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EDITORIAL NOTES.

The center and soul of all human history is Jesus Christ. No adequate explanation of the events that happen in this world can be made if Jesus is left out of the reckoning. In man's attitude and relation to Jesus Christ will be found the key to solve all the problems that now puzzle us in connection with events of history. Opposition to Him and to His will results in ultimate failure and loss. Obedience to His will may bring us into temporary losses and distresses, but it will lead us finally into the fulness of His joy.

The true Christian should cultivate a passionate and absorbing ambition to be like Jesus Christ in thought, word and deed. He will strive always to do the will of God in serving others. He will manifest before the world Christian courage and patience. In utter self-forgetfulness, in confident faith and in consuming zeal he will abide continually in the love of God and cultivate the sincerest abhorrence of sin.

In many homes throughout our land mothers and fathers are anxiously thinking of the time when their sons may be called for service in the army. A Presbyterian woman, anxious that these boys and men may gain a knowledge of the way of salvation if they have not already found it, has suggested that a copy of the Shorter Catechism be placed in the hands of as many as possible. The Shorter Catechism presents in brief form the essential doctrines of God's Word. Every boy who goes forth from a Presbyterian home ought to carry this brief compendium of Gospel truth with him and meditate on it. Of course, a New Testament or a Bible should form a part of the equipment of every boy or man who goes forth to battle. To supply these is a work that may be done by churches or individuals, and is worthy of the serious thought and effort of all Christian people.

An abstract of the annual report of the Executive Committee of Christian Education and Ministerial Relief is published on page 6 of this issue. In the varied phases of the work of this Committee unprecedented progress has been achieved during the past year. There was an increase of more than \$5,000 in the amount remitted to the beneficiaries of the funds of Ministerial Relief, and yet the average assistance to each of the two hundred and sixty-three families on the roll was only about two hundred dollars a year, or fifty-five cents a day for each family. The Endowment Fund is now \$543,651.53, and the Assembly has urged that it be made \$1,000,000. Nothing short of this will adequately meet the need. A final report is made of the affairs of the former "Assembly's Home and School" at Fredericksburg, Virginia.

The topic for study and prayer in the missionary societies of our Church during the month of May is "General View of the Field." This subject is chosen in order that the annual report of the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions, which will be ready early in May, may be given careful study throughout all the churches. A valuable pamphlet has

been issued by the educational department of the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions, Nashville, Tennessee, bearing the title, "The Seven," which gives facts and figures from the annual report, for the year ending March 31, 1917, about our work in Africa, Brazil, China, Cuba, Japan, Korea and Mexico. This shows the total population of our foreign fields as 31,846,127 (estimated). The number of missionaries or foreign workers is 377, and the number of their children 283. There are 894 native workers and 160 earnest congregations with a membership of 38,169 communicants. The number of additions to the Church in foreign fields for the past year was 5,256, the largest ever reported in any single year. Two hundred and five natives are now students for the ministry. The number of communicants has grown in ten years from 10,824 to the present number, 38,169.

For the convenience of our subscribers we send from time to time statements of account printed on the inside of an envelop. These statements save the subscriber the labor of writing a letter. It is only necessary for him to enclose money order or check, fold and seal the flaps, and mail his remittance, and he will receive the correct credit. With this issue statements are sent to many who have not paid in advance.

Christian work laid down by hundreds of men who have gone into the national guard or into the ranks of the nation's army and navy must be carried on by earnest workers who volunteer to take their places. A stirring call has been sent out by the Seabury Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church, of New York, and Presbyterian laymen of that city, who insist that Christian workers who go to the front must have assurance that their work at home will be carried on. In England when workers in the churches went to war, others came forward and were trained as substitutes. Something of the same thing has happened in France, Italy, and even in Russia. America's Christian work and benevolence must not fall off, but rather increase. "A Church Laymen's Recruiting Week" has been called for May 20-27. In the call for this meeting are these heroic words: "The calamity of war must be turned into a blessing by teaching the laymen of American church pews that work for Christ and men is God's scientific prescription for love of Christ and men."

Throughout all the Evangelical Churches there is greater interest in tithing as a solution of church and missionary problems of finance than at any time during the past century. Voluntary agreements to tithe all one's income are being made in many churches. An organization known as the "America Tithers' Union" is enrolling in its membership the names of those who are willing to sign an agreement to tithe regularly. This agreement includes the following statement: "Believing that I am accountable as a steward to God only, I reserve the right to decide as to the objects to which my tithe shall be devoted." The Union desires to lay the foundation for the ultimate enrollment of all tithe payers in the United States and Canada. Application for membership in the Union and free literature on the tithe can be secured from "The Layman Company,"

Not new opinion, but renewed devotion to known duty, is what is needed for the impoverished life of a professed disciple of Christ. This is what was meant by the Old Testament prophet who said: "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

Home Circle.

For the Christian Observer.

Chinese Courtship.

BY LETTIE TAYLOR GRAFTON.

"Good-a-afternoon-a."

Even before I looked up I recognized from the voice that one of the boys of the English class was accosting me. I replied, "Good afternoon," and he said, "Where Mees-ter Grafton?"

"He is not at home, can I do anything for you?" Whereupon he left his English, and in Chinese said:

"I have a little business I should like to speak to you about if you have time." I invited him into the sitting room, feeling sure I knew his "little business" without being told.

Do you wonder how I felt so sure I knew what he had come to talk over? He was one of the six older boys of the Orphanage, and he was the third one who had come during the last few days to ask that a wife should be spoken for him from among our girls.

I have heard "In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love," but all signs fail when there are twenty odd boys to get wives and only twelve girls. Whenever a half-way opportunity opens, it is taken advantage of, and either Mr. Grafton or myself are used as a middle man to do the courting. Mr. Grafton enjoys it hugely and enters into the thing with a zest, but I try to avoid these boys when they "would a courting go."

They have such a round-about way of opening up the matter and you can't help them out because they fondly imagine you are in the dark as to their errand. One boy for instance came in and talked about half an hour, and finally said:

"I have just had a letter from my mother in which she said now that I was nineteen years old and her only son, she was very anxious about my future, and that unless some arrangement was made by you (Mr. Grafton) she would feel compelled to look around for a suitable wife for me. What is your idea for me?"

Mr. Grafton asked, "What is your idea?"

"Oh, I am willing to do just as you say. Of course I cannot decide this matter, and it is entirely in your hands. But I should not care to enter into an engagement with any one not a Christian, and one of our own girls would be most desirable."

"Now, then, which girl would you suggest?" asked Mr. Grafton. Whereupon the young man became confused and giggled out:

"That I leave to you." Then it was decided that Mr. Grafton should gently mention the matter to one or two girls, a-la John Alden. Next day chancing to meet one of the girls in the school yard, he said to her:

"Big sister, are your affairs entirely in my hands to decide?"

Instantly she turned her back and hung her head and said in a whisper almost, "Yes."

"How would Dr. Morgan's hospital boy do?"

"What, the boy with one blind eye? No!" Nothing more to be said to that girl, so he mentally folds up that mitten and puts it in his pocket. Shortly afterwards a teacher girl comes for some information, so he makes another venture.

"Big sister, may I mention your engagement to you?" This big sister looks him squarely in the eye and says:

"I do not want to have a mother-in-law. I prefer to stay here and teach." A pair of mittens you see! And so the next day when the boy came to get any news, he did not seem at all downcast when he heard two of the twelve had declined his suit. What does it matter to him if these two have said no? He has had another in mind all the time, and now is his chance, so he said,

"Other people have been saying

Wang big sister would make a good wife—I don't dare to suggest, but others are suggesting her."

"Ah," said Mr. Grafton, "she's the one you want. Well she's a mighty nice girl and will make a good wife. I'll ask her."

"Thank you so much," and his face showed he was satisfied. As he was about to leave he bowed most deferentially and said, "If you would attend to this matter at once I would be obliged."

The following day Wang big sister was seen and she replied "Yes," and added, "The sooner it is arranged the better; people are talking of us."

Happy young man. His engagement is settled, and all there is left to be done is to write the contract, a copy of which each must have. When Mr. Grafton asked if he preferred this written in Chinese or English the reply was, "Please-a-write English words."

Here is the contract which they signed:

The Betrothal Document.

From earliest times man has been a creature of many needs. He has ever been in need of the sun to lighten and warm him. He has needed walls and roof to screen him from the rains and wintry breezes. He has needed food to strengthen him and clothing to warm him. He has needed education for his mind and religion for the comfort of his soul.

These blessings all men and women have enjoyed to more or less extent. But should it have befallen any one man to attain unto the maximum allotment of any of these he could not say, "I am satisfied," for there would be still one unfilled want, one hunger as yet unsatisfied—the desire of companionship and sympathy in his daily life.

When Adam gazed on Paradise what rapture met his gaze! Even the Creator stamped His approval upon all, for we are told that God saw that all was good.

Yet in the midst of this perfection God saw one thing that was still not good, one thing yet unfinished. So after the rest of the Sabbath he set himself to complete His work, and who will deny that His supplementary production was the greatest of all? For He created woman and gave her to the man.

Since that great day in the heart of every one of the descendants of our foreparents is planted a desire to live as they lived—in companionship of a congenial soul.

Happy marriages are made in Heaven. And he who even has had the pleasure of anticipation of marriage is blessed with a preliminary conception of the delights of Heaven.

So it is with hearts that beat high, and hopes that spring joyously in our breasts that we, the undersigned, man and woman,

Do hereby enter into betrothal agreement.

We ask our friends to rejoice with us even as we rejoice, and some of the nearest and dearest are requested to sign their names in witness of the testament this day executed.

Witnesses—

You know the Chinese custom does not allow the engaged couple to speak to each other or even be seen by the other, but western customs are being introduced among the Chinese, and so when one of our boys had completed his marriage arrangement with one of our girls he asked if he might talk with her. We agreed, provided they would come to our study. So the following day at a fixed hour the girl came chaperoned and the boy came a few minutes later. Tea was served them in the study, and what they said,



GARDENS.

BY MATTIE LEE HAUSGEN.

Some people work in their back yard
With spade and rake and hoe, so hard!
Then seeds come up—a very few.
I raise things in my back yard, too,
But these three crops my time employ:
Some chicks, a pup, and my small boy!

or if anything was said, deponent saith not. I had to go into the room once and a more embarrassed looking couple I never saw, and I suspect little enough was said.

When we began the Orphanage with over one hundred children they had to have all sorts of things done for them—nursed when they were sick, fed and clothed, taught and chastised, and it was no easy thing, but all that sinks into insignificance compared to mating them for life. This is a responsibility, I candidly admit, I shirk.

Chinese mothers weep when daughters are born, and they weep when they see a daughter enter the bride's chair to go to her mother-in-law, and they rejoice when they have engaged their last girl, and I must say I am Chinesey enough to say I will indeed be glad when our orphanage girls are all married, as well as when all our boys have secured wives.

Haichow, China.

THE MINISTER'S SON.

No matter where we travel, we find the general sentiment that ministers' sons are fated for a bad end. Perhaps this is due to the desire of humanity to see all things assume a final balance, and when the minister is so worthy and immaculate of conduct, it is probably natural that his son should fall correspondingly below the standard. Yet if one cares to go into the history of the affairs of this country, says the Philadelphia "Ledger," one will unearth a vast array of individuals who were ministers' sons, but nevertheless made a mark of considerable brightness in the world. Instead of furnishing the nation with a galaxy of scalliwags, if we are to credit the account, the clergy have made of their sons men of distinction and so small prestige. We are told:

"Who's Who" shows that one-twelfth of all the men whose biographies appear there are sons of clergymen. England's "Dictionary of Biography" reveals an even greater preponderance of clerical forebears of noted men.

Sons of clergymen are nearly double the number of sons of lawyers and physicians combined.

Who in American history were the sons of preachers?

Of famous writers there stand Emerson, Holmes, Lowell, Bancroft, Parkman, Sloan, Gilder, and Henry James.

In politics the answer to the roll-call is equally impressive. Sons of ministers include Henry Clay, President Buchanan, President Arthur, Senator Quay, Senator Beveridge, Senator Dolliver, President Cleveland, President Wilson, and Justice Hughes.

Then there is the immortal Field family, embracing Cyrus W., who laid the first Atlantic cable; David Dudley, the renowned lawyer, and Stephen J., the United States Supreme Court justice.

Agassiz, and Samuel F. Morse, inventor of the telegraph, and Mergenthaler, inventor of the linotype

machine, were sons of clergymen.

The list is inexhaustible, and in it blaze such names as Oliver Goldsmith; Linnaeus, the naturalist; Jenner, the father of vaccination for smallpox; Ben Johnson, the poet Cowper, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Charles Spurgeon, Lyman Abbott, and Addison.

Instead of being amiable vagabonds, the sons of clergymen come pretty close to the rank of top-notchers in every field of human progress.

For the Christian Observer.

"THE LEAGUE OF THE KINDLY TONGUE."

Twenty thousand persons in thirty-nine states, the District of Columbia, Canada, Russia, and far away India are striving to make this old world a little bit better, a little more happy, by joining the "League of the Kindly Tongue" which is now celebrating its third anniversary.

The League of the Kindly Tongue is unique. It has no officers, no dues, no meetings, and no constitution. Yet, as one member says, "it is helping to make America and the world another Garden of Eden."

The League was founded in 1914 as a result of a kind word said to the founder, Rev. W. D. Marsh, of Appleton, Wisconsin, by a lady who wished to encourage him in his work. It was established shortly afterward, and within three years the membership has extended to between 20,000 and 25,000 members.

If you have not yet joined, enroll. If you were a member, your friends would be stronger, happier, sweeter men and women. Membership is free and chapters may be founded anywhere. No attempt is made by the founder, Dr. Marsh, to make money from the organization. Its purpose is altruistic entirely, to keep people from gossip, scandal, deceit, evil speaking, harsh criticism, uncharitable speech; to fill the lips with kind and helpful words; and to encourage every one to radiate the spirit of love and good cheer. Membership cards printed in gold for signing the pledge of kindly speech may be obtained from the founder at one cent each, or they will be sent free to any who ask for them. Address Rev. W. D. Marsh, Appleton, Wis.

NOT ONE CENT.

One of our pastors who worked up the envelope system with great care was astonished and grieved to have several men return the lists of objects with this comment opposite the item of foreign missions: "Not one cent." That such persons may realize the actual significance of their words, let us state their position in detail. What it involves is this:

Not one cent for saving a soul outside of the United States.

Not one cent for giving the Bible to other nations.

Not one cent for revealing a God of love except to Americans.

Not one cent for making Christ known as a Saviour of all mankind.