

God's Way.

I wonder why the grasses grow so green
Wherever fire has been?
I wonder why earth seems like Eden again
After the bitter rain?
I wonder why the knife must prune the
shoot
To make the tree bear fruit?
It is God's way—this is enough for me,
Thy will, O Father, be!
And if I cannot quell always my tears,
I can my doubts and fears.

—James Buchanan.

Tom Dunton and His Companions.

BY MRS. ANNIE A. PRESTON.

"There is something in the Bible for every soul and for every need, isn't there, little mother?" said Tom Dunton as he rushed in for his overcoat before starting for his usual morning drive to the village, where he was reading law in Judge Blount's office. As he spoke he paused to kiss and toss his rollicksome baby nephew, who was rolling in the autumn sunshine among rugs and pillows arranged on the dainty, yellow-painted kitchen floor.

"There certainly is, my son," replied Mrs. Dunton cheerfully, although she was taken by surprise, for her big boy Tom had not been like himself for two weeks, at least. He had been out at night a great deal more than usual, and when at home had remained in his room; he had not noticed baby at all, and when spoken to had given curt answers. She was getting anxious about him, and over and over her heart went out in prayer to her Heavenly Father that her boy might not be lead astray. So now as she set the pans of bread she had been moulding on the broad shelf back of the stove to rise, and sat down to pare apples for pies, she went on:

"You look as if you had found your morning's portion of Scripture especially comforting."

"It seemed to just suit my need somehow. I wonder if you ever noticed it, the twenty-fourth chapter of Job? Here's your Bible, let me read it to you. I am early this morning, and if I take a few minutes I shall get to the office on time. There now, do you see it? Of course you do not. I shall have to tell you all about it. You see I have been asking myself those questions: 'What advantage will it be?' and 'What profit shall I have?' for a month now, and the language took right hold of me. For two weeks I have been hard pressed. You must have noticed that something was the matter with me. You see, the way of it is this: Hank Caston has come home from the city and gone into business with his father, and he has filled up all the boys—my companions—do you notice the words of the chapter—and me, too, with the idea that in order to be abreast of the age, as he says, we must have a club. We are to give it some literary sounding name, and hire the rooms in the end of his father's block, and Hank is to have charge and work the thing up and make it popular. We are to have a library and music and games, but behind the scenes, in the rooms at the rear, with Jack Patrick at the helm."

"Jack Patrick!" interrupted Mrs. Dunton, and the pippin she was cutting dropped from her hand and rolled across the floor.

"Yes, little mother, I knew it would shock you, but I am trying to make a clean breast of it. The public are not to know that there is any connection between the liquor-saloon and the club, that is the club secret, and there are to be private rooms and secret doors. Hank has the thing worked down to a fine point, and he wants me to put in my money. You know I am almost twenty-one. He says I can get larger returns in that way than in any other, and in a year or two they will make me president of the club, and we will ring into politics gradually, and with both the club and the saloon to back us we can carry all before us."

"You have not pledged yourself?"

"No, mother, there are a good many things about it that I know you would not approve, and in order to get the ready money needed I should have to mortgage our home place here. I said last night that I would give my answer today and when I was up in my room just now I started to get a fresh handkerchief and found my Bible on top of the box. I have found it so over and over, lately, mother. Did you hope I would open it? Oh, you did, I see by your face. Well, this morning I knocked the Bible to the floor, impatiently, and it opened; I looked down and saw the words, 'Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art,' and I saw my young brother drawn into the drinking den by my influence. I took up the Bible and read the whole chapter. At the words, 'These and thy companions with thee,' I saw right into the future as if a cloud had been torn in twain just as I have seen the fog hanging over the river part when a breeze came up, giving us a glimpse of the valley beyond. I saw myself

and my companions, bloated drunkards like the crowd that used to hang around old Mr. Gaston's bar-room and I put my hand on the book and said aloud: 'God helping me, I will have nothing to do with the nefarious project. I will stick to the home club with mother as president.' My spirits went up like a freshly opened pod full of thistle-down, and I ran down stairs three steps at a time to saddle Prince Harold, but I thought I couldn't go away without telling you—for I saw you were troubled about me—and kissing babykin, I haven't felt myself fit to touch him all this time while I have been planning to be a rum-seller, worse, for there is nothing too low for Jack Patrick to go into."

Mrs. Dunton was very pale, but she said, grimly: "I would rather have lain you in the cemetery by your father, and your sister, poor baby's mother. What can I do to keep my boys from temptation and from such influences and associates?"

"Nothing, little mother. There are no parents however watchful and careful who can help it. I have studied the ground all over. All that can be done is to keep the home influences pure and sweet and inviting—and the Bible on the handkerchief-box"—he added, as he bent to kiss his gentle mother, placing the orphan baby in her arms. "Don't worry. I shall set my face like a flint against the club."

He did so and his influence was strong enough to keep his companions on the side of right living. They went to work in the church and Sunday-school instead of the club and saloon, and Esq. Dunton, a wealthy and influential citizen is faithful in recommending the Bible as a guide in any emergency of mind, and ever maintains that Christian homes are the hope and strength and pride of our modern society.—Standard.

Sharpening His Knife.

My neighbor, Mr. Slowcum, came over last Sunday afternoon to have a talk with me. In his dull, drawling way he said: "Now, Senex, don't you think that we ought to get a smarter preacher? The sermon this morning was so dull that I couldn't keep awake, all I could do, and my wife had to pinch me or I would have snored out loud."

"Are you sure that the fault was in the preacher, and not in the hearer? Didn't you work very late this morning? Didn't you have to hurry so about your chores that you had no time to read your Bible or to pray before you went to church? Were not both your head and your heart too full of your worldly cares and business when you entered the house of God? If the preacher had told about some better or easier way of farming, or about the prospect for a rise in the price of wheat would he not have interested you? Let me tell you a story that I read in a newspaper the other day."

"A man was dining at a first-class hotel. He ordered a beefsteak, tender and rare. It was brought. He began to carve it, but in a moment stopped, called the waiter, and said: 'This steak won't do. It is tough. Bring me a better one.' The obsequious gentleman of color bowed, took the dish away, returned in a few minutes with another. This was tried with the same result. It too, was sent away. The guest seemed hard to please. A third steak was brought, tried and rejected. The other guests became interested, and watched the result with side glances. The third time the waiter took away not only the steak, but the knife and fork of the guest. He was absent longer than before. He came back with a smile that was almost broad enough for a grin, and said: 'Guess I got one tender enough this time.' The guest took up his knife, cut the steak, and replied: 'Yes this is first rate.' Another guest, anxious to understand the mystery of beefsteaks, called the waiter to him and said in an undertone: 'Pompey, how did you get a beefsteak at last tender enough for that man?' Steak the same all the time, sir. But I sharpened his knife, sir."

"Now, that man did not even taste his steak before he rejected it. It did not cut easily, and hence he hastily concluded that it was tough. The fault was not in the steak, but in the knife. So with many people when they go to church. Their ears are dull. Their minds are preoccupied. Because the preacher don't startle them with something as brilliant as a flash of lightning, they don't get interested. They think of something else. They are weary from overwork. They begin to doze. Now, the voice of the preacher whose ideas they have not grasped, or tried to, becomes a sort of lullaby, and because they find it hard to keep awake, they call the sermon dull."

Neighbor Slowcum looked a little cross at first. But he is a good-natured fellow, and after awhile he brightened up and said: "Senex,

I believe that you are more than half right. The fact is that I work too late Saturdays, and hurry too much Sunday mornings. I am all tuckered out and worried, and ain't fit to listen to a sermon. I must try to sharpen myself up. I remember when I was a boy at home, my good old father would have us all quit work an hour or two before sundown on Saturdays. Then we would do up beforehand as many of the Sunday chores as we could. Then we would all take a bath, and go to bed early. Sunday morning we would get up early, feed our stock, get our breakfast, have family worship, and sit down and study our Sunday-school lessons until church-time. After church we had a cold dinner, and while eating it we all had to tell what we could remember of the sermon. We didn't talk about the people we saw at church, and how they looked, and who of them had new bonnets. But we talked about what the minister said and father made us feel sometimes as if it was God who said it, rather than the minister. People nowadays wouldn't endure such sermons as we had then. They were never less than an hour long; and they were not full of stories, but on quotations from the Scriptures, and of solid arguments based upon them. The preachers discussed the doctrines, such as, 'Depravity,' 'God's Sovereignty,' 'Election' and 'The Perseverance of the Saints'; and even the children listened to them, and remembered what they said. They were trained to do it by the example of their parents, and by being catechised at home."

I am afraid that there are a good many Slowcums in our churches every Sunday. And I would be willing to take a contract to make the preaching twice as interesting as it now is, if I could make the hearers prepare for the Sabbath and the sanctuary as they did in olden times.—Senex in Journal.

Nagging.

It is not always easy for us to distinguish between what is essential and what is an accident of development in our children. For the former we must have long, patient, and judicious training, reaching from infancy to maturity, slowly weeding out elements that are noxious, and as slowly incorporating those that are wanting, just as we graft pears upon quince roots, or apples on the thorn tree. For the accidental qualities, we have only to wait their outgrowth. Yet these qualities, mainly, and not the essential ones, provoke nagging, of which mothers, more than fathers, are apt to be guilty.

At one time in the life of a boy, and this applies as well to girls, he delights to get into the ink. Look out, then, for stains on the carpet, scribbles in your choicest books, and blotches on handkerchiefs, aprons, dresses, and table-covers; they are as certain to come as winds in March, and are almost as trying; but they go of themselves, neither hastens nor delays their departure. Dancing a chair about on one leg while sitting is another performance that many nervous children go through, and it lasts till they grow into easy self-confidence.

Slamming doors and leaving them open mark another regular stage in the growth of every boy. Life is too short in the juvenile estimation to shut them quietly, perhaps to shut them at all; and about this time, all long, before and after, he has too much on hand to stop to wipe his shoes when he comes in from the muddy street. What matters a little mud? As he sits by the stove warming his feet and leaving traces of their presence, what more natural than that he should whistle or sing a comic song, or a psalm, or tune comically? He doesn't mean anything wrong by it. The boy-nature, exuberant, effervescent, overflowing, must work itself off in some manner, or dangerous consequences might ensue, the very worst of which will be ill-nature resulting from suppression. Nagging only makes matters worse.

Coeval with muddy feet and slamming doors are images in pencil on the house; finger-marks on the windows, especially on a frosty morning, when they are so tempting as tablets; trials of the new jack-knife on the dining-table or the pillars of the front porch; marginal notes on spellers and arithmetics in hieroglyphics that not a Champollion can decipher; the boy's name in uniformed chirography scrawled in chalk or pencil everywhere, on the coal-bin, the barn-door, the parlor window-sill, the walls of his sleeping-room—all these testify to the presence of the boy in the house. Can he help it? Yes, and no. Are such things to be allowed? By no means. They are to be born with kindly rebuked, and the activity that engenders them turned into a channel large enough to absorb it all. A damp cloth will remove the chalk and finger-marks, eraser soap will take off the plumbago, tartaric acid obliterate the ink-spot, but what can eradicate from the child's

character the effects of perpetual nagging?

The time comes fast enough when there will be no careless little hand to make a muss on the clean tablecloth, no tiny fingers to scatter things around, no clatter of childish feet on the stairway. Fresh paper may cover all the marks on the hard finish or pumice-stone erase them, paint may conceal the ambitious handwriting on the wood-work, but those traces of boyish pranks that still remain, the mother's eye and heart may cherish as sacred to the memory of the dead or absent, as something she would not willingly be without.

In a genial, wholesome, tolerant, loving atmosphere, the boy and girl will go through the various stages of growth from childhood to adult life, dropping whatever is in its nature juvenile little by little, as naturally as the bean-vine drops its seminal leaves, but the forbearance and loving patience of the wise father and judicious mother who, under provocations innumerable, refrained from nagging will not be forgotten.—Advocate.

A Talk With Talmage.

Rev. Dr. Talmage, in an interview in the Brooklyn Eagle, says: "I began the ministry by writing out my sermons with great care and taking every manuscript into the pulpit and confining myself strictly to it. But coming out of a theological seminary with but little preparation in the way of sermon material, I found the preparation of two sermons and a lecture a week a complete physical exhaustion, so I refracted from that habit and used no notes at all. My first experience in this new departure was marked and unusual. It was in my village church at Belleville, New Jersey. Finding that I must stop the exhaustive work of preparation, I resolved on a certain Sabbath night to extemporize. The church had ordinarily been lighted with lamps as there was no gas in the village, but the trustees had built a gas house in the rear of the church, and the new mode of lighting the edifice was to be tested the very night I had decided to begin my extemporaneous speaking. The church was thronged with people who had come to see the new mode of lighting. I had about ten minutes of my sermon in manuscript and put it down on the Bible, intending when the manuscript gave out to launch out on the great sea of extemporaneousness. Although it was a cool night, it was a very hot one for me, and the thermometer seemed to be about up to 120 degrees. At a very slow rate I went on with my sermon, making my manuscript last as long as possible. Coming within three or four sentences of what I had written, and in great trepidation as to what would happen when I began to extemporize, suddenly the gas-lights lowered to half their extended size. I said within myself, 'Oh! if the gas would only go out!' and sure enough, as I uttered the last words of my manuscript, the lights were suddenly extinct, I said, 'Brethren, it is impossible for us to proceed.' Receive the benediction." I went home greatly relieved, feeling that I had been rescued from a great crisis, but fully resolved that I would break the bondage of manuscript and be a free man in the pulpit, and my habit has been to extemporize ever since."

Our Echo.

You remember the story of the boy who went out in the woods and cried out "Hello!" and echo said "Hello!" The boy got mad, thought he was being made fun of, and he said, "I hate you!" Echo said, "I hate you!" His anger increased and he cried out, "I'll hit you!" Again Echo says "I'll hit you!" The little fellow, indignant, went into the house and told his mother that a boy out in the woods was going to hit him and that he hated him, and so on. The mother saw the secret, and said to him, "Now, my son, if you will go out in the woods and cry out, 'I love you,' you will find that the boy will say he loves you." So out he went and said, "I love you!" and Echo immediately replied, "I love you!" When we go out into church, into the world, with this life of love in us, producing harmony of all our faculties, we can project into our environments or circumstances this life of love, and by it make men love us, and beget in the lives of men this life of love.

WHAT BECOMES OF OUR SINS.—"I cannot understand," said a little boy, "What becomes of our sins, when God takes them away."

"When you do a sum, Willie, and take a sponge and wipe your slate, what becomes of the figures?"

"O, I see now," he said, "they are all gone."

And so God says he will blot out transgressions, and will not remember our sins.

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1880.....	141,402.81	911,132.93	3,881,478.09
1882.....	254,841.73	1,073,577.94	5,849,889.1
1884.....	278,378.65	1,274,597.24	6,844,404.04
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