

"THE SPECIAL COLUMN"

It has been sometime since we have received a communication from our little readers for our special column for boys' and girls'; we are always glad to hear from our little friends and our readers like to hear from them too. In the salutatory of the ORPHANS' FRIEND children are invited to speak freely and "help us to lay their wants before the people:" parents teachers and all friends of education are requested to use our columns as a medium to disseminate and compare their views and opinions on the best methods of teaching, school government &c. As those countries which have the greatest variety of exports and imports are most interesting to travelers so those papers which have the greatest number of correspondents, will be most interesting to the general reader and we cordially invite communications from all interested in our work.

THE FLOWER MISSION.

Among the many charities of our great cities, one of the most interesting, is the distribution of flowers among the sick in the hospitals, only those who have been for weeks shut up in dark rooms where the sunlight is excluded, and even the pure air of heaven has not free ingress, can know how refreshing is the sight of a flower. As soon as the first spring flowers, such as crocus, hyacinths and violets, make their appearance, they are tied in tiny bunches and sent on their mission of love to the hospitals where the sick and weary are cheered by their bright presence. Sometimes a text of Scripture is wrapped around the stems, but usually the little flower is left to preach its own eloquent sermon. While the stars in their ceaseless course proclaim to millions in voice sublime the power and glory of their great Creator, the humble little blossom is also telling us manifold and wondrous truths; the unfolding bud, the gorgeous blossom and the scattered petals of the fading flower, all contain revelations from above; they tell of the Divine hand that shaped and colored their delicate petals; the wondrous laboratory where their fragrant perfume was distilled, and of our Savior's loving care to suffering humanity, and nowhere is their voice more powerful than at the bed-side of the suffering.

It is touching to see how the pale faces of the patients brighten as their feeble hands are extended for the sweet silent comforters. As the flower season advances they are sent in such profusion that the almoners scarcely know what to do with them; after the hospitals have been supplied, the surplus is frequently sent to the sewing rooms, so that the weary toilers there whose lives have been shorn of all that is lovely may be refreshed by these sweet gifts, and long after flowers are faded and scattered their influence will live and the blessing of grateful hearts will follow those who have literally strewn flowers in the pathway of their toiling, suffering sisters.

CONTRIBUTION BOXES.

SEVERAL merchants write that they have placed contribution boxes in conspicuous places on their counters, and propose sending the contents to the Orphan

Asylum monthly. No doubt the silent pleaders will catch many stray pennies that will never be missed by the donors, and these accumulated trifles in the course of the year may amount to a considerable sum. A lady once dropped in a box all the nickel pieces she received in change, and at the close of the year gave them to her little sister. On counting them found she had enough money to purchase a nice Bible.

For the Orphans' Friend.
SCENIC EFFECT.

The wonderful effect of scenery on the development of both mental and physical natures is never questioned in this enlightened age, and we don't propose to present any original proposition in the subject which we now lay before our readers, but merely to pause a moment and examine some of the wonders which it works. Its effect on the imagination is perhaps as interesting as any we may observe. External beauty so impresses itself on human thought and action as to be reproduced in both. Every thing in nature is engraved in art even in the infancy of our race in the rude stone age, man covered in rock the animal he was familiar with in the chase or else the tree by his hut which he had so often observed that it possessed for him a marked individuality a strange human companionship and all of us have more or less sympathy with this feeling for we all have our favorites among the trees as they seem the embodiment of some idea to which we are partial. The people highest in the scale of civilization have been blessed by a country most highly endowed by nature; few of those who have obtained "comfortable quarters on Parnassus" hail from an ice bound region; there is little in frozen streams, scanty vegetation and a colorless sky to develop the embryonic sentiment within, and those sons of the North who have immortalized themselves in verse have traveled long in a sunnier realm. Where in holy converse with nature there he views her stores unrolled and the devotee's reward is the high priest-hood of nature. To him she interprets the strain that her songsters are ever singing what the brook is babbling as it goes murmuring or the "wild waves saying" as they dash on shore; she bids him hark to the wind as it shrieks on the lonely barren mountain, mourns in the distant pines, whispers among the orange bowers or trembles all over the aspen till she teaches him to ever be heedful of her voice whether it speaks in the "laughter that comes from the ocean's lips" or the comfortless winds unrest." To him she comes with her cherished secrets and hand in hand with her he revels amid the favorite haunts of the immortal nine. With nature in all her phases under all aspects he becomes familiar led captive at his will no change it matters not how small is without its effect on him morn noon and night he exults in the ever veering phenomena he is in the confidence of a universe: then it is that he is called upon to translate the language he has learned to his kindred race.

The metamorphosis it works on the physical nature is not less striking, the stalwart mountaineer has little in common with the denizen of the valley, the one is in perfect sympathy with the characteristic boldness of his country, counterfeiting in form and feature

the rugged aspect which it views with a frame seemingly as enduring as its hoary hills and an impetuosity of disposition like unto its own mountain torrents. With something loftier in his nature than is the portion of all men accustomed as he is to gaze on those "heralds of eternity," and possessed of a language never enervated by conformity to the laws of euphony. The other relaxed in mind and body by the softening influence of his climate presents a striking contrast to his highland brother, less vigorous he may be but he compensates for that by symmetry of form and grace of movement, representing the sinuous outlines of his own landscape by his undulatory pace; for as utility is represented by straight lines in nature so is the beautiful by curves. But welcome to both their types for the combination of strength and beauty antedates perfection.

E.

LAYING UP MONEY.

Economy as a principle has not been taught of late years. For this parents are mostly to blame. Wise saving has been excluded from the list of household virtues, and reckless expenditure substituted in its stead. Dress, jewelry of every kind, cigars, matinees, and amusements almost infinite in variety—to say nothing of evils of far greater magnitude have been deemed indispensable.

Just and honest obligations have been put aside to gratify the prurient taste for outward show and inward corruption.

A family that could not pay their rent or grocer's bill, could find the means to pay one dollar and fifty cents a pair for white kid gloves to wear to a concert. Who will pretend to say that just demands could not be met, and something saved beside, had not all been swallowed up in the maelstrom of fashionable folly and extravagance? Even limited incomes and small salaries could be made to yield something for future emergencies, were the principle of economizing properly enforced—those disposed to lay by for a rainy day" affirming that they have done better, in proportion, with limited means than with larger incomes, and increasing facilities. A woman whose wages before the war did not exceed one dollar and fifty cents a week, managed to lay up one dollar of that, bought a small house, and from the rent paid the balance due on the purchase. Yet she was always neatly dressed, and paid her proportion of the expenses of the church of which she was a member. To the youth of the present age these are idle words.

"It cannot be done. There is no use talking, it cannot be done," said a young man with whom a friend was pleading "to lay up something."

"Wait a moment, let us see," said his friend. "Your salary is six hundred dollars a year?" "Yes." "And you pay five dollars and a half for board. Does that include washing?" "It does, as I board at home." "Call it three hundred dollars in round numbers and that will cover all." "Very well, yes." "Then you have three hundred dollars left?" "Yes." "Now then, suppose you take ten per cent. or thirty dollars of that for charitable purposes, and lay aside seventy dollars for future use; you have left two hundred dollars, will not that be sufficient to clothe you?" "Well,

yes, under some circumstances it would; but you see a fellow can not go into good society unless he is well dressed." "Young man," said his friend seriously, "depend upon it, the best passport into really good society is not the clothes the tailor makes for you; but your character for honesty, fidelity, and self-denial, and its fruits laid up in the bank."

"Gather up the fragments, let nothing be lost," said the wise economist by whom the worlds were made.

Because of our reckless disregard of this injunction, thousands and tens of thousands are suffering all the evils of poverty today. Is it not time to mend our ways? And may we not look to the house of God for an example of sobriety and godly living, or do we heed further chastisement ere we are prepared to "crucify the flesh with its afflictions and lusts?" Take heed. God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap." We have sowed the seed of folly, of pride and extravagance.

We are reaping its bitter fruits. May we all learn wisdom from the lesson.—Church Union.

TURNING POINTS IN LIFE.

The switch-tender was weary, and he sat at his post, his eyes were heavy, and he fell asleep. The train came thundering along, and as it neared the place, the man heard the whistle and rose to adjust the switch for the train. He sprang aside, the cars moved on, were thrown from the track, and a scene of death and disaster was the consequence.

It was only a little switch. A bar of iron a few feet in length, which opened one end only one inch to allow the flange of the wheels to pass through the narrow way. Only a few seconds more would have placed the little bar at the right angle, and all would have been well. But the few seconds were lost, the little bar was out of place, and the train, with its invaluable freight of life and property, was nearly all buried in a mass of death and ruin.

A young man was once under a state of deep inquiry about his eternal interests. Two or three of his companions learned that he was going to prayer-meeting, and they determined to change his purpose. They persuaded him only this once, to go to the accustomed place of resort. He finally yielded. They plied their art of amusements, gaiety and pleasure, and bound him at last in the snares of a wicked companion. It was his fatal moment. In a few weeks from that time he had committed murder, and followed the deed with instantaneous self-destruction.

A young man had appointed to meet some friends to go to one of the public gardens in London, on Sunday evening. While waiting at the place assigned for rendezvous in one of the streets, a Christian friend, a lady, passed by and asked him where he was going. He was ashamed to confess his intention, and readily yielded to her invitation to go with her to church. It was the turning point with him. He was arrested by divine truth, was brought under a sense of sin, became a Christian—a faithful missionary, a devoted and exalted hero, an apostle of Christ—and died a martyr on the isle of Erromango, a victim of heathen rage, but a sacrifice of love to his Redeemer. It was John Williams, the missionary.

A young man went to visit his friends on New Year's day according to the custom of New York. He had abandoned the intoxicating cup. He had suffered from its evils, and was a sworn total abstinent. He uniformly refused to taste or handle until he called upon a young lady, who, finding her invitations all declined, began to baiter him with a want of manhood, and plied her ridicule so far that he at last yielded. It was the setting of the switch. He was taken home in a state of intoxication, and a few months afterward he died, uttering terrible curses upon the tempter who had been the cause of his ruin.

A young man who had been prayerfully trained, came to the city to enter a place of business. His fellow clerks invited him to join in their pleasures and past times. For a time he resisted, but at length he thought he would go to the theatre, only once, just to please his friends and see what a theatre was. The devil was the switch tender that night, and the course of that young man subsequently lay through the paths of extravagance, gambling, shame and the grave.

Two young men were walking one evening toward a prayer meeting, when they were accosted by several acquaintances, who were on their way to a place of usual resort. They entreated them to join them, but they refused. Finally one of them consented and turned aside, only once more, for an evening of worldly pleasure, and let his friend go to the prayer meeting alone. One found peace with God; but his companion became hardened, and in three months, while his associate on that eventful night was honoring his Master by his faithful and consistent life, he was the inmate of a prison awaiting the penalty of the law.

Our life is full of these turning points of our fortune, and of ill, of peace and of woe, of life eternal or of despair and death. The tract we travel has a switch at almost every step. We need to have them well guarded. The eye must be kept open, the hand must be steady, the arm must be strong. The soul should be well armed, so that it may be prepared for every attack, or for every expedient of the enemy. Life, honor, virtue, success and immortality are before us. Little things, at first unaccounted of, may lead to the other extreme!—Biblical Recorder.

Riches of the Bible.

Some writer gives the following analysis of the "book of books," the Bible:—It is a book of Laws, to show the right and wrong. It is a book of Wisdom, that makes the foolish wise. It is a book of Truth, which detects all human errors. It is a book of Life, which shows how to avoid everlasting death. It contains the most authentic and entertaining Histories ever published. It is a perfect book of Divinity. It is a book of Biography. It is a book of Travels. It is a book of Voyages. It is the covenant ever made:—the best deed ever written. It is the young man's best companion. It is the school-boy's best instructor. It is the learned man's masterpiece. It is the ignorant man's dictionary, and every man's directory. It promises an eternal reward to the faithful and believing.