, and then she told her that her father was dead, and that her little baby brother was sick, and that her mother bound shoes, that they might have bread; but that sometimes they were very hungry, and sometimes they were very cold; and that her mother sometimes cried, because she had no money to buy milk for her little sick brother. And then I saw that the lady's eyes were full of tears; and she rolled up the bundle quickly, and gave it back to the little girl—but she gave her nothing else; no, not even one sixpence; and, turning away, went back into the store from which she had just come out. As she went away, I saw the glitter of a diamond pin. Presently she came back, and stepping into a handsome carriage, rolled off. The little girl looked after her for a moment, and then, with her little bare feet colder than they were before, ran quickly away. I went with the little girl, and I saw her go to a narrow, damp street, and into a small dark room; and I saw her mother—her sad, faded mother; but with a face so sweet, so patient, hushing and soothing a sick baby. And the baby slept; and the mother laid it on her own lap, and the bundle was unrolled; and a dim candle helped her with her work, for though it was not night, yet her room was very dark. Then, after a while, she kissed her little girl, and bade her warm her poor little frozen feet over the scanty fire in the grate, and gave her a little piece of bread, for she had no more; and then she heard her say her evening prayer, and folding her tenderly to her bosom, blessed her, and told her that the angels would take care of her. And the little child slept, and dreamed—oh, such pleasant dreams!—of warm stockings and new shoes; but the mother sewed on, alone. And as the bright spangles glistened on the satin slippers, came there no repining into her heart! When she thought of her little child's bare, cold feet, and of the scant morsel of dry bread, which had not satisfied her hunger, came there no visions of a bright room and gorgeous clothing, and a table loaded with all that was good and nice, one little portion of which spared to her would send warmth and comfort to her humble dwelling? If such thoughts came, and others—of a pleasant cottage, and of one who had dearly loved her, and whose strong arm had kept want and trouble from her and her babes, but who could never come back—if these thoughts did come, repiningly, there came also another; and the widow's hands were clasped, and her head bowed low in deep contrition, as I heard her say: "Father, forgive me; for thou doest all things well, and I will yet trust thee." Just then the door opened softly, and some one entered. Was it an angel? Her dress was of spotless white, and she moved with a noiseless step. She went to the bed where the sleeping

child lay, and covered it with soft, warm blankets. Then presently a fire sparkled and blazed there, such as the little old grate had never known before. Then a huge loaf was upon the table, and fresh milk for the sick babe. Then she passed gently before the mother, and drawing the unfinished slipper from her hand, placed there a purse of gold, and said, in a voice like music, "Bless thy God, who is the God of the fatherless and the widow; and she was gone: only, as she went out, I heard her say—'Better than diamonds! Better than diamonds!' What could she mean? I looked at the mother. With clasped hands and streaming eyes, she blessed her God, who had sent an angel to comfort her. So I went away too; and I went to a bright room, where there was music, and lights, and sweet flowers; and I saw young, happy faces, and beautiful women, richly dressed, and sparkling with jewels; but none that I knew; until one passed me, whose dress was of simple white, with only a rosebud on her bosom, and whose voice was like the sweet sound of a silver lute. No spangled slipper glittered upon her foot: but she moved as one that treadeth upon the air, and the divine beauty of holiness had so glorified her face, that I felt, as I gazed upon her, that she was indeed an angel of God."

The Cyclone in Calcutta.

A cyclone of unprecedented violence fell on the town of Calcutta, and the district around it, on the 5th of October, and a brief account of it will not, we are confident, be deemed irrelevant to our readers, who take a special interest in the spiritual improvement of India, and cannot therefore be indifferent to its temporal interests.

The close of the monsoon in Lower Bengal is generally marked by a severe storm, and once in about ten years by a fearful gale, three of which in 1832, '42, and '52 are still remembered with terror. Of these the most disastrous was that of 1832, when the *Duke of York*, a vessel of 1400 tons, was carried a mile inland from Kedgerie, and imbedded in the rice fields. But even this tornado was by no means so violent, nor did it create so much havoc, as that of last month; and there is no record of one of equal fury since 1737, when all the shipping in Calcutta was torn from its anchorage, and carried up into the town, and the magnificent steeple of the church, the ornament of the settlement, was prostrated.

The annual holidays, which last ten or twelve days, had just commenced when the cyclone occurred, and the Europeans had generally dispersed holiday making, and the natives were busily employed in preparations for the annual saturnalia of the Doorga poojah. The Observatory in Calcutta, from motives of paltry economy, was in charge of a native. A remarkable variation was observed in the barometer on the 4th of October, but there were no arrangements, as in England, for giving notice of it to the shipping, or hoisting a storm signal, to enable the commanders to prepare for the calamity which it presaged. On Tuesday night there was a succession of squalls and rain, which gradually increased in violence till about half-past ten on Wednesday morning, when the wind veered round to the east, and began to blow with increasing energy. Towards mid-day, a noise like that of thunder, appalled all hearts, and gave notice that the winds of heaven were let loose on the devoted city. Nothing could face the wind for an instant, and the effect of its fury was aggravated by the rain which fell in torrents. Trees, which had stood the storms of a century, were uprooted in an instant. Even the bamboos, which yield to the wind and remain uninjured, were swept away. Carriages and palanquins were blown along the streets like toys. Corrugated iron roofs were torn off, and doubled up as if they had been sheets of paper. Pallisades and railings were levelled with the ground, and the venetian windows and fashies smashed, and the storm entered the strongest European houses. Within two hours the eastern and southern suburbs of Calcutta were a complete wreck, and not a tree was to be seen; it was, to borrow the expression of the *Spectator*, as if the ploughshare of the Almighty had passed over them. The Strand road along the banks of river, which is ordinarily five feet above high-water mark, was overwhelmed by the waves, which broke over it with irresistible force, and presented a rolling mass of the debris of cargo boats and cargoes, rice, jute, rattans, and bales of every description, and here and there the huge bulk of some ship or steamer heaved on shore.

But it was in the river that the havoc was most appalling. Owing to the over-crowded state of the port, vessels were moored five abreast. Many of them were filled with valuable cargoes, in consequence of the great efforts which had been made to complete their lading before the cessation of business during the holidays. The number of vessels in the Port amounted to 265, nearly half of which exceeded 1000 tons in burden; and the aggregate tonnage at anchor on the morning of the 5th of April was 183,000. It was the highest spring tide of the year, and, unfortunately during the height of the gale, the bore came rolling up with extraordinary violence. The wind then shifted to the south, and the storm-wave, rushing up from the sea, raised the billows twenty feet high, and the work of destruction commenced in fearful earnest. Vessels were speedily torn away from their moorings, and, owing to the loose alluvial soil of the bed of the river, in many cases carried their moorings along with them. The ships, tossed about like wherries, were thrown on each other, and matted together in groups of five and six; and as they were hurried along by the storm, carried away even the vessels, which were endeavouring to ride out the gale,

till the whole group was dashed on the shore. Twenty-one vessels went down at their anchors; a still greater number were cast on shore; and for the length of five miles the banks exhibited a scene of unparalleled destruction. The Howrah side of the river, opposite Calcutta, presented two dense masses of wreck; in one place fourteen, in another more than sixty steamers and ships, huddled together and tangled in inextricable confusion, some with a single mast standing, others with masts and booms and rigging hanging over in every form of ruin. The river, which in the morning had been crowded with noble ships, was in a few hours entirely bare of them, and of the hundreds of boats connected with this vast traffic not one was to be seen. Early in the day, the gasworks had been disabled, and after the gale, which subsided about sunset, the City of Palaces was left in total darkness to meditate on the scene which was to be disclosed the next day. But in the morning the sun rose, bright and cheerful, as if in mockery of the desolation on which it shone.

The cyclone was felt with equal violence down the river. Few of the vessels escaped its fury. The telegraph office at Kedgerie was carried away early in the gale, by the bumping of one of the pilot vessels,—which was subsequently lodged in the fields beyond it,—and all communication with Calcutta was broken off. At Diamond Harbour, fifty miles below Calcutta, all the offices were swept away, and the whole place became a mass of ruins. Some idea may be formed of the strength of the tempest from the fact that a large steamer, and two vessels in tow, which were threading the channels of the Sunderbans, were carried clean over an island and its large trees, and cast into another channel. The district designated the Twenty-four Pergunnas, a large portion of which lies to the south of Calcutta, resembles a vast plain within a ring fence; but the embankments erected to resist the ordinary rise of the tide were utterly powerless against the storm-wave which rolled up from the sea and overwhelmed it; the loss of life and property has therefore been immense. Whole villages had disappeared, and the left bank of the Hooghly was strewn with the dead bodies of men, women and children, intermingled with those of deer and buffaloes, of tigers and boa constrictors, washed out of their lairs in the Sunderbans. But the fate of those who might have survived the gale was even more deplorable than that of those who had perished in it; not only had their habitations with all their stores of grain been swept away, but the tanks, or ponds, had been filled with salt water, and thousands were exposed to a lingering death from thirst and hunger. The most energetic efforts were made by the European community in Calcutta to send relief to the sufferers. A meeting was held, soon after the gale, which was attended by representatives of all classes of Europeans, who subscribed £2,500 on the spot. Of the native gentry, six only were present, who expressed great sympathy with the sufferers, but their subscriptions did not exceed £327, though tens of thousands of pounds had been squandered in the previous week in the celebration of the worship of Doorga poojah.

The wreck of the native boats rendered it difficult to disentangle the vessels which were looked together on shore, and the natives themselves were too busy in repairing the injuries of the storm, and erecting sheds for their homeless families, to spare their services to others; the price of labour had, therefore, risen to a fabulous amount, and many months must elapse before the port can assume its wonted appearance of life and activity. But the most imminent danger from this visitation was the malaria engendered by the decomposition of the numerous dead bodies lying in every direction, and which, without the most energetic measures, was sure to create a pestilence, in and around Calcutta, and along the banks of the river below it. At Diamond Harbour, as reported by the commander of a vessel, the river was so strewn with dead bodies of men and animals, as to render it difficult to steer through them; and farther down the river, the whole night was represented as emitting the putrid effluvia of floating carcasses. The first duty of the community, therefore, was to dispose of the dead to preserve the health of the living, but this was not so easy a matter, as there are few castes which will touch a dead body.

Some time must elapse before any accurate estimate can be formed of the destruction of life by this cyclone. It is reported that the number of brick-built houses injured by it, in and around Calcutta, amounts to more than 3,500, while the number of native huts destroyed is stated at more than 80,000. 21 vessels are totally lost; 139 have sustained serious injury, and 38 are slightly damaged. Of 54 steamers and flats in the river at the time, 29 are total wrecks, and 15 have been essentially injured. The lowest computation of the actual loss of property, is two millions, without reckoning that which must arise from the interruption of commercial operations, and the enhanced price of labour.

One gallant action during the gale should not be passed over. The *Govindpore*, a vessel of 1,100 tons, was sinking at no great distance from the shore at Calcutta, and the crew and officers had taken refuge in the fore-top. The inspector of police offered a large sum to any one who would swim to her, and rescue the men from destruction; but in the awful sea that was then rolling, no one could be prevailed on to risk his life in such a service. At length, Cleary, a seaman, who had heard nothing of the reward, and moved on by the generous impulse and stout heart of a British sailor, secured one end of a rope to his body, plunged into the billows, and succeeded in reaching the vessel, which by this time was lying hull under; and

one by one, but not without the greatest difficulty, the whole of the men and officers were brought to shore. The commander, Captain Moskross, remained on board till the last man had been sent off, and then stepped into a boat which had been sent from the steamer "Nadir," and reached the land just as it had filled and was sinking by the stern. We trust the Royal Humane Society will not forget Cleary at their next annual meeting.

Plain Speaking.

I think there is a great deal of mischief done by what is called plain speaking; and yet, how beautiful it is when a serene old man, knowing the way of youth, in a spirit of ineffable gentleness and love, at a timely moment, draws aside a young man whose disposition he had watched, and says to him in plain words, "My son, thus and thus you are living, and thus you will end such a life if you persist in it"—doing for him what his father or mother, or employer never did—administering to him plain, but kind and loving words of rebuke! That young man will turn by and by; and when he does turn, and take hold of the way of righteousness, he never will forget the beauty of that faithfulness of speech that so sank down into his heart. But, on the other hand, there are many men that undertake this faithfulness of speech who are like a physician that should conclude that all men were below the standard of health, and should go around with some nauseous medicine, and wherever he could see a man's mouth open, put in a pinch, making himself a pest to the whole community. There are many persons that, as religious reformers, are impatient, intrusive, void of good judgement, annoying, provoking.

Restraints and Penalties.

Rev. Dr. Osgood, in the last of his pleasant vacation letters from Fairfield, Conn., to the *Christian Inquirer*, (Unitarian,) tells humorously how his country residence was entered a few nights ago by burglars, who penetrated even the room where he was sleeping, and took his watch, his purse, &c. He says: "I confess to not being strengthened by this experience in my convictions of the present perfection of the human race, and find myself less agreeing than ever with those of our friends who think all coercion a mistake, and human nature may be left free to its own propensities. Hell and the hangman are not indeed the pillars of society, nor of our creed; yet I am not quite willing to give up the constable as a social power, and retribution as a Christian doctrine." This personal form of the argument for retributive justice will sometimes quite overpower all creeds to the contrary.

Genius and Accomplishments.

Themistocles, when asked to play upon a lute, said, "I cannot fiddle, but I can make a village and a great city." Corneille did not speak correctly the language of which he was such a master. Descartes was silent in mixed society. Addison was unable to converse in company. La Fontaine was coarse and stupid when surrounded by men. The Countess of Pembroke said of Chaucer, that his silence was more agreeable to her than his conversation. Dryden said he was unfit for company. Hence it has been remarked, "Mediocrity can talk: it is for genius to observe."

THE CAPTAINS OF LABOUR.—The other day, when speaking of the opportunities which had fallen to his lot of forming a just estimate of the working classes, Sir Morton Peto stated that for years past his firm had employed not less than 30,000 men in their different works. These consisted, of course, of persons of various classes, who, as this great contractor remarked, were employed in different parts of the world, and comprised the people of many lands. Fifty or sixty years ago the guidance of so many hands by one head, for any other than warlike purposes, would not have been thought of. It seems even in these days a marvellous fact that Sir Morton Peto's army, which is engaged in advancing the civilisation of the world, should be as numerous as those commanded by the Duke of Wellington, and other noted generals. Besides the advantage of the works which are completed by this enormous human power which is wielded by Sir Morton Peto, there also is to be taken into consideration the additional aid of steam, hydraulic power, and other applications by which in part docks, harbours, railways and other constructions are made. And the amount of money yearly distributed by this firm for labour and for various materials must amount to a vast sum. We have no certain figures to go upon; but if we estimate the wages of all classes of the employed at 17 a week on an average for each man, the item would amount to 1,560,000l. in the year. There are many other monster establishments and it is one of the remarkable signs of the present age that these are constantly on the increase. The results are not all good.—*Builder*.

"EASY" AND "HARD."—There is a great deal of theology in the idea of the little girl who wished that she could be good without obeying her grandmother. She said it was easy enough to read books and pray, but it was pretty hard to mind grandmother.

A wit once asked a peasant what part he performed in the great drama of life? "I mind my own business," was the reply.

The young lady that kept her word has found it very useful.