

## The Voice of the Guide.

Walking through an unknown region,  
Tangled thicket, briar and thorn,  
Weaving barriers dark and legion:  
Shadows on the face of morn,  
Noontide hid in brooding tempests,  
Nightfall coming cold and gray;  
Lord, we thank thee for the promise,  
Starlike in thy Word today!

Give us listening ears to hear it;  
Give us faith to follow on,  
Through the clouds unfurled cover  
All the glory of the sun.  
Thou shalt hear a voice behind thee!"  
Do we, waiting as we pray,  
Sweet from heaven discern its cadence?  
Tread with courage, "This is the way!"

Lord, so many thoughts beset us;  
Lord, so many whispers press  
On the silence of the spirit,  
Pilgrim in this wilderness:  
Only as thy voice commands us,  
Only as our hearts obey,  
Are we safe, and sure of reaching  
Home at ending of the way.

Lord, when we are worn and weary,  
Lord, when faith is weak and faint,  
Give us then, we pray, then to hear thee,  
Hush the moaning of complaint.  
Thou shalt hear a voice behind thee!  
Starlike beams the Word to-day!  
And we listen, and we journey,  
God himself our strength and stay.  
MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

## The Empress of China.

Through one of those unusual providences, so beyond the range of human foresight, the young empress of China, in the past few weeks, has heard something of the Gospel story. How has it reached her in her secluded hours? A year or two ago a Chinese tailor became interested in the truth he heard in a street chapel, grew to be an inquirer and finally joined the Congregational church. When the trousseau of the imperial bride was to be made, various reasons led to his being chosen for the work. The man is an earnest Christian, and when he went with his employees to this home to work on the bridal garments, he carried his New Testament with him. As he sewed he kept it open on a table by him, and the young Empress herself took it up. It was prettily bound with gilt-edged leaves, and she asked, "What is this nicely bound book?" The tailor explained to her that it was part of the Christian Scriptures, and told her something of its contents, and she occasionally took it up and read a little in it. One day she was in a room with a younger sister when she saw one of the tailor's employees going through the court. She sent a servant to call him to her, and when he came in she shut the door and said, "Now I want you to tell me about this new doctrine."

That a girl under seventeen, soon to be an empress, within a month or two of her wedding, and in the midst of preparations for it, could still take pains to seek for information from a humble tailor about a new religion, shows a mind and heart one is glad the Empire of China is going to possess. The old Duchess, the grandmother of the bride (her mother is not living), was also interested in the tailor's book, and had several conversations with him about it. One day a bright thought occurred to him. He said: "We have something new at the mission which you probably have never seen—a stereopticon. It has pictures which illustrate this doctrine and make it more easy to be understood. How would you like to have it brought here for you to see?"

The Duchess agreed readily, and the tailor went at once to one of the missionaries to consult him. The missionary, Mr. Ament of the American Board, called in one of the native helpers—a young man of much quickness of mind and social attractiveness, and a born teller of stories—and let him practice one evening in exhibiting magic-lantern pictures, and early the next week he with the tailor and one of the employees made their way to the home of the Duchess. They found about thirty of the family gathered in a room with the requisite white wall, and there with the lantern-picture illustrations, they told the story of the life of Christ. There seems to be no way in which so vivid an impression is made on the minds of the Chinese as this. This company of people might have had the same things read or told to them twenty times, and yet not have had them so fixed in their memory as by this one evening's looking at the beautiful pictures. That they were interested and appreciative could be seen by the remarks made. At the picture of Christ in a manger, someone asked: "And what are those shepherds doing?" On seeing Jesus in the temple, they remarked: "What a fine-looking child he has grown to be!" And at the picture of the crucifixion the Duchess sighed deeply and said: "How sad! He was such a good man, and yet his enemies hated him so!"

Although the future Empress would not venture to be present at such a gathering, she yet can not fail to hear about the pictures and

the explanation of them from other members of the family. Truly it is a gracious providence that has brought to her the opportunity of hearing even a little of Christian truth before the palace gates close upon her and shut her away from the outside world. Shall not Christendom pray that impressions made may be deepened by the Spirit, and that there may be results in the palace and for China from the seed-sowing of these days?—Mrs. Lucy Beach, in Advance.

## Mr. Brown's Subscription.

Tell ye, I can't give another cent, Deacon Wilds!  
Wish you could see your way clear to do so. I think we could unite on this man if each could only pay a little more.  
Can't, I tell you. A little more! Why, I can't give so much as I gave last year.

Do you like Mr. Akers?  
Yes. Like him first-rate. Good gospel sermons. Gives it to the Pharisees and hypocrites good. I hope the people will unite on him.  
But, Brother Brown, its no use to unite on the minister unless we unite our purses, too. A few of us cannot pay for the preaching of the many, especially when the many are better off than the few. We must pay the laborer.

Can't help it. It's hard times. Tater bugs are eatin' all my patch. Hay crop looked as though 't would amount to somethin', but we ha'n't had a bit of weather to lit it in. Mine's spilin'. Look down in that medder. Ten tons there nigh 'bout rotten. Beats all what nasty weather we do have.

Excuse my plainness, Brother Brown, but who ordered the weather? Seems to me this is a good time to do what you were asking us to do last night.

What's that? said Mr. Brown, whose words in prayer-meeting did not very often mingle with his week day thoughts.

I think I heard you say, last night, you wished to glorify God in all things. Seems to me, brother, this is a good time to glorify him.

What on airth air you drivin' at? I don't see.

Why, anybody not a Christian can glorify God when the potatoes are flourishing and skies are clear, and the hay crop all right; when the purse and barns are full, and everything goes to my liking. Seems to me it is a good time for God's children to trust him when things look dark. A good time to say to the world, we have a wise and good Father, who knows what he is about, and what we need. I am not going to pray 'Thy will be done' and then fret because God does it. Isn't this a good time to trust?

Tain't in natur.  
So it isn't, brother; but isn't it in grace? You like the minister, then, and think that we had better keep him?

Sartin.  
But who is to pay him! Excuse my plainness, but God has intrusted to you about as much of his money and land as to any of the church. If all gave less instead of more, we should starve the minister, supposing he was foolish enough to come.

Have you seen Esquire D— and Colonel S—? How much'll they give?  
Oh, they say it is hard times too! Colonel S— says he's lost a lot on the Mt. Blank railroad. Esquire D— is hard pushed on account of building his new house.

Humph! They're both on em got money enough, got a pile on't.  
Perhaps so; but I tell you what, brother—let's, you and I, do just what we think the Lord would have us, no matter what the squire and colonel give. If they give less perhaps we ought to give more. Everybody has some excuse for not giving. Suppose we find excuses for giving: We need a minister. He must be supported. He must be well supported. Let us show the world that we can give, and trust in God to lend us the means, for it is all his. Come, brother, let's put our names down. Supposing we give more than we did last year, in spite of potato bugs and bad weather, and our own stingy hearts. Let us glorify God by giving and trusting in him.

Strange I never saw that way afore. Guess you've got the right on't, deacon. Put me down for ten dollars more'n last year.—Congregationalist.

## The Families of Prisoners.

Of course, it is one of the inevitable consequences of crime that one's family must suffer with the perpetrator, and also that the reputation of the criminal, as such, must in some degree follow him through life; but it is pitiful to read such a portrayal as the following from the pen of Rev. Frank Russell, in an exchange, and it ought to move every one to treat, with the most careful consideration those women and children who are under a shadow on account of crimes committed by the husband and father: I found a mother, once an educat-

ed, proud and happy wife. When her husband had gone to the penitentiary, she came with her three children to a neighborhood in my parish, and soon gained the reputation of being queer. She told me her sorrow, but not until I had disclosed my knowledge of it, and showed her letters from friends who had asked me to seek her out. I asked her if some of the ladies of the church might call on her. She shuddered as she replied: "Oh, no! I don't want to make any acquaintances; I don't want any one to know about it." After the ushers have taken their seats at the evening service, I sometimes see this woman slip into the rear pew, and she is gone before the benediction.

When the stain comes upon the home, the curtains come down at the windows. The children are kept from the day school, from the Sunday-school, and from association with playmates on the street. Frequently the little cottage is offered for sale. The family moves hurriedly, almost at random, to another place. Their conduct does not invite acquaintance. The children are restrained from finding associates. Calls are not returned. Schools are shunned. An impression quickly gains footing in the neighborhood that there is something strange about this new family. Soon will come a rumor, followed by confirmation, of the crime and disgrace. Exaggerations aggravate the account; gossips toss their heads at each other, and say they had known something all the time; and there is a general agreement by all parties to give this family a wide distance. Children learn of it; some of them think it is brave to throw it up to the children of that household, and there is sorrow and weeping at night and more shrinking by day. Recklessness may supervene, which probably leads some of the family into crime and infamy; or the misery may simply be borne, with some relief through frequent removals only to incur the same in each succeeding neighborhood. A woman said to me: "It has followed us wherever we have gone; not a person before has come to talk kindly to me; and only the other day a neighbor called and said she wished I would keep my children in: she did not wish her's to play with them, for reasons which she presumed she need not name." She added, "I don't know what to do."

## A Sister's Influence.

I wonder, said Mrs. Eaton, what makes Frank Sawyer so different from Tom Blake and Bill Harris? They've got good homes and good parents, but Tom and Bill are as tough as young Indians, and never seem to know the difference between the inside of the house and outdoors. Well, the fact was that Frank Sawyer had sisters, and it was impossible to feel that the inside of the house was the same as outdoors, where the presence and influence of either older or younger sisters were constantly felt. Said a gentleman in our hearing not long since: I can, never tell what my elder sister was to me all through my growing up. I knew nothing of her value to me as a boy, recognized comparatively little of it as a young man; but now I have reached years of maturity I realize how much she did to make home attractive and my childhood a very pleasant one.

And again, it was but a little while ago a lady was speaking of the gentle manner and unusual ability in entertaining shown by a young gentleman who had recently come into the community. Oh, well, said a friend, I'll tell you where he learned his ease and finished manners; he grew up with a lot of sisters, and they always depended on him to help them when they had company, and they consulted him about their fancy work and the arrangement of a room or tea-table, just as if he was another girl.

Comment us to these boys who have grown up with a lot of sisters. We have often heard a gentleman remark regretfully: I never had a sister; that was something I missed. We feel for them a genuine pity that they should have missed so much. But do the girls of the family realize even slightly the great influence they are exerting, or might exert, over their brothers?

Young Men Depend On Yourselves. If you would be anything, or do anything in this world, begin at once, and don't wait for somebody to come along and give you a lift. There are thousands of young people to-day waiting for some venerable friend to shuffle off this mortal coil and leave them a few thousands. Then, say they, there will be some use in trying, and they will shortly double or treble the sum, and a fortune will result. But the young men and women who have the courage to start at once on their life-work, and leave future difficulties to be overcome as they appear, are those for whom the world waits, to solve its problems and develop its resources.

But these are all too seldom found. The majority are found waiting for help at every turn. And to father, mother, brother, sister, or the successful friend who has had the courage to grapple with adverse circumstances and conquer them, he appeals again and again for aid, and they give it. But there is little or no improvement in his condition; and the very aid that should have enabled him to get a footing from which to advance, has left him instead weak and more dependent, from the very fact that he feels that where he fails others will make up his loss to him, and he fails to make the effort he would if he had only himself between him and want.

Our primary need in ever character that would develop a sturdy manhood or womanhood is the ability to decide for self and all questions; for where this quality is wanting the individual invariably asks some other one's opinion, and if he acts on this one's judgment now, and again on some other one's, there will be apparent in his life a strange consistency of behavior that will mystify friends and repel acquaintances, and destroy all personal influence. Now this quality of self-reliance, although to some extent a natural endowment, must be cultivated. This many parents prevent by preparing everything to the hand of their children, so that no effort on their part is required to realize their wishes. And, as a rule, children of such parents are not the men and women that become famous. It is the rare exception that a youth reared in luxury and ease rises above mediocrity in anything. On the other hand, it is the sons and daughters of humble cottagers, who from very infancy have been thrown upon their own resources, first for amusement as they lay in the cradle while the mother toiled, and later to improvise playthings for themselves if they would have any; these are the characters who, having learned thus early this very important lesson, have developed into the self-made men and women that have blessed the world.—Burlington Hawkeye.

## One Stitch at a Time.

What is the secret of your beautiful work? asked a friend, looking at an exquisite piece of crochet work, wrought by the lady to whom the question was addressed.

There is no secret about it, replied the lady; I only make every stitch as perfect as I can, and am careful always to put it in the right place. There isn't a wrong or careless stitch in all that work. If I make a mistake, I ravel it out, and correct it.

One perfect stitch at a time! So the fabrics of lace worth fabulous prices are made. So the exquisite embroideries are wrought. So the costly garments of men and women are put together. One perfect stitch at a time.

The noblest lives are lived one moment at a time. No moments wasted; no moments carelessly or viciously spent. Wrong stitches in crochet can be raveled out and made right. Wrong stitches in garments can be picked out and made right again. But who can reverse the tide of time, undo a wrong act, and make it right again?

One stitch at a time! Sometimes we become confused with the thought that we have a dozen things to do at once. But that is a mistake. We can do but one thing at a time, speak one word at a time, see one thing at a time. For every duty really required of us, we have time given to do it in. We may pass rapidly from task to another, we may construct engines by which much of our work may be done simultaneously; but no mortal can live two minutes at once, nor can recall one act or one moment of the past.

"Let us then be up and doing,  
Heart within and God o'erhead."

PRAY FOR THE PASTOR.—It was once the custom of every household altar to pray, definitely and fervently, for the pastor. Is the custom going out? Do we hear the heart-warm petition offered for the minister, that his work may be blessed, his hands strengthened, his endeavors abundantly prospered? If not, we who love our church do not love as we ought those who are ordained priests. In the delicate and difficult duties of his office your pastor should be sustained by your prayers. Certainly in the prayer-meeting there is a lack, if the habit of praying for the pastor has fallen into desuetude. In the united petitions of God's people, prayer for the pastor should have a place.—Dr. Roland.

There is a burden of care in getting rich; fear in keeping them; temptation in using them; guilt in abusing them; sorrow in losing them; and a burden of account at last to be given up concerning them.—M. Henry.

If it be true for me, that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," then, by the grace of God, I will henceforth live as one should live who has been washed in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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