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CONTENTS.

EDITORIAL:	
Notes.—Child before Man. Praise Rarer than Blame. Our Days. Looking Out for Others. Large Tales in Small Mistakes. Strength through Weakness.	17
NOTES ON OPEN LETTERS:	
Luther's Estimate of the Epistle of James. The Object of Sunday-School Teaching.	18
FROM CONTRIBUTORS:	
"No More Sea" [poem]. By Mary Rollins Murphy.	18
The Watershed of Life. By Hugh Macmillan, D.D., LL.D.	18
The Deluge and the Ark. By Professor Robert Ellis Thompson.	19
What They Thought of It. By the Rev. Willis S. Hinman.	20
A Child's Thankfulness. By Jeanie DeF. Junkin.	20
The Conquest of the Worst. By H. E. A.	20
FOR CHILDREN AT HOME:	
The Pattern [poem]. By S. F. D.	21
The Squirrel's Lesson. By Cora Stuart Wheeler.	21
LESSON HELPS:	
Lesson Calendar.	22
Outline Inductive Studies.	22
[Lesson IV. January 28. God's Covenant with Noah. Gen. 9: 8-17.]	
Lesson Text.	22
Lesson Plan.	22
Lesson Analysis.	22
Lesson Bible Reading.	22
Lesson Surroundings and Critical Notes. By Professor Willis J. Beecher, D.D.	22
The Lesson Story. By Cunningham Gelkie, D.D., LL.D.	23
The Sign for Man and the Remembrancer for God. By Alexander McLaren, D.D.	24
Teaching Points. By Bishop H. W. Warren, D.D.	24
Illustrative Applications. By H. Clay Trumbull.	24
Teaching Hints. By A. F. Schaffner, D.D.	25
Hints for the Intermediate Teacher. By Falth Latimer.	25
Hints for the Primary Teacher. By Roxana Beecher Preuszner.	25
Oriental Lesson-Lights. By H. B. Tristram, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S., and the Rev. William Ewing.	26
Question Hints. By Amos R. Wells.	26
Blackboard Hints.	26
Hints for Lesson-Hymns.	26
Lesson Summary.	26
WORK AND WORKERS:	
Mission Work Among Jews in London. By the Rev. William Hurll.	27
WAYS OF WORKING:	
Bible-Class Work Separate from the Sunday-School.	27
BOOKS AND WRITERS:	
Recent Biography.	28
An Answer to the Question "What is Poetry?" Phillips Brooks's Poems. Voodoo Tales. The Classic Myths in English Literature. The Book of Elegies. For the Fourth Time of Asking.	28
LITERARY NOTES AND NEWS:	
Death of Professor Milligan. Prayers for Jewish Children. Polyglot Journals.	29
WORTH REPEATING:	
Room for the Noble [poem].	30
Rise and Fall of Philosophies.	30

Being must precede becoming. The only right way to take the future into account is to have a right present. Rousseau thought it worth while to proclaim the truth that "Nature requires children to be children before they are men." This is so obvious that we are prone to forget it. It is a sad lot for a man never to have had a childhood, or for a child to be without one. It is the real child that stands the best chance of being a real man.

Praise for well-doing is more rare, but not less important than blame for doing ill. The average parent is likelier to check a child when he does wrong than to commend him when he does right. So, all the way along in life, he who does as he ought to do is not sure to hear from it, while he who makes a slip of any kind is pretty sure to be reminded of the fact. An

editor, as he sends out, week by week, the paper on which he has labored earnestly, knows that ten readers will write to him about the errors which they note, where one will write a kindly line in recognition of his care at other points. The knowledge that one's faults and mistakes are sure to attract attention, keeps a man on the alert to do his best; but the occasional word of appreciation and praise from generous-minded observers, helps and cheers him in his ceaseless struggle.

The new year leads us to pray, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." They are *our* days. It is true we have not worked for them, or earned them. They have been given us, and thus become part of our lives. Time does not lie around loose, that whoso will may pick it up. Like every other possession, our years are a talent to be accounted for to the Giver. To make this the easier, time is given us but a moment at once, that we may dispose wisely of that before another comes. So the single life well lived is a well-sustained melody, one note at a time, and each note being right because the singer is not taking thought for those that are to follow, but giving his mind to that which is to be rendered now. The harmony comes from the divine Tone-master adjusting these several strains into a musical unity beyond our power to create, but fitted to give us unceasing delight.

Looking out for others is essential to being one's self. A man cannot be himself without recognizing his relations to others. This is as true in little things as in great. The man who forgets that others have rights on the sidewalk, or in the doorway, or in the street-car, or in the church or public hall, where he finds himself just then, forgets to be himself as a true man. No man can properly fill his place without confining himself to his place. The man who in a crowded street carries his umbrella or his silver-headed cane under his arm, with two or three feet of its length sticking out behind into the faces of men and women who are so unfortunate as to be within that distance of him, is as much of a boor, even though he be faultlessly dressed, as a house-painter who walks the same street with a twenty-foot ladder on his shoulder and a pot of paint hanging at the end of it. So, again, in walking, or standing, or sitting, the man who does not think of others, and have a care to give them their rights, is not giving proper attention to himself, or being the man he ought to be.

Small mistakes sometimes tell large tales. That which to the ignorant appears like learning, easily shows itself as ignorance to the learned. "If I didn't pronounce Rio Grande in the Spanish way," said a sciolist, "my friends would think I didn't know any better." "Well," answered the scholar, who was advocating the Anglicized pronunciation for Americans, "you *don't* know any better." And so with a very large proportion of those who would seem sufficiently literate and cultivated to write for the press. They would impress the editors with their facility in the marks of professional accomplishment. They would not send "a manuscript," but an

MSS, or an M.S.S., or an MS.S., or even an MM.S., or Mms. It is almost as rare to find such writers sending an MS. as "a manuscript." And, again, it is not uncommon to find handsomely printed books, pamphlets, circulars, etc., by, or about, an L. L. D. One "S" or one "M" too many, or one surplus period, is a small mistake with a large significance. Upon what principle are such abbreviations constructed? How much is there to know about such symbols? Evidently they are dangerous tools in the hands of the inexpert. No one can expect to use them safely, and to carve a writer's fortune with them, unless he is willing to study out what such signs stand for, and how. Success is not to be attained in literature or scholarship, any more than in any other walk of life, by relying upon seeming to know what one does not know.

STRENGTH THROUGH WEAKNESS.

Strength and weakness stand over against each other in sharp contrast; the one seems inconsistent with the other: yet there is a sense in which strength may come through weakness, and weakness may become a cause of strength.

The Apostle Paul loves to speak in paradoxes, that is, in sharp, startling contrasts of the actualities of the spiritual life with the expectations we have acquired from our natural life. To him the two worlds are so different that at times it seems as if the laws which govern the one were exactly the reverse of those which control and constitute the other. Hence such a saying of his as "When I am weak, then am I strong."

In the natural life, strength and efficiency characterize well-poised, self-sufficient personalities, like Goethe or Napoleon. The growth of such personalities culminates in their discovery of their exceptional powers, when they suddenly realize that they are in the world of mankind as its leaders and masters. To each of them comes that hour when they find themselves and assume their place with a confidence born of the inward assurance of exceptional powers. Up to that moment there is something raw, crude, undeveloped, in their achievement. We feel the contrast between this and the ripe work of their prime, and while we feel a certain distinctive beauty in it—

that which sets

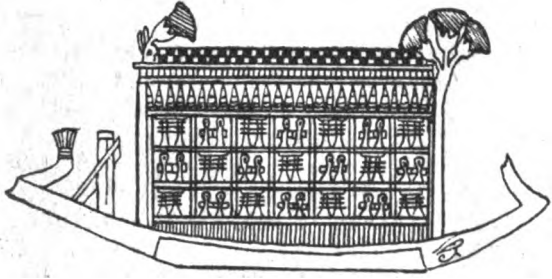
The budding rose above the rose full blown,

yet, after all, the full-blown rose is the crown and glory of the rose-bush.

This has been the natural development of lives whose whole scope of ambition lies within the earthly and the temporal,—who found empires, carve statues, or write poems, simply to command the attention and admiration of the generation whose life they share. Like all natural developments it has a beginning, a culmination, and a decay. It is not an eternal life, for it lays no grasp on that which cannot perish or decay. It is the life of the world-child (as Goethe defined himself), not that of the prophet or the seer or the saint. Its greatness is in a self-centered strength, which rests on no divine foundation, and seeks no help from a source above itself. And it passes away.

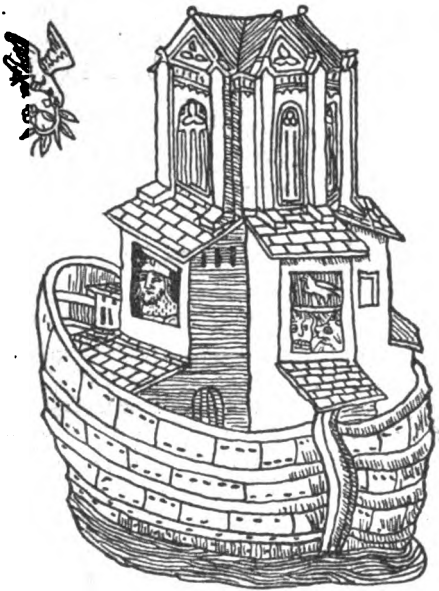
The life Paul was living when he wrote to the Corinthians "When I am weak, then am I strong,"

idea. The destruction of the earlier race of mankind, which we find vaguely indicated in their legends, was by fire, not by water. On the other hand, the word for "ark" (*aron*) is that used in Genesis 52: 26 for the chest or coffin containing an Egyptian mummy, and may have been a loan-word from the Egyptian. Now, it is notable that in the Egyptian funeral the mummy in its chest



Funeral ark, from Wilkinson's "Ancient Egyptians."

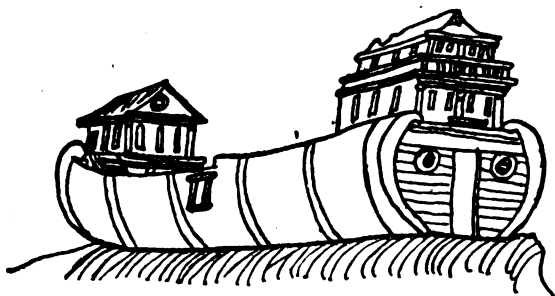
must be carried across water on its way to its final resting-place. In Thebes this was done by the carriage of the body from the city to the great necropolis across the Nile. In other cases, the burial-places were furnished with an artificial lake, like Lake Moeris, near Memphis, which was thus used. This usage, again, is associated with the story of Osiris, who was shut up in a box by his brother Set, flung into the Nile, and borne away by the river to what seemed his utter destruction, but proved finally his deliverance. So it would seem the bark or



From "Mer des Histoires," an anonymous French chronicle, probably of the sixteenth century.

ark of the mummy typified the deliverance of the dead man, or of all that the gods saw fit to save, from what seemed his destruction. A comparison of the Osiris bark with the latter attempts at depicting the ark of Noah, shows how much the one has influenced the other.

The Chinese traditions of the Deluge seem to be very old. They are found in the Shoo-King, which we have in the form given it six centuries before Christ. Here, also, the ark rests on the top of a great mountain, and the date B. C. 2597 is given. The traditions collected among the Karens of Burmah by the Baptist missionaries are so close in resemblance to the Bible story as to suggest a previous knowledge of its account. Less open to this suspicion is that of the Kohls in Hindostan. It ascribes the Flood to the wickedness of mankind, who would not work or wash themselves, but only dance and drink. The two survivors, a brother and sister, save themselves in a hollow tree, but the flood is one of fire. The rainbow is the sign that it will never recur.

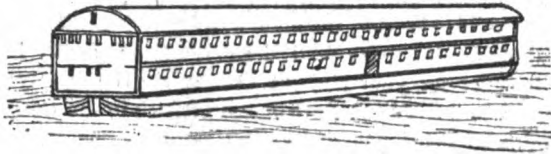


From the "Copper Bible," 1781.

The Finnish epic of the *Kalavapoeg* somewhat resembles Teutonic tradition. The giant Kaleva is borne across the flood in search for Mother Earth, whom the floods have hidden from him.

Similar traditions are found among the Indians and Esquimaux of America. Deluge traditions also have

been found among the negro and other tribes of western Africa.



From the "Copper Bible," 1781.

The common elements in nearly all traditions are the sinfulness of mankind, the divine warning of impending judgment, the rise and abatement of the flood, and the sacrifice offered at the coming out of the ark.

Philadelphia.

WHAT THEY THOUGHT OF IT.

BY THE REV. WILLIS S. HINMAN.

One man said: "How interested in his sermon the pastor was this morning! I wonder how many of us were as deeply impressed as he was." Another said: "I venture to say he prayed hard over that sermon before he preached it. I wonder if anybody will pray as much over it now as he did then?" One lady's enthusiasm led her to exclaim: "What a glorious sermon!—only he stopped too soon." Another, with a yawn, remarked: "What a long discourse our pastor preached to-day! I thought he would never stop." A working-man said to his wife, as they entered their humble home: "That was doubtless a good sermon; but there were some things in it so deep I could hardly understand them." One man, who prided himself on his depth of thought, said: "I wish our minister wouldn't waste his time and ours with so many simple illustrations, but give us more good, strong meat, to stimulate vigorous thought."

What the preacher thought: "I wonder if my sermon to-day accomplished anything of what I wanted it to. I asked the Lord to help me to say something of comfort for that mother whose child I buried last week. I wanted to strengthen that young man whose faith seems to be wavering. There were some thoughtless ones there whom I wished to arouse. I tried to mingle strong thought for certain ones and some simple statements of truth, pressed home with illustrations, for others. I hoped to awaken some sinner, and to have something to help every hearer. I am sure it wasn't as good a sermon as I wanted it to be; but, O God! follow it with thy blessing."

Columbia, Pa.

A CHILD'S THANKFULNESS.

BY JEANIE DE F. JUNKIN.

Little Preston was taking his Saturday-night scrub. It was a cold, damp night, and, after the hard part was over, he was allowed to play for a while in the warm water, splashing it over himself, and enjoying it thoroughly. At last his mother said:

"Come, Preston, let's get out now, and get ready for bed."

His face immediately screwed up in a queer little frown, and a suspicion of a whine was in his voice as he said:

"Oh, no, mother! I don't want to get out yet."

"No, no, Preston! I don't want any whining. You know you promised me that I shouldn't hear a single whine to-day." Thus interrupted mother's gentle voice.

His face cleared, and without a murmur he allowed himself to be lifted out, and rubbed well with a rough towel.

As he watched the swirl of the water going out, he said, "Good-by, water!" then, in an undertone, "You sweet water!"

A little laugh from mother seemed to call for an explanation, so he hastened to add: "Well, it was sweet water, mother! It made me so nice and warm and clean."

Then he continued the conversation with the water, alternately questioning and answering.

"I'm going to sleep, water. Are you going to sleep?"

"No, I'm not going to sleep. I don't ever go to sleep."

"How do you know the water never goes to sleep, Preston?" interrupts mother again.

"Oh, 'cause it just keeps going on, and flowing, and making waves."

"But how did you find out all that, Preston?"

"Well, one day, when I was at the water's house, I asked it, and it said that it never went to sleep."

Now, how did the idea suggest itself to that little four-year-old head to thank the water for making him warm

and clean? Why is it that grown people so seldom are thankful for such seemingly little things? Why don't they think of such things? Even people who are right cheerful, and thankful for small favors, do not think of so small a thing as this as a blessing. Yet this little heart thought of it, and put his thought into words.

Another day he asked his mother, with great earnestness:

"Mother, will you always be like you are now?"

"Why, no, Preston! I'll grow older, and change some every day. Why do you ask?"

"Because, mother, I don't want you ever to get un-sweet."

A delicate compliment truly, and nicely put. But how often do we put our love into words, in our intercourse with the home people? We tell other people we like them, pay them compliments; but it is too much trouble to treat home folks so. It is just the other way with children; they tell mother and father of the love they bear them, but are utterly unconcerned about what outsiders think of them. Would that all the world were like children! It would be more like heaven.

Louisville, Ky.

THE CONQUEST OF THE WORST.

EXPERIENCES IN THREE MISSION SCHOOLS.

BY H. E. A.

A few incidents in my life as Sunday-school teacher have given me unusual hope for the many who are too often regarded as incorrigible pupils.

Learning, one evening at a church meeting, the membership of which I had recently joined as a stranger, that more teachers were needed at one of their mission stations, I readily volunteered, and presented myself on the following Sunday for duty.

My first work was with a class of girls, and, as they are usually well behaved, I noticed, with some surprise, a class of boys near by, of eighteen years of age and under, who regularly came in late, and all together, and seated themselves without much decorum, their teacher being apparently ill at ease.

The pastor informed me that, hearing I was from a distance, they wished me to take the teacher's place; but the thought even of so doing alarmed me, and the proposal was instantly declined. But, nevertheless, it was impossible to resist making that particular class a study from Sunday to Sunday, as new teachers of both sexes were seen to come and go, none daring to remain; and the only one who undertook their teaching for a second time, gave very decided evidence that he was greatly discouraged.

One Sunday when, on account of the weather, teachers were few, and many pupils were absent, I was requested, for the afternoon, to take a class of boys.

They inquired regarding my preference, evidently supposing it would be the little ones beside me, who were very winning in manner; and the surprise with which my reply was received was noticeable, as the "big boys," who were all there, were selected, they having entered somewhat late, and noisily, as usual.

Every Sunday, at a signal from their leader, they had risen and left in a body, in the midst of the services, however interesting they might be; however, a thought had come to me, and I would test its value. I was but just seated when the largest boy, with big, bulging eyes, broad leather waistband, and the general make-up of a daring, roystering leader of any set into which he might fall, yelled into the ear of the lad at his right. Instantly, instead of reproving him, as he probably expected me to do, I took the vacant seat beside him, laid my hand gently on his, and said pleasantly: "I like boys; there is always something good about them."

Instead of rudely replying, he seemed intensely to regret what he had done, and quickly changed his seat from the middle to the foot of the class. Then, with a voice choked with emotion, he said, "I am going home."

"Don't go," I replied, seeing his mortification; and he remained, as did all the class, until the school was dismissed. The others had evidently received previous orders from him, since, for a time, there was a but partly suppressed babel.

One boy sat looking directly into my face, and saying "Rats!" as fast as possible. Another, ready with a quantity of paper pellets, was blowing them through a tin tube all over the schoolroom; still, there was something like order, compared with their usual demeanor.

The lesson was attempted, but not one of them all even knew the subject. Questioning two boys of about sixteen and seventeen years of age, they told me they had changed teachers so often they had prepared no lesson.