

Belleville, Pa., August 17, 1906.

SILENCE.

Silence! That's the greatest gift
Man can cultivate,
Sort of thing that's sure to lift
Him from trouble great.
When you're in the blackest hole,
Getting deeper in,
That's the time to keep control
Of your chin.
When you get into a fuss
With some other chap,
Do not add unto the muss
With a verbal rap.
Hold your tongue right warily,
Not a bit of slack,
There'll be fewer things to be
Taken back.
Speeches of the quarrelsome
Easily unloosed
Raise the Dickens when they come
Home again to roost.
Nothing's harder to digest
Than an odd word—
Few can stand it at the best,
So I've heard.
When you sit by her you love,
Heart too full to speak,
Eyes like Heaven's blue above,
Dimples in her cheek—
What's the use of trying, pray,
Feelings to confess,
When your thoughts the words you'd say
Can't express?
So pretend! You are dumb
As you walk your way,
Let your motto be—"Mum!"
Nothing for to say!
Let the other fellow show
Off his cheerful chin,
While in silence deep you go
In and win.
—By John Kendrick Bangs.

IDELLA AND THE WHITE PLAGUE.

"Sakes alive!" exclaimed Mrs. Sparrow, dropping the letter in her lap and holding up both hands. "Well, I never did!"

Mr. Sparrow, reclining in the rocking-chair with the burst case seat, his stockings feet resting on the wooden chair without a back, started, opened his eyes, and gazed at his wife. Lyncurus Sparrow and Editha Sparrow and Edwin and Ulysses and Margerite and Marcellus Sparrow, scattered here and there about the room, on the floor and the broken down couch, raised their eyes from school books and rag dolls, and looked at their mother. Even little Shadrach, the smallest Sparrow in the flock, seemed interested.

"I never did in this world!" repeated Mrs. Sparrow with conviction.

"Never did what?" snapped her husband.

"Land of love! Hain't you got any thought for my nervous? Here I be a-settin' and sufferin', tryin' to forgit I've got any stomach or lungs, and you turn loose and holler like a loon. I'm all of a paley. You never did what?"

"I never heard tell of such a thing in my born days, and you'll say so too, Washy, when I tell you. What do you s'pose Idella's been and done?"

"Hain't lost her job, has she?" asked Mr. Sparrow, anxiously, sitting upright in the rocker, but holding on to the arms in order not to "bear down" too hard on the broken seat.

"No, not exactly lost it. But she's gone and—Oh, you'll never guess!"

"Well, I ain't got to guess, have I? 'Tain't no conundrum. I never see such a woman I got with it! Here's she done!"

"She's gone and—Mrs. Sparrow paused to give the announcement due weight; "she's gone—and—got—married!"

Mr. Sparrow's stocking feet struck the floor with a slap as their owner sprang up.

"Married!" he repeated in a shriek.

His wife shut her lips and nodded solemnly.

"Married!" groaned Mr. Sparrow, and fell heavily back into the rocker. The remnant of case ripped across and he sank forward, doubled up like a jackknife. Then, apparently unconscious of his uncomfortable position, he stared out between his knees and again muttered "Married!" in a dismal whisper.

"Yes, sir," said Mrs. Sparrow. "She's married without my knowin'. I was with it that she had. Idella—indeedness, all over. Here, Lyncurus! why don't you and Edwin help your father out of that chair? Want him to break his back?"

The two boys sprang to the assistance of their entrapped parent, and each, seizing an arm, pulled and tugged until they separated him from the framework of the rocker. The thanks they received were not effusive.

"Leggo o' me!" shouted Mr. Sparrow, shoving them to one side. "Tryin' to haul me in ha', ain't ye? Look here, Betsy! Who'd that girl marry? Has he got any money?"

"She don't say, Washy. She jest writes that she married him, and his name's William Burke, and she met him last winter at a dance of the Carpenter's Union. She—"

"A carpenter! A carpenter! And now she's got him to look after. That's it! Work and slave and worry yourself into the graveyard binning up children and soon's they get big enough to earn something, if they go on I marry another man."

"But, no, look at Editha, aged eight, 'Idella couldn't marry 'em 'cause you've got marner."

"Be still, you sassbox you! Makin' 'em of your sick father and your ma uphoidin' you in it. What's goin' to become of us without the money that that girl's been sendin'?"

"What's goin' to become of me, all but gone with consumption (cough) and mad-crazy with nervous dyspepsy?"

Idella, Betsy Sparrow hastened to interrupt and ward off the attack of "nerves" that she knew from experience was at hand.

"It's all right, Washy," she cried. "That part's all right; better'n ever, most likely. Seems her husband has got a job buildin' the big hotel at East Wellmouth, and him and her are comin' down here to board with us. Idella says they'll pay good board and she'll help me with the house and washin' and things. We'll have more money 'stead of less; don't you see?"

"Humph!" grunted her husband, pushing a child or two out of the way and sitting down on the lounge; "that sounds lovely—in paper. Well, go ahead and read us the letter."

Betsy read it. It was a long letter, full of good humor and cheery optimism. But then, Idella had always been hopeful and happy, even when, by virtue of rank as the eldest of Washington and Betsy Sparrow's troupe of children, she had given up school at fourteen to stay at home and

mend and cook and sweep and tend baby while her mother went out washing. To be obliged to live in Wellmouthport the year around is, of itself, enough to sour the most saintly disposition; but to live in Washington Sparrow's rattle-trap shanty in the woods, with the added discomfort of Mr. Sparrow's society thrown in—that Idella had done this for years and hadn't lost faith in the world is the best possible key to her character. To give up these duties and take service as maid-of-all-work with Dr. Saunders and his family, first at their summer home at East Wellmouth, and then at the city mansion in Brookline, was in comparison like sitting down to rest.

Idella's disposition and willingness to work were inherited from her mother. Washington Sparrow was an inveterate idler and knew it. In fact he knew it better than any one else. When he and Betsy were first married he went fishing occasionally and did odd jobs around town. Then his wife made the mistake of going out washing to add to the family income, and "Washy" began to develop symptoms. He developed in succession those of rheumatism, pleurisy, phthisis, and lamboago. At last his disease narrowed down to two, nervous dyspepsy and slow consumption. These were estivating chronic and debilitating. All day long he slept or smoked or sat by the fire, and his only function not impaired was appetite. The town physicians had long given him up. Dr. Bailey scoldingly prescribed a diet, and old Dr. Penrose suggested Paris green. The children told their teachers that papa was too sick to work, and Betsy informed her washing clientele that Mr. Sparrow was "dreadful poorly." She believed it, too, poor, self-sacrificing soul, and scrubbed and delved from morning 'till night to keep things going.

Mrs. Sparrow read the long letter through, stopping occasionally to comment.

"Jest listen to this," she cried exultingly. "I guess my coming home will make things easier for you, ma. We'll have you playing lady in the rocking chair yet. Ain't that jest like Idella? She ailsers used to say that. She don't fergit her poor old mother."

"Hub!" grunted Mr. Sparrow, with sarcasm; "how 'bout her poor old father? Ain't no bouquets for him, is there? No, I'll bet there hain't."

"Oh, she ain't forgot you nuther, Washy. Here's what she says: 'Tell pa that my livin' in a doctor's family has learned me a lot about diseases. I believe I can cure him.'"

"Yes, she'll cure me a whole lot. No, sir! I've got my never-got-over and I know it (cough). Well, the sooner the quicker I'll be at rest pretty soon and everybody'll be glad. Don't rag out in no mournin' on my grave. Don't put no hot-house wreaths on my grave. I know how you all feel and all I ask is to git through. I'm resigned. Git off my feet, you everlasting young ones! Think I'm a softy?"

The attack of nerves developed. Mr. Sparrow felt that he and his troubles were in danger of being overshadowed by the news of his daughter's marriage, and that it was time to come to the front. He stormed and stamped and coughed and groaned and whimpered. The children fled, the younger ones to bed and the others to prepare them for it. After a while the invalid fell asleep on the lounge. Mrs. Sparrow sat by the table mending and darning. She took up the letter and read it through again. Idella was coming back. Perhaps there was balm in Gilead after all.

And two days later Idella came. The depot wagon reeled and bumped through the sandy ruts and up to the little one-hinged front gate. It was a Saturday and the children were all at home. The allowance of washing for that day being "taken in" Mrs. Sparrow was at home also. They were all at the door to welcome the arrival, all but the afflicted Washington. He stayed by the cook-stove in solitary dignity.

Idella jumped from the wheel and ran in at the gate. "My sakes, ma," she cried, grabbing Mrs. Sparrow about the neck and kissing her; "if it don't seem good to see you. And Lyncurus (snack), and Editha (snack), and Ed and Lys and Nap and Margie (snack for each), and there's the hub! My! how you have grown!"

The children blushed and grinned and stared admiringly at Idella's jacket. A red store-coat, and new, not out-dated and turned and made over a half-dozen times. And the gay hat with the red ribbons was new likewise.

"If it ain't fine to see you all again," cried Idella. "Seems if the care never would get here. Oh, and Bill must see you too! Bill, come here, will you?"

Mr. Burke was big and square-shouldered and sturdy. He came obediently as his wife's first call. It was easy to see who was "boss" in that family. Mrs. Sparrow wondered and envied.

"They went into the house, Bill bearing the trunk as if it was no heavier than a carpet bag, Mr. Sparrow, by the stove, did not deign to turn.

"'And there's pa!' exclaimed Idella, running over and embracing him. "Why, pa! how well you look!"

"Well!" repeated the invalid indignantly. "Maybe I look well, but I tell you—"

"This is my husband," interrupted Idella briskly. "Bill, shake hands with pa."

Mr. Burke extended a hand of proportionate size to the rest of him and mashed his father-in-law's flabby fingers within it. He growled that he was pleased to be "acquainted" to Mr. Sparrow.

"He's the cough, pa?" asked Idella.

Her father gave a tentative snuffle at the cough before replying. Then he observed resignedly that it wasn't no better and he called it never would be.

"Oh, yes it will," affirmed his daughter.

"Dr. Saunders has learned me a whole lot of things. You'll see, Bill, open that trunk, will you please; I want the folks to have the presents we brought 'em."

The word "presents" caused even the invalid to brace up and take an interest in life. There was something for every one; nothing expensive, of course, but all wonderful in that family.

"'And now, ma,' said Idella, 'jest let me change my duds and I'll pitch in and help git the dinner. I hope we're goin' to have herrin'! I ain't had a herrin' sense I left Wellmouth."

That was the beginning. Before the next week had passed it was evident that there was a new manager in the Sparrow household and the name of that manager was Idella. She took charge of affairs at once and began to make improvements.

The children all went to school regularly, the eldest included. On Tuesday Mr. Burke began his labors at the new hotel, leaving early in the morning and returning at six o'clock. In a fortnight Idella announced that her mother was to go out washing no more. She might "take in" the laundry work if she wished, but then it could be done at home and she, herself, could help. Mrs. Sparrow protested, but Idella calmly asserted that she had regular customers and arranged with them.

In a month Betsy actually realized that she had a month's daylight time, to "set in the rocking chair" and do the mending. Idella cooked and scrubbed and dressed the children. She and her husband paid board, so there was more money on hand than ever before. It was wonderful, but it was true.

At first the invalid viewed all these changes with suspicion, but when he found that the food was better, that he wasn't asked to do anything and that, more important than all, his ailments were appreciated and understood, he became reconciled and told his wife that he could pass off in peace now because he knew that she and the children would be provided for.

But one evening, early in November, his dreams were shattered. They were seated in the kitchen. Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow, Bill and Idella. Lyncurus and Editha were doing sums in the front room. The rest of the children were in bed.

"Pa," said Idella suddenly, "I don't s'pose you feel well enough to go to work?"

Her father, seated with his feet on the hearth of the cook stove, took his pipe from his mouth and turned an agitated face toward his daughter. He started to speak and then, recollecting, coughed long and with dreadful hollowness.

"I asked," continued Idella, "'cause Bill says they need more hands to cut down trees and lug lumber over to the hotel, and he could git a job for you any time you wanted it."

"Cut down trees!" shouted the sufferer. "And lug lumber! What you talkin' 'bout? How long do you call 'I'd last done' that? I'm slipping into the grave fast enough as 'tis, jest setting here hakin' and all tore to pieces with dyspepsy. Do you want to kill me all to once?"

His spasms of coughing this time was heartrending to witness.

Yes," said Idella. "I told Bill you wasn't fit to work. But, pa, I think something ought to be done to cure you and so I'm goin' to try."

"Care! Hump! I'm past curin', darter. Don't you worry about me. Doctors give me up long spell ago. No, all's left for me is to linger around and die slow. I'll be glad when it's over and so'll everybody else."

"Doctors gave you up so! What doctors? These one-hoss ones down here? I've been living for a year with a reel doctor and he didn't give folks up jest 'cause they had consumption. No, sir! he cured 'em, and I've got his receipt."

"It ain't no use—" began Washy, but Idella was called on.

"Your case is kind of mixed up, pa, I'm free to say," she continued, "'bout of your consumption being complicated with nervous dyspepsy. The cures for the two is so different. But I've made up my mind to start in on your lungs and kind of work 'round to your stomach, as you might say. Bill, where's the receipt for consumption?"

Mr. Burke, a grim smile hovering about his lips, took a folded paper from his pocket and handed it to his wife.

"Consumption," said Idella, looking at the paper, "ain't cured by medicine no more. Not by the reel doctors is ain't. Fresh air night and day is what's necessary, and you don't git it here by the stove. You ought to live outdoors. Yes, and sleep the night."

"Sleep outdoors? What kind of talk is that? Be you crazy or—"

Idella help up a hand. "Don't screech so, pa," she said. "You'll wake the children. Bill, where's that magazine?"

Her husband produced a dog-eared copy of a popular periodical and Idella turned it over to her father. "Here's a piece 'bout curin' the White Plague; that means consumption. Let me read you a little of it."

Mr. Sparrow declared that he didn't want to hear so much foolishness, but his daughter laboriously spelt out extracts from the article, which specified the dangers of dark rooms and confined atmospheres and described Adirondack sanatoriums and open air sleeping rooms.

"See, pa," she said, holding the magazine before her father's eyes. "See that picture. That's a tent where two consumption folk lived and slept for over two years. 'Twas thirty below zero there sometimes, too, but it cured 'em. And see this one. 'Twas forty-five below where that shanty was, but—"

"Take it away!" shouted the invalid. "if you expect me to believe such lies as them you're—"

"They ain't lies. Dr. Saunders had lots of patients with consumption and he cured 'em the same way. And I'm goin' to cure you or die myself a tryin'. Our woodshed out back here is jest the place for you. It's full of cracks and the windows are broken, so there'll be plenty of air 'strin'! Bill, look the lounge over there a little while; didn't you, Bill?"

"I thoughts I missed that lounge!" exclaimed Mrs. Sparrow, who had been listening open-mouthed.

"Yes, it's there. There's plenty of bed clothes, so you'll sleep warm. You can wear your own clothes and Bill's old overcoat and set in the sun daytimes. We'll fetch you your meals. You mustn't come in the house at all. If you've that way of mind, why—"

"The alarmed Washington leaped to his feet. 'The gal's gone loon!' he said. 'She wants to kill me so I'll be out of the way. I don't stir one step. You hear me? Not one step.'"

"Some of Dr. Saunders' patients talked that way first along," observed Idella, "but they had to do what he ordered. Bill, take pa out to the shed. I'll carry the lamp."

Mr. Burke rose, squared his mighty shoulders, and advanced toward his father-in-law. He looked as if he rather enjoyed the situation.

"Betsy," shrieked Mr. Sparrow, dodging into a corner. "he you in this? Do you want to see me murdered?"

Mrs. Sparrow was troubled. She had no right confidence in her daughter, but she sympathized with her husband's infirmities.

"Idella," she protested, "seems to me I wouldn't—Remember them nervous attacks he's subject to?"

"Nerves," declared Idella, "come from the stomach. I'll tend to them later. We must cure his lungs. Bill, fetch him along."

Mr. Burke's hand settled firmly on the back of the invalid's neck. "Trot along, dad," he commanded. Mr. Sparrow fought and hung back. The other hand descended and seized him by the waistband. He moved toward the door, "walking Spanish" like a small boy in the school yard.

Idella opened the door. "Nobody can say," she remarked with emphasis, "that I let my father die of consumption without tryin' to cure him. Come on, pa."

"Remember, Washy, it's all for your good," faltered Betsy, wringing her hands. The procession moved round the yard and into the shabby woodshed. Idella placed the lamp in a sheltered corner on the floor.

"Bill! stay till you git to bed, pa," she said. "Good night!"

The woodshed door shut. The agitated sufferer looked at the bare walls, the heap of coal wood stacked and split by Lyncurus, and the lounge.

"Git undressed," commanded Mr. Burke. "Hurry up."

"I'll freeze to death," protested Washy. "No, you won't, not yet. Anyway freezing is a quick death, so they say, and I've heard you hankering to die quick ever since I got here. Git to bed, see?"

Mr. Sparrow threw off his outer garments and shiveringly encamped on the lounge Mr. Burke took up the lamp and looked at him.

"Good night," observed the carpenter. Then he added: "There's one thing more I ought to say. To-morrow I'll be away to work, but you are to come in to the house. You will stay outside same as Idella tells you. If you come in or try any funny business, why—" he meditatively opened and closed a fist like a hammer—"Well, you don't die of consumption anyhow."

He withdrew; Mr. Sparrow was alone. The fresh air cure had begun.

"Next day the invalid, wrapped in Mr. Burke's trailing nil-ster, spent a lively series of hours chasing the patch of sunshine as it moved around the exterior of his dwelling. His meals were brought to him by Idella. Betsy had evidently received orders not to interfere. Through the window he could see the fire in the cook stove. He begged and pleaded to come in, had spasms of coughing and attacks of nerves, but his daughter was adamant. "It is all for your good, pa," was her one reply. Washington was strongly tempted to enter by force, but the thought of his son-in-law's fist and the gentle hint with which it had been displayed prevented his yielding to the temptation. He slept in the shed that night.

The following afternoon he had an idea. After dinner, eaten on the back step, he watched his chance and hurried off, through the woods, on a mile walk to the billboard in the village. There he found a roaring fire and a comfortable chair; also some free lunch which served for supper. When he reached the shed at ten o'clock that night he figured that he had found a way to outwit his guardians.

But Mr. Burke made a pilgrimage to the village the next morning on his way to work, and when Washington opened the billboard room door that afternoon he was received with a roar from the proprietor.

"Git out of here!" shouted the latter.

"Git right out and don't show your nose in here," he said. "You've got consumption, and it's catchin'! Git!"

The discomfited Mr. Sparrow "got" and tried the store. There he met the same reception. After loafing about the wharf till twilight he returned home to a picnic meal and the lounge.

He stood it for a week, and then announced that he felt somewhat better to risk a day indoors. But Idella didn't see it in that light.

"I'm glad your lungs feel better, pa," she said. "I called that would be. But, of course, you must stay outside this winter anyhow. Now, I guess it's time to start in on the dyspepsia line." She produced the sheet of paper that had been the beginning of her father's troubles. "For dyspepsy," said she, "and particularly for nervous dyspepsy, which is the worst kind, you have to diet and take exercise. We'll begin on the dietin'. 'In severe cases the patient should take nothing but hot milk.' Well, we've got plenty of milk; that's lucky."

Washy sprang from the wash-bench where he had been standing hunched. "Do you have the face to tell me," he screamed, "that I can't have nothing to eat but milk, Why that's—"

"That's the doctor's orders, pa. I'm goin' by doctor's orders; and see what they have done for you already."

"I can't live on milk! I hain't a baby. I hate the stuff! I don't believe no doctor would ever—"

"Well, we'll call Dr. Bailey and see what he says. I'll bet he will back me up."

Mr. Sparrow didn't take the bait. He knew Dr. Bailey, and the latter's opinion of his case.

"Aw, Idella, please—" he pleaded.

"For your own good, pa," said Idella, "I will fetch you the hot milk."

She did, a quart of it. He drank it because there was nothing else. For a week he lived on milk and fresh air. He tried every neighbor, and they were few, within two miles, but they had been posted and refused to feed him. Also they told him it was for his good. He could not smoke because his daughter said tobacco was the worst thing possible for both his ailments. As for the prescribed exercise, he got that running about to keep warm.

"Aw, Idella," he pleaded, one Sunday morning when the sky was overcast and the cold wind gave promise of a northeast snow storm. "Aw, Idella, won't you let me have something 'hearty'! Only a hunk of bread, say. I've drowned my taste buds with milk till I feel like a churrn. I can't keep on drinkin' the stuff; it goes agin me, to smell it. The bare sight of a cow makes me seasick."

But it was no use. "All for his good," his daughter said. These words had become to him almost as unpalatable as the milk.

The northeast developed. By night the woodshed shook and rattled like a hen-coop. The snow streaked in through the cracks and sifted over his nose whenever he brought it above the blankets for air. Also he was tremendously hungry.

At midnight he arose, desperate, and shook himself into all the garments on hand, including the ulster. Then he opened the shed door and went out. The thought of Bill and the family "Fog" was the strongest possible for both his ailments. He was going to be warmed and fed even if he poked to death afterwards.

He crept about the house, trying every door and window. He had tried them on previous nocturnal excursions but had always found them locked. This time he was more thorough, and at last—"oh joy!" he found a nail loose behind a cellar window. He worked it back and forth, while the night gave way and fell inside with a jingle. He waited, breathless, but there was no sound from within. Then he squeezed himself through the window.

He tiptoed up the creaking cellar stairs and into the warm kitchen. The storm was making a terrific racket around the house; and that was a Providence for him. He held his hands over the stove for a moment and then tiptoed to the pantry.

He knew where the matches were kept and took some. They were of the "eight-day" variety and noiseless. He lit one and by its light saw, on the pantry shelves, cold ham and bread and ginger cake and mince pie. Also there was milk, but he didn't look at that.

Mr. Burke was the first of the family to fish dressing next morning. He came downstairs, lamp in hand, and opened the door leading into the kitchen. Then he stopped, stared, and went back after Idella.

la. He led her to the door and pointed. There, in the rocking-chair before the cook stove, sprawled Washington Sparrow, fast asleep. His feet were on the hearth, a fragment of pie crust was on the floor by his hand, his countenance was turned up toward the ceiling and on it was an expression of perfect peace and comfort.

As the Barkes stood and stared, Mrs. Sparrow came from her room and joined them.

"My soul and body!" she exclaimed. "Washy heard her and awoke. At first he merely opened his eyes and blinked at the ceiling. Then he sat upright and turned around. His jaw fell.

"Well, pa," said Idella sharply, "what sort of doin's is this? What do you mean?"

Mr. Sparrow looked at his daughter. He essayed to speak. Then his glance fell upon his son-in-law's fist and remained fixed. He said nothing.

"The idea!" cried Idella. "After all I've done to cure you. Roastin' in this red-hot kitchen and eatin'—Is that mince pie crust by your hand?"

Lyncurus had appeared and gone away again. Now he came back.

"Ma," he said, "he's et every blessed thing in the the butty'."

"I—I—" faltered the invalid wildly. "I didn't mean to, but I was starved and froze and—"

"Mince pie!" exclaimed Idella. "Well! Now we're in a nice mess, and all to do over again."

"It's all right now, anyway," protested Mr. Sparrow. "I ain't coughin' none and the grub don't distress me a mite. Not ha' so much as that dratted milk."

"All to do over again!" repeated Idella. "And I don't know as we'll ever cure you now. Git outdoor this minute. And you mustn't eat a thing, even milk, for three or four days. Open the outside door, Bill."

Bill opened the door. A howling gust of wind-driven snow swept in. Mr. Sparrow felt his freezing breath and shivered.

"I'm all right, I tell ye!" he shouted. "I feel fine. I'm cured. Better'n I ever was, dunno's I ain't."

"Are you sure, pa? Don't I know I'm all cured?"

"Well, that's a mercy!" said Idella. "I knew 'twas the right receipt, but I didn't think 'twould work so quick. Bill, pa's cured. He'll go with you to take the job at the hotel this very day."

Washington's facial barometer sank to "cloudy." He choked and hesitated.

"Course you mustn't go if you ain't surely cured, pa," said his daughter. "Maybe you'd better try the shed and milk for a month or so longer."

The snow danced along the kitchen floor. It reminded Mr. Sparrow of the previous evening in the woodshed. "I'll go," he said, "but I'll work kind of easy fast along, so's—"

"Oh, no! You must work real hard, so's to get the exercise, else you'll have a relapse. You'll see that pa works the way he'd ought to, for his sake, won't you, Bill?"

Mr. Burke nodded. "He'll work," he said sardoniously.

The news of the wonderful cure spread quickly. Dr. Bailey laughingly congratulated Idella upon it.

"Gee!" said that young lady, "I cal'late he's cured, at least for a spell. Anyhow, the 'Everybody Works but Father' song don't fit our fam'ly no more."

Sabbath Observance.

The Bellefonte Ministerial Association is much encouraged by your permission to open the columns of your paper for occasional scripture selections touching the vital interests of the Christian religion and helpful to the coming of "the kingdom of God." I submit brief quotations concerning Sabbath day observance.

"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."—Isa: 8:20.

"The Lord spake unto Moses saying: Speak thou unto the children of Israel, verily my Sabbath ye shall keep; for it is holy unto you; whoever doeth any work therein that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord."—Exodus 31:12-16.

"And Jesus said unto them, the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."—Mark 2:27.

"To preach the acceptable year of the Lord"—Luke 4:16.

"Leaving us as an example, that ye should follow his steps."—1 Peter 2:21.

"—Mabel—"Would you believe it, auntie, two men followed us down to the plane!"

Marian—"Yes, auntie, every step of the way."

"Annie—"How did you know?"

Mable—"We saw them every time we looked back."

Marian—"Yes, auntie, and they followed us on the boat."

Aut—"What makes you think they were following you?"

Mabel—"Because we noticed them watching us every time we turned our heads."

Aut—"Ab, I thought your heads were turned."

No Hurry at All.

A lazy and loquacious man whose farm lies just outside of Worcester, England, called at a neighbor's house recently.

"Sit down, sit down!" exclaimed the neighbor.

"I don't know as I ought," replied the farmer, but, nevertheless, he sat down. After some talk about crops, the farmer said slowly: "I don't know as I ought to be settin' here; I came over to see if I could get a ladder: our house is afe."

Lateral.

Agnes was being hurried off to bed at her usual hour, 8 p. m., despite the fact that there were guests in the house.

"Why, Agnes, you go to bed with the chickens, don't you?" a visitor sympathetically remarked.

"No, I don't," replied Agnes, resenting his reference to her youth. "I go to bed with mamma."

"—Him—"Isn't that Miss Uperton over by the piano?"

Her—"Yes."

Him—"She is certainly a handsome girl, isn't she?"

Her—"Yes, but she isn't as handsome as she's painted."

"They say that faint heart ne'er won fair lady."

"Yes; but the lady I'm after is dark."

—Bingus—"I've got a suit of clothes for every day in the week."

Niggs—"Yes, I see you have it on!"

Antient Water Villages.

From the Technical World Magazine.

One of the most interesting regions in the "Old Fatherland" of Spree, the so-called "Spreevald," the Forest of Spree, situated not far from the German capital, in the province of Brandenburg. Each village is a little Venice, every house a little island; and these islets are connected by bridges sufficiently raised to allow boats to pass under them.

Most of the houses, with their bars and stables, rest on piles, and there is generally a strip of artificial terra firma, either in front or at the rear of every building. By means of these land strips and of the bridges, the slender lanes and of communication which during the period from spring, when the last vestiges of frost and ice are disappearing, until the end of autumn, are kept throughout the district, but most of the business and amusement is carried on through the canals, which not only form the main highways, but penetrate and cross and across the whole region. It is in these lagoons that all traffic is conducted in boats during the period from spring, when the last vestiges of frost and ice are disappearing, until the end of autumn. You see the letter carrier shoot up and down the canals, performing his duties in his frail craft; the police glide leisurely along the banks, watching everything going on; peasants bring the products of their toil to the nearest towns; children go to and from school; young mothers, dressed to suit their Sunday clothes, are rowed to church, carrying in their arms a small, queer-looking bundle, from which two large eyes in a tiny face stare at the stranger in wonderment—baby is going to be baptized, an important moment with this strongly religious people.

—Forcing the youthful mind is a practice no longer obtaining in schools of the best standing, but not yet obsolete in many of the common schools. In schools which represent the dominant ideas of education to-day, stimulation, interest, suggestion prevail, and driving is avoided. If there has been some leaning toward the prosaic there is now a fresh interest to stimulating the emotions, and a full realization of the need of many things conventionally not classed among the useful. The greatest problem of education unsolved to-day relates to girls. Heretofore their education has been a mere copy of that long ago established for boys. Some day a genius will come along and conceive thoughts which shall form the basis of an education which shall help girls to all their best possibilities, without dissipating their strength on lines of effort established for nature in some respects entirely different.—Collier's.

THE SUNDIAL.

It Should Be Marked For the Last-itude In Which It Stands.

In an old shop in lower New York a man keeps up his trade of dial making. The dials, square, octagonal or circular, are hand chased. They do not receive a high polish, and any accidental effect of weather stain or other "tone of time" is carefully preserved if not skillfully added. These dials, fitted with the gnomon, or stylus, are then artfully slipped into the show windows of uptown curiosity shops among a selected debris of Sheffield plate, prism candlesticks, inlaid tea caddies and old blue plates.

A visitor to one of these shops asked: "How old is that brass dial over there? It's all hand work, isn't it?"

"It's all hand work," said the proprietor, whom we will call Truthful James. "I can testify to that, for I know the man whose hands made it. It's about a month old, if you want to know. You're like lots of other people—you want an old Scotch or English dial. Don't you know it would be useless, if you found it, for practical purposes? Excuse me, but haven't you ever studied geography and heard of latitude? A dial ought to be marked out scientifically for the exact latitude in which it is to be set up. So unless you strike the same parallel in the states that the dial fell in England it will tell lies from morning till night. You'd be surprised how many people pick up a dial that strikes their fancy which perhaps stood in the garden of an old Virginia estate, intending to hurry it off to the big grounds of some place in Minnesota; or they'll snatch at some quaint dial from New England, with the idea of rigging it up in Texas.

"More people would make the same blunder, except that many haven't caught on to dials. Too bad. Nothing is prettier than a simple dial at the crosswalks of garden paths, or by a fountain or on a terrace or at the entrance of a pergola or near a rustic seat or arbor. You don't have to hire a head gardener and two assistants to keep a sundial. Marble platforms and pedestals are very grand, but unless you're running a big Italian garden with clipped hedges and yews and statues something simple is what you want. The dial will keep just as good time, once it's engraved right, if it's mounted on a tree stump, with Ivy planted round it, or on a bowlder, or on the coping of an old disused well, or on a column of cobbles mortared together, or on top of the old hitching post that the family doesn't use in these automobile days, but doesn't want to root up and throw away.

"You'd be surprised at the ingenuity of some people," said Truthful James, who himself seemed of ingenious bent. "I mean people who haven't much money to spend and are fond of their own old stuff for association's sake. They're the ones who get effects with a piece of junk, a lump of sentiment and a pocket of small change that can't be bought with a blank check. I've known people who used an old millstone to set the dial on, or who laid a slab over an old stone garden urinal, or who saved the capitals from pillars on a house being torn down, or who even rigged up a standard from the bricks of a chimney on an old homestead that had meant a lot to them. One family made a sort of cairn out of a geology collection some ancestor had formed. Another took a flag pole for the gnomon and laid out a dial with pebbles in the grass around the pole.

"No, it doesn't require any skill to set up the dial. Get the noon mark for the gnomon on several days, nick it on the slab and then set the dial in a bed of cement. There you are."—New York Post.