Our Young People

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THE. C E. TOPIC—Feb. 28.

BY AMOR R. WELLS.

HEROISM AND OTHER LESSONS FROM CHINA.

Acts 14 19-23.

There are countless stories of the heroism of missionaries and native Christians during the Boxer disturbances in China.

To take one instance: Rev. C. H. Parsons, of Pao-ning, was travelling on a river boat when crowds of Boxers on the shore began to shoot at them, and the frantic boatman ran the boat up to the bank. At once his enemies rushed on board with spears and guns. His Chinese Christian servant warded them off, while he sprang overboard, spears being thrust after him and bullets whistling close. He was almost drowned when a Chinese gunboat picked him up. The servant, losing some of his fingers in the fight, was captured and bound. The missionaries held a prayer for his release. A deep sleep fell upon his captors, and he escaped, with his hands tied behind his back.

One of the results of those terrible riots, in only one place, a missionary wrote: "We now have a martyr church in North China. Of our 700 Christians over half have been chopped to pieces by the Boxers. Daily our poor, shivering refugees have been coming in with their tales of woe. They have been scattered on the mountain sides, hiding in caves or in the high grain. In some way the house of one of our deacons was left unburned. That is the only house of our 700 Christians that I know of which has not been burned. To-day one little boy turned up, the last of a family of seven children. Many of the people went to their death like heroes. One man requested that he might put on his best clothes, as he was 'going to the palace of the King.' They dug out his heart to find the secret of his courage."

No more will native converts in China be called "rice Christians," that is, adherents to Christianity for worldly gain. A few recanted, but these were so few as to be entirely lost to sight in the vast throng who held their faith firm and gave bold testimony even in their torturing death.

At Pao-ting-fu fifteen missionaries and their families were burned alive, shot, stabbed, and beheaded. They exhibited in that dark hour the most serene trust in Christ.

In Shansi and Mongolia 113 missionaries with 46 of their children were barbarously murdered, while scores beside suffered tortures in their escape that wrecked them physically.

At least 25,000 native Christians (most of them Catholics) were butchered by the Boxers. No more heroic fidelity to the truth was exhibited by the martyrs in the days of Nero.

We look down upon the Chinese. Christian nations dread their coming, and hedge the way against them with stern restrictions of immigration. But no race in the world's history can show a nobler record, manifesting the loftiest and most admired of manly qualities than these Chinese Christians can exhibit.

We stint our gifts to missions. To the four hundred millions of China we send only twenty-eight hundred missionaries, including their wives and lay assistants. That is only one to 144,000 Chinese, while in the United States there is one minister to each 500 souls. If such has been the result of work by the handful of missionaries, what would be the result if the Christian church should awake to the full measure of its privilege and its duty?

CLARK'S HARBOR, N. S., SOCIETY.

A little more than a year ago we organized the Endeavor Society here. Various opinions as to the advisability of its organization prevailed. Some encouraged it, others said it would soon die. Its influence is widening and usefulness is increasing. New members are taking a grip of it; to the Lord be the praise. A few nights ago, when one of our newly initiated members had charge of the prayer-meeting, and after she had opened the meeting, we were gladly surprised when a young mother rose and gave her heart to the Saviour. She was baptized and received into the church the following Sunday.

Our society purchased sixty new song books for its work, and have about eight dollars in the treasurer's hands.

William A. Kenney, at our last semi-annual business meeting, was elected president, and is a good man in the right place.

ATLANTIC ENDEAVORER.

How May I Overcome My Temptations?

BY AMOS R. WELLS.

Certainly it is no disgrace to be tempted, since our Lord was tempted. Temptations the most foul beset the very best of men. Indeed, as Rev. F. B. Meyer says, "When you live nearest to God, you will be most tempted of the devil. Some men think they are most holy because they are not tempted. I should not believe in your holiness if you were not tempted." It is not the desert, but the rich and fruitful lands, that the enemy tries to conquer.

Many temptations are simply God testing us. As some one has said, it is like your testing of a coin. You ring it on the table, you bite it or file it, or put a drop of acid on it. You do not want to destroy it. You would be very sorry to find the coin spurious; you would be so much the poorer. So with God in these testing times; he does not want to destroy us, but to save us.

"Temptations are a file," says Fenelon, "which rub off the rust of self-confidence." They are much more than that, when rightly used; they are iron to the blood and steel to the backbone.

All this is true, however, only of God's testings and not of the devil's temptings. Phillips Brooks wisely warns us that "only those temptations which we encounter in the path of duty, in the path of consecration, only those our Lord promised we should conquer. If you are in temptation for temptation's sake, for no other purpose beyond it, you are lost."

When God sends temptations, he will "with the temptation also make a way to escape." The way to escape is along the line of the temptation, but in the opposite direction. That is, as Mr. Meyer says, "if you are tempted to impatience; if tempted to weakness, claim strength." Extract from your temptation its opposite grace.

But some temptations are like the pattings on the neck with which the butcher lures the witless ox to his destruction. There is only one thing to do with regard to them, and that is to run away.

Such temptations are of the evil one. We are to regard them as the little girl did, who stole the peach. Soon the child was seen to come pattering back and replace the peach, while she exclaimed triumphantly, "That's one for you, Mr. Devil!"

The same sentiment is also illustrated by the experience of the foolish young man who gambled until he thought he had lost his all. He discovered, however, a hundred dollar bill in his pocket, and was about to stake it in one play when he noticed the greedy look of the dealer fixed upon it. At once he twisted the bill, thrust it into the gas jet, and watched it burn.

The poor fellow could no longer trust himself with money, and he had not learned to put his trust in the One who was tempted like as we are, yet without sin. In his strength, he could have kept his hundred dollars, and walked home a free man.

Now if it be our purpose
To walk where Christ has led,
To follow in his footsteps
With ever careful tread,
O let this be our watchword,
A watchword pure and true,
To ask in each temptation
"What would Jesus do?"

—*Sabbath Reading.*

PREPARATION FOR PRAYER.

Meditation has always been, and must always be, reckoned among the indispensable means of grace. Since ever saints were, their saintliness has been in great part due to a habit of meditation. Without it, the other means of grace remain hopelessly outside of us.

The Word does not profit except the mind be actively appropriating God's message, and revolving it. Prayer is but a deluding form, which means nothing, and receives nothing, if meditation has not provided it material. Unless a man thinks upon life, and tries his ways, his confession can but remove the scum from the surface, leaving the heart burned and polluted; for the graver sins do not float, but sink deep, and must be dragged for with patience and skill, if not discerned through a very natural clearness and simplicity of character.

It is the stillness and quiet of our hours of reflection, when the gusts of worldly engagements and desires have died down, that the seeds of grace are deposited in our souls. It is then that our thoughts are free to recognize reasons of humanity and causes of thankfulness. It is then that the thought of God resumes its place in our souls, and that the unseen world re-asserts its hold upon us.

It is then only that the soul, taking a deliberate survey of its own matters, can discover its position and necessities, can assert its claims and determine its future, can begin the knowledge of all things by knowing itself. So that "if there is a person, of whatever age, or class or station, who will not be thoughtful, who will not seriously and honestly consider, there is no doing him any good.—*Marcus Dods.*

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HOW TO BELIEVE IN MISSIONS.

Every once in a while I hear some one growl against foreign missions, because the money and the strength put into them are needed at home. I did it myself when I did not know better, God forigve me. I know better now, and I will tell you how I found out. I became interested in a strong religious awakening in my own old city of Copenhagen, and I set about investigating it. It was then that I learned what others had learned before me, and what was the fact there, that for every dollar you gave away to convert the heathen abroad God gives you ten dollars' worth of purpose to deal with your heathen at home.—*Jacob A. Riis.*

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"Blessed are they who hunger after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

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