

The Sunday School Times.

JOHN D. WATTLES, }
PUBLISHER.

PHILADELPHIA, DECEMBER 12, 1885.

{ VOLUME XXVII.
NUMBER 50.

Copyright 1885 by John D. Wattles.
Entered at the Post-office at Philadelphia as "second-class matter."
The Sunday School Times will be sent post free for a year to any address in the United States or Canada for \$2.00. It will be sent on trial to any subscriber every week for three months for 50 cents. For sale by newdealers. Price, five cents.

CONTENTS.

EDITORIAL:	
Notes.—How to Speak Clearly. Churches and Undertakers. Good Out of Ill. Self and the World Mutually Interpretative. Songs that Make Freemen. The Rain of God's Tillage.....	785
The Ethics of Imitation.....	785
NOTES ON OPEN LETTERS:	
More Hints for Christmas. How to Prepare the Lesson.....	786
FROM CONTRIBUTORS:	
My Saint [poem]. By Emily Huntington Miller.....	787
The Finding of the Law. By W. Henry Green, D.D., LL.D.....	787
Christmas Presents. By the Rev. J. Max Hark.....	788
A Stray Arrow. By Mrs. E. N. Collier.....	788
Mountain Heights [poem]. By William H. Hayne.....	788
What Will Poor Robin Do Then? By Mrs. P. Tripple.....	788
An Invitation [poem]. By W. W. Gay.....	789
FOR CHILDREN AT HOME:	
That Unfortunate Mattie. By Susan Coolidge.....	789
LESSON HELPS:	
Lesson Calendar.....	790
[Lesson XIII. December 27. Fourth Quarterly Review.]	
Home Readings.....	790
Titles and Golden Texts.....	790
Topics and Outlines.....	790
Review Bible Lights.....	790
Recapitulation.....	791
Review Teaching Hints. By the Rev. A. F. Schaeffer.....	791
The Evangelic Prophet. By Charles S. Robinson, D.D., LL.D.....	792
Hints for the Primary Teacher. By Faith Latimer.....	792
New-view Hints.....	793
Pre-view Hints. By J. L. Burrows, D.D.....	793
Lesson Helps for the Next Three Months.....	793
BOOKS AND WRITERS:	
Publications Received.....	794
Young Folks' Books of Information.....	794
Holiday Miscellanea.....	794
Life and Times of Samuel Bowles. Bryant and His Friends. Lenore. Eve of St. Agnes. Nearer, My God, to Thee. The Birth and Triumph of Cupid.....	794
LITERARY NOTES AND NEWS:	
A New Sunday-school Magazine. Some English Illustrations. News from Samaria.....	795
WORK AND WORKERS:	
Workers in Council.....	795
Temperance.....	795
General.....	795
WORTH REPEATING:	
The Snow-storm [poem].....	796
The Proroguing of Parliament.....	796

There is only one way to attain the power of clear writing or of clear speaking, and that way is through clear thinking. When a Sunday-school teacher comes before his class and talks for twenty minutes, without making a single clear statement of truth in that time, the trouble is not so much with his inability to say what he wants to say, as with the mental sloth which has prevented him from forming a clear conception of the truth to be taught. There is really, after all, no better rule for clear speaking than the epigrammatic one: Know exactly what you want to say, and then—say it.

How deeply rooted is the feeling that religion has a chief value with reference to the life beyond the grave. This is illustrated in the familiar story of the woman who, when asked if her sick husband wouldn't like a neighboring clergyman to call and see him, answered promptly, "Oh no! he's not so sick as all that!" Again it is grimly suggested in the common display of the full address of sexton and undertaker on the outer wall of a city church, even where no name of a pastor appears,—in case a man wanted help for the living instead of for the dead. Religion has its bearings on the life that is to come, but not to the neglect of the life that now is.

As we go on through life, if we have learned our lessons well, our disappointments have less and less bitterness for us. Looking back over past experiences,

we see how the skillful hand of God has brought good out of so much that seemed ill at the time, and wrought beauty out of so much that seemed a marring and a failure; and, thus taught, we learn to expect the same in other cases. This is God's way of dealing with us. Well for us that it should be so! What a ruinous failure life would be for us, if everything were allowed to remain just as it passes from our hands. But the Master takes up our poor efforts at living, and by his touch transmutes blemish into beauty. Hence it is that growing faith fears less and less, as it goes on, from the seeming misfortunes and calamities of life. Somehow, some time, good will come out of them all; for God rules, and the key-note of his providence is love. "I know the thoughts that I think toward thee, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil."

Self and the world are mutually interpretative. There are a thousand things happening in the world every day which we would never understand if we did not find the key to them in our own selves,—in our longings and our regrets, our strength, and our weaknesses. So there are a thousand things going on in our inner experience which we should fail to understand, did we not see their progress and their results written large in the record of the world's doings. The wise man reads his newspaper as a key to the unexplained things of his own experience; and he reads the secrets of his own heart as a key to the unexplained things of contemporary history. The portraiture of the world is the portraiture of the human soul, magnified; the experience of the human soul affords, in miniature, a picture of the loves and hatreds which make the history of the world. These are the two sources of the experimental knowledge of human life; and no wise man will despise either the one or the other.

There is a blessing as well as a duty in the service of praise. Nor is there ever a time when a child of God has not reason to give praise to God, or when he will not find help to his own soul in sounding God's praises. Among the old poems of the Norseland, there is many a praise of the spirit of praise. Says Odin, in one of these poems: "I am possessed of songs, such as neither the spouse of a king, nor any son of man can repeat: one of them is called the Helper; it will help thee at thy need, in sickness, grief, and all adversities;" and again: "I know a song, which I need only to sing when men have loaded me with bonds; for the moment I sing it my chains fall in pieces, and I walk forth at liberty." Such a song as that it was which Paul and Silas sang at midnight, while in chains in the prison at Philippi. In the singing of a similar song every trustful believer in Jesus can find help and joy in the hour of his sorest earthly need. "In the day of my trouble He shall keep me," says David confidently; "and . . . I will sing; yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord." "It is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant, and praise is comely."

Tears are the rain which refreshes God's tillage. When the heavens glow, and the earth is parched beneath the fierce sunlight, all nature suffers; the plants droop, the grass withers, the brooks dwindle. But when the dark rain-cloud veils the sun, and the cool

showers fall upon the earth, the whole face of nature changes; the sky is bluer, the grass is greener, and every scented flower sheds its perfume far and near. In our times of prosperity and peace, our souls are sometimes parched with too much sunshine. We shrink from the storm; and yet God's lightning and tempest and rain are his appointed ways for our deliverance. It is not pleasant to be enfolded in darkness, or to be smitten with God's arrow, or to listen to the ceaseless dropping of the rain of our tears; but the darkness, and the storm, and the tears, are doing a work for our soul-tillage, and one which could be done in no other way. We may cower for the present before the tempest; but when it has passed away, we shall recognize what it has done for us in clearing our spiritual atmosphere, in refreshing our drooping courage, and in restoring lost sweetness and fragrance to the blossoms of the soul. We shall thank God for it then; but why not thank him for it now?

THE ETHICS OF IMITATION.

Men are born to learn from one another. If every man were condemned to know only that which he learns by personal experience, the stock of his knowledge would be small indeed. He would have to begin on a lower stage than that occupied by any of the barbarous tribes of the earth; for they have their traditional knowledge by which the new comer into the world is made the heir of the wisdom of his predecessors. Such a man, knowing nothing except what he learned by bitter experience, would probably soon fall a victim to his own ignorance; and even if he lived out his threescore years and ten, the progress which he would have made in that time would not have lifted him above a low stage of barbarism.

It is for this reason that the old figure of the lamp-bearers is so universally recognized as the true symbol of the progress of civilization. The light of civilization is not kindled anew by each nation, but it is handed on from bearer to bearer. The East handed down the divine light to Greece, Greece to Rome, Rome to modern Europe, modern Europe to America. Thus nation learned from nation; thus the dead past moves and speaks and thinks in the living present. You step for a moment inside one of our courts of law; the principle which the judge enunciates carries you back to old Rome and the Institutes of Justinian; the form which goes on before your eyes reminds you at once of the Norman-French courts in Medieval England. It is the old life carried down into the present.

In such learning of nation from nation, there is not necessarily any sacrifice of national independence,—any servile imitation. And yet, side by side with it there always has gone on an imitation which is servile. Antiquity knew well the distinction between the Greek and the Greekling; Wieland says, in his sarcastic way, that the Abderites imitated the Athenians—as apes imitate men. Wherever a nation rises to a height of pre-eminence in any sphere, it is almost sure to find smaller states to ape it as the Abderites aped the Athenians. The opinions that prevail in the leading state—its fashions of thought, of speech, of dress, even its defects—will be copied with the utmost faithfulness by the minor state, which thinks to place itself thereby on the same level as its model. Alas! it takes more than a toga and the Latin speech to

ment envelope, one that opens like an accordion, in which I keep illustrations,—jottings mostly, but some clippings,—each marked "love," "hope," "prayer," etc., respectively, and assorted by their initials; it contains, also, references, on slips, to matter in my library (bound sermons, bound religious papers, etc.). It often helps me. Now, for use in the class. I take a slip, say two inches wide by seven long. In systematic order, small hand, often with abbreviations, I transfer to this the substance of my notes. This is a "brief;" my memory being now charged, I dispense with a portion of the jottings. But this slip gives me the mass of facts and lessons in the condensed, orderly way in which I desire to present it to the class. I carry the digest in my Bible, not to lecture from it,—for I do not like the lecture system,—but because it helps me to control the trend of discussion, and gives me my material so in hand that I can make every minute count. Returning home, I preserve my "brief" in a cheap Bible which I have for the purpose. If the lesson is on, say, Hezekiah, I open this "portfolio" at 2 Kings 18 or 20, where the lesson is, and place it there. If I need it in the future, I can turn to it at once.

MY SAINT.

BY EMILY HUNTINGTON MILLER.

This is her picture, framed about
With golden palms, and wings;
Set in a softly curtained niche,
Apart from common things.
And though her hand no lily clasps,
Her brow no aureole wears,
She is my saint, whose steadfast eyes
Turn all my thoughts to prayers.
She walked, as in a cloister's shade,
Along life's dusty way;
And rosaries of blessed beads
Slipped through her hands all day.
The incense of her praise arose
Before a household shrine,
And common mercies to her taste
Seemed hallowed bread and wine.
The sprinkling of her pitying tears
On sinful souls was shed;
Her heavenly patience was the ban
From which all evil fled.
For serge and ashen weeds, she wore
The shining robes of love.
The angels keep her sisterhood
In calendars above.

THE FINDING OF THE LAW.

BY PROFESSOR W. HENRY GREEN, D.D., LL.D.

The discovery of the book of the law in the temple in the reign of Josiah was an event momentous in its consequences, and hence prominent and detailed mention is made of it in both Kings (2 Kings 22: 8, etc.) and Chronicles (2 Chron. 34: 14, etc.). Occurring after the long neglect of the law in the ungodly reigns of Manasseh and Amon, it made a profound impression upon both king and people, who bound themselves by public covenant to adhere to its requirements. It stimulated and gave direction to the reformatory measures which made this reign notable.

It led to the complete abolition, for the time, of idolatry and the worship on high places, and recalled Judah to the pure worship of Jehovah. The influence thence resulting, powerfully seconded, as it was, by the labors of contemporary prophets, such as Jeremiah and others, was the last effort, so to speak, to save Judah from degeneracy, the kingdom from overthrow, the land from desolation, and the people from exile. The effort proved unsuccessful. The death of good King Josiah was followed by a relapse under his ungodly successors, which precipitated the ruin which had long been impending.

A factitious importance of another sort has, in recent times, been given to the finding of the book of the law by unbelieving critics, who allege that this marks the origin of the law itself, which they claim was never heard of before this time. De Wette, in his earliest production in the beginning of this century, is credited with having invented the notion that Deuteronomy was the book of the law found in the temple, and that it had no existence prior to the reign of Josiah. The Pentateuch was then first completed by the addition of this its closing book. The most recent school of critics, led by Reuss, Graff, and Wellhausen, have, however, gone far beyond this. Accepting De Wette's conclusion that Deuteronomy belongs to the days of Josiah, they maintain that the major portion of the Pentateuch was not even then in existence; but that what we denominate the Priest Code, embracing the whole of Leviticus, together with portions of Exodus and Numbers, was not written until after the Babylonish exile, when it was first brought forward by Ezra, and the people were pledged to obey it.

The allegation is that the book of Deuteronomy is a

pious fraud prepared with good intent by the best men of the nation. They were convinced by the experience of the past that idolatry could not be thoroughly extirpated, and the religion of Jehovah be maintained in its purity, so long as the worship on high places was suffered to remain. It was, they claim, the ancient, and, previous to this, the universally approved, custom to establish sanctuaries and altars to Jehovah in every part of the land. This had been the usage of the patriarchs, and no one had ever thought of regarding it as unlawful. But in the sanctuaries remote from the capital, and subject to no effective supervision, idolatrous emblems came to be introduced, and degrading forms of worship. And the various attempts which had been made to purge out idolatry from the high places, and to rectify the worship celebrated there, proved abortive. They were so numerous and scattered so widely that they could not be kept under proper control. Hence the most enlightened men of the nation, particularly the priests and the prophets, felt it to be necessary to restrict sacrificial worship to one central altar, that of the temple in Jerusalem; and to accomplish this end the Deuteronomic code was drawn up. To give it the highest sanction and authority, it was prepared in the name of Moses, and in the form of a parting address to the children of Israel just prior to their entrance into Canaan. In order to bring it to the attention of the king, and gain his influence in its favor, Hilkiah, the high-priest, was to represent that it had been found in the temple while repairs were going forward there. The king sent to Huldah, the prophetess, to inquire about it; but she was in the secret, and gave a response in its favor. Thus the support of the young and impressive king was obtained, and the code was enforced with all the weight of the royal authority.

But this is all a sheer invention of the critics, and has not the slightest foundation in the historical narrative. It is directly in the face of what both Kings and Chronicles explicitly record, which give no suggestion of a plot or a forgery, but simply of the finding of the book of the law, which is spoken of as a well-known volume upon the very first mention of it (2 Kings 22: 8), which their fathers should have obeyed, but did not (v. 13), and which is further called the law of Moses (2 Kings 23: 25).

The charge of forgery against such men as the high-priest and the prophets of the period is gratuitous and preposterous. The inherent impossibility of the case is not relieved by the attempt to show that it was a well-understood legal fiction, or that literary property was not regarded then as it is now. Truth and honesty have not changed their meaning. That a fraud could be concocted by truly good men from love to a holy God, and to promote his pure worship, is inconceivable. And that a man like Jeremiah, who makes frequent use of Deuteronomy, should have connived at and favored such a fraud, is quite incredible.

If the parties concerned had been bad enough to attempt such a fraud, it would have been impracticable. A previously unheard-of body of laws could not be thus suddenly imposed upon a people as one that had been in force ever since the days of Moses; especially if designed, as is alleged, to make an entirely new departure, to forbid what had always been freely practised, and enjoin what had never been required before. Every man in the nation would know that no such law existed before, and that it could not possibly be what it professed to be.

And this is still more evidently the case inasmuch as this alleged innovation was opposed to the interests of a powerful class, and contrary to deep-seated feelings of the mass of the people. All the priests and Levites, who ministered at the numerous sanctuaries which the critics suppose to have existed in every town and neighborhood throughout the country, were thus suddenly thrown out of occupation, deprived of their means of subsistence, and reduced to a vagrant, impoverished, and dependent class. Even the priests at Jerusalem, who might be thought to derive advantage from the closing of all other sanctuaries and the concentration of all sacrifices at the temple, could not be expected to welcome the admission of all the priests thus thrown out of occupation to equal rights with themselves, as Deuteronomy 18: 6, 7 is interpreted to mean. This, according to 2 Kings 23: 9, was not allowed, which is of itself conclusive, according to Dr. Robertson Smith, "that the code did not emanate from Hilkiah and the Zadokite priests." It must also have been a great shock to the deepest religious feelings of the people, who had been accustomed to bring their offerings, as often as devotion prompted, to sanctuaries that were easily accessible from their homes, to be required to desert these sacred spots, many of which had been hallowed even from the days of the patriarchs, and to be obliged to make long pilgrimages to the capital whenever they would pay their adoration. This surely

would never be submitted to at the bidding of a supposititious code. If such changes were necessary, the only way to effect them would be by a code honestly prepared and issued by competent authority.

It is still further impossible to believe that a book which had such an unworthy origin could ever have been admitted to a place in the inspired word of God, or could have been recognized by the Lord Jesus Christ as of divine authority, and as the production of Moses.

Many even of those critics who deny the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy, are ashamed of the baseless charge of forgery, and confess that there could have been no intention of fraud in the case. And that the book could not have been honestly produced in the reign of Josiah, is plain from its explicit claim to have been written by Moses (Deut. 31: 24), and to be composed of addresses delivered by him to the people in the plains of Moab, with which its entire tenor and contents agree. Much that it contains would be antiquated and inappropriate in the time of Josiah, as the command to extirpate the Canaanites (Deut. 7: 2; 20: 17) and Amalekites (Deut. 25: 19), who had long before ceased to exist; the preference shown to Edomites above Ammonites and Moabites (Deut. 23: 3, 7), directly contrary to Jeremiah 46: 47; 49: 6, who promises a restoration to Ammon and Moab, but none to Edom. A law regulating wars of foreign conquest (Deut. 20: 10-15) would be absurd when Israel could not maintain itself at home. The prohibition to make a foreigner king, or to lead the people back to Egypt (Deut. 17: 15, 16), sounds strangely at a time when no one could have thought of such a thing. The frequent inculcation of duties by the remembrance of Israel's condition in Egypt (Deut. 10: 19, etc.) was natural and appropriate in the days of Moses, but not eight centuries afterward.

The profound impression made upon the mind of the young King Josiah by the reading of the book (2 Kings 22: 11) does not prove that its contents were entirely unknown to him before. If this had been the case, his suspicion would naturally have been awakened, and he would have given little credence to the book so mysteriously found. It was his previous knowledge of its general purport and its divine authority, which made its denunciations now read to him so startling. And Josiah had begun his reforms and his removal of high places six years before the book was found (2 Chron. 34: 3).

The critical hypothesis of the late date of the book of Deuteronomy stands opposed to all the evidence, internal and external, by which its Mosaic origin may be established. Here is a connected chain of historical testimony to the existence of the book of the law reaching back from the days of Josiah to those of Moses. Hezekiah kept the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses (2 Kings 18: 6). The ten tribes did not observe the law which Jehovah commanded their fathers (2 Kings 17: 13), and which is expressly declared to have been a written law (v. 37). The book of the law of Moses was obeyed in the reign of Amaziah (2 Kings 14: 6; comp. Deut. 24: 16). It was transgressed by Jehu (2 Kings 10: 31). It was commended by David to Solomon (1 Kings 2: 3; 2 Kings 21: 7, 8). It is spoken of in the time of the judges (Judg. 3: 4). It was possessed by Joshua (Josh. 1: 7; 24: 26), who solemnly charged Israel to obey it (Josh. 8: 31 ff.; 22: 5). And the law of the unity of the sanctuary (Deut. 12) is not only that by which Hezekiah was governed in his abolition of high places (2 Kings 18: 4) a century before the finding of the book in the temple, but it can be shown to have been the law from the time of Israel's first settlement of Canaan. Every departure from it was either a willful violation of known law, or is capable of satisfactory explanation from the peculiar circumstances of the case.

While the discovery of the book of the law in the temple casts no suspicion upon its genuineness or Mosaic authorship, there is also no reason to doubt that this book contained, in addition to Deuteronomy, all the rest of the Pentateuch. Deuteronomy is based upon and presupposes both the history and the legislation of the preceding books. It does not repeat in detail all the ritual prescriptions, because it is addressed to the people at large, and not to the priests who were charged with conducting the ceremonial. Yet its law of clean and unclean animals (Deut. 14) is drawn directly from Leviticus 11. It makes explicit reference (Deut. 24: 8, 9) to the law of leprosy (Lev. 13 and 14). The permission to eat flesh in all their gates (Deut. 12: 15) plainly refers to the law restricting the slaying of animals to the tabernacle (Lev. 17: 3, 4), which it rescinds. Deuteronomy 18: 2 is quoted from Numbers 18: 20.

And there is abundant evidence of the existence of the ceremonial law long before Josiah. This appears from numerous allusions found in the earliest of the

prophets, Hosea and Amos, Micah and Isaiah. It appears also from the history. Solomon's temple was only a magnified Mosaic tabernacle, after which it was modeled throughout. The horns of the altar (1 Kings 1:50, 51; 2:28) imply that its construction corresponded to Exodus 27:2. The feast observed on the fifteenth day (1 Kings 12:32, 33) of the seventh month (1 Kings 8:2) agrees with Leviticus 23:34. The gradations in the sacerdotal order of high-priests (2 Kings 12:10; 22:4, 8), priests of the second order (2 Kings 23:4; 25:18), and Levites (1 Kings 8:4), are those of the Levitical law. Unleavened bread was the food of priests (2 Kings 23:9); mention is made of sin offerings and trespass offerings (2 Kings 12:16), the burnt offerings, meat offerings, and peace offerings (1 Kings 8:64), the daily sacrifice and the sprinkling of the blood (2 Kings 16:15), and the exclusion of the leper from the ordinary abodes of men (2 Kings 15:5).

Princeton, New Jersey.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.

BY THE REV. J. MAX HARK.

The custom of exchanging gifts of friendship and love at the holy Christmas season is, in itself, altogether beautiful and commendable. Nothing could be more appropriate than thus to symbolize and celebrate the advent of "peace on earth and good will to men" through the coming of God's best and most perfect gift into the world.

But even this beautiful custom can be, and has been, so abused as altogether to lose its true significance, and in so far its appropriateness and usefulness. It is true, this abuse was far greater, in some respects at least, in olden times, than at the present day. Christmas presents used to be almost wholly of a character to gratify and appeal to the grosser, merely physical, part of man. The fact that, of all seasons of the year, Christmas ought to be the one specially devoted to man's higher, spiritual nature, and that its celebration should particularly enlist this, and in every possible wise minister to it, in contradistinction to other more carnal festivals, was almost altogether lost sight of. A considerable improvement in this regard may indeed be noticed in our modern Christmas celebrations and Christmas presents; but by no means to the degree we could wish, and should have a right to expect. Much too large a proportion of the gifts exchanged still fall altogether short of the true Christian idea. Most of them still aim only at the gratification of the physical senses and bodily appetites. How few of them contribute to the instruction, edification, refinement, the growth and improvement of the spiritual nature. How few of them, therefore, in any true sense, represent, or call to mind, or are in line with, that supreme gift of God to the soul of man, the Christ-spirit, the eternal love and life and light of the world!

After more than eighteen centuries of Christian culture and growth in spirituality, ought we not to have more regard for real appropriateness and spiritual usefulness in this matter? In plain words, is it not about time that we stop making our presents only to one another's stomachs, and gratifying one another's vanity and love of material comforts and bodily luxury? Is it not time that, instead of merely cakes and candies and jewelry, and such like, we give also gifts that shall feed and adorn the mind and character?

It may be an idea not altogether easy to carry out in the face of prevalent customs and fashions. But it is not impossible. A good heart-reaching, soul-finding book, for instance, chosen with special reference to the spiritual needs of a friend, may not be as showy or stylish a present as a ring or a cane, a box of French candies or of cigars; but it will surely be more appropriate, and, accompanied by our earnest, loving prayers, it certainly will also be more truly useful and of lasting benefit; and if our friend be a sensible person, it will as certainly be appreciated. It is as much a token of love and esteem, but of a truer, wiser love. It is as serviceable as a memento, if that be desired; but of a kind more enduring far, calling us to the remembrance of our friend as often as it shall be read, and years after more perishable material gifts would have been eaten up, or worn out, and forgotten. And far more truly than these it is the expression of that spirit which Christ Jesus came to bring upon earth.

In our Sunday-schools, at least, we can and should discourage more and more the mere carnal observance of Christmas. For the enjoyment of the appetite we can substitute the higher, truer joy of the heart and noblest feelings. We ought to help our scholars get rid of the ignoble idea that Christmas is only, or mainly, a season

for "getting good things" for the stomach. Indeed, they should be assisted to rise above the expectation of mere getting altogether, and made to realize practically that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Their attention should be fixed on the goodness of giving,—giving gifts, bringing happiness and joy, to others, and so receiving the reflex pleasure, the truest Christmas joy, into their hearts.

This, too, can be done, and easily done. I have in mind a Sunday-school where it was tried for the first time last Christmas. The scholars had their attention drawn away from the expectation of the usual gifts to be received, by having a plan proposed to them which at once aroused a wholesome and entirely unselfish interest. "Instead of thinking of what we are to get this year," the superintendent said to them one day, "let us think what we shall give to some of the hundreds in our city to whom Christmas brings but little of comfort and cheer. How many of you will bring here, on Christmas Day, some offering, however small, to be given to the inmates of the Home for Friendless Children,—something to make those little waifs happy?" A hundred hands went up. An eager party assembled on the appointed day, leaving their warm and cosy homes and bright Christmas trees to bring their gifts for the homeless and needy. A happier band was never seen than they, as through the snow they marched, fully a mile, to distribute their gifts in person to the friendless children. Nor were they content with this. In a body they went still farther,—to the County Hospital. Its inmates who were able were called together in the wide corridors, and there again gifts were distributed. And, better than all, the scholars sang some of their glad carols there to ears and hearts that were all too unused to such sweetness of melody, and to hear the old, old story from such bright messengers of the heavenly Christ-child. Ah, few were the eyes that were dry during that visit! Many a singer's voice, too, quivered and faltered! The sight was a touching, melting one. It was a new kind of Christmas joy to many, all too hallowed and deep for mere laughter; a sanctifying, uplifting joy, such as made that Christmas Day the happiest and most truly blessed those scholars had ever enjoyed. Not one of them, I know, will this year think of getting, but all are already planning to give,—to give another such visit to the poor and the outcast, to bring them the message the angels first brought from the clouds o'er Bethlehem's hills.

Was not that a worthier Christmas present than any candy or oranges could be? I mean the present those scholars themselves received. They were given into their hearts the true Christ-spirit, unselfish sympathy, charity, helpfulness, love for others, even for the least of the Saviour's brethren on earth. And with these sentiments came their invariable accompaniments: a deep happiness and pure pleasure, the blessedness of well-doing; a holy Christmas joy took possession of their souls, more precious and purifying, more spiritual, lasting, and more heavenly, than all the richest material gifts in the world could ever have imparted.

Christmas presents can, therefore, be spiritualized. It has been done. No doubt it can and has been done in a hundred other ways than those described. So much the better. Then let it be done again, more and more. Let our Sunday-schools take the lead; the rest of the world will follow.

A STRAY ARROW.

BY MRS. E. N. COLLIER.

Many years ago, a book called "Stray Arrows," written by the Rev. T. L. Cuyler, was brought into my childhood's home. An older sister, now at rest in our heavenly Father's house, read and re-read it so often, that I, though rather averse to religious literature then, was induced to do so too. I cannot now recall one word or idea in that book, but its title has always lingered in my memory, and now suggests a title for my own use, though the incident I am about to relate may not bear any relation to the contents of the book.

More than twenty years ago, a Christian woman, in the city where I live, was sitting in her home, reading and explaining God's Word to a young girl in her employ. It was summer, and the window of the room, outside which a man was engaged in painting the house, was open. "The wind bloweth where it listeth;" and, unknown to Mrs. W—, her words, dictated by the Spirit of God, were carried to his unwilling ears. He was an unbeliever, and had cast aside his Bible, but his curiosity was excited by what he heard; and he decided that when he had an opportunity he would search the Scriptures to find out if her words were true.

The reading ceased. the women left the room. the

painter finished his work, and took up in his home his long-neglected Bible. I do not know if he and Mrs. W— ever met again. At all events, she never knew that she had had any other listener, that summer afternoon, except her young servant. The latter soon returned to Ireland, and those in this country who were interested in her have had no opportunity of learning whether the seed sown in her heart ever bore fruit.

A few years since, Mrs. W— rested from her labors, leaving behind her blessed memories of a life-long service of Christ. About two or three years ago, a near relative of hers, a minister of the gospel, while staying for a short time in Brooklyn, was called upon to visit a sick man, whose own pastor was probably absent from the city. While conversing with reference to the man's preparation for death, the minister drew from him, in response to inquiries, the above particulars. "God's word had not returned to him void," when taught by his faithful servant, even if the one for whose benefit she had intended it may have turned a deaf ear to it. The painter, who lay dying in the city to which he had removed shortly after his work on that house was finished, in the course of his Bible study, undertaken at first from curiosity, had found Christ, and was now going to be with him. And, after these "many days," God's providence had led to his death-bed one who had the privilege of relating to the surviving children this story of the fruit that had sprung from seed sown by their mother, now in heaven.

I think that all who, like Mrs. W—, sow in faith "beside all waters," will find in the other life many unexpected results of such labors. Many arrows of truth which we send off, we think, with such precision of aim that they cannot fail of success, seem to miss the mark, and we fancy they are lost. But God's aim is better than ours, and he may have directed them where they will do sure execution for him.

There are oftentimes listeners unnoticed or unregarded by us, who, like that painter, may be drinking in truths which we think are utterly thrown away on those to whom they are directly addressed. I have often seen children in Sunday-school (whose teacher was engaged in ordinary conversation with his class) bending forward to listen to words spoken by neighboring teachers, whose own scholars were seemingly paying little attention to them. Who knows but that these words were heaven-directed arrows whose influence will never be unfolded till teacher and child meet in the other world.

Thank God for the glad surprises which await his children there!

MOUNTAIN HEIGHTS.

BY WILLIAM H. HAYNE.

On mountain heights the morning mist
Bestows pure grace and quiet;
As if to guard their lofty life
From worldly care or riot.

So high are they I almost dream
That God's decree was given
To keep all mountain summits near
The sacred gates of Heaven.

WHAT WILL POOR ROBIN DO THEN?

BY MRS. P. TRIPLE.

Winter, I suppose, is fairly upon us. The public road is as white and unsullied this morning as the sheet of paper on which I write; and the sheep-paths, which wind around and over the hills, look like fairy trails that lead to sylvan grottoes.

Now we ask, in sober earnest, What will poor robin do? We have haply not many poor among us; still there are destitutions which may do one's heart good to relieve. That colored family across the road and over the hill, in that tumble-down log-cabin, has six in it; and here comes tapping a little orphaned one that must be squeezed in after some fashion, for there is no place else for her. When you see her out, she has a large white sun-bonnet on, reaching to the hem of her dress, and looking as if she might have formed an original for some caricatures in our magazines, or one of Kate Greenaway's sketches. It will not do for her to wear it through the winter; it would catch and hold all the wind that passes over some of these mountain-spurs. How shall we contrive to get a close hood for her? She goes to Sunday-school, too, in an old basque, her only wrapping,—perhaps her dead mother's,—the sleeves of which are turned up to the elbows, that her hands may peep out.

A thought has struck me! That medicated red flannel shirt, left here by the pale student, is nearly as good as new,—only a little thin at the elbows,—and almost as bright in color as ever. It will, with skill in cutting and