

For the Torch of Reason.

Object Lessons.

BY CHARLES KENT TENNEY.

Our city contains quite a large German population, and one of its societies owns a beautiful park, bordering on one of our lakes. In the summer time this park is used for picnic purposes, and on Sunday afternoons hundreds of our working people, who have no other time, with their wives, children, and sweethearts, assemble there to enjoy its quiet shades and refreshing air. It is an afternoon of simple, quiet, orderly enjoyment to these people and their families, and speaks volumes for the forethought of the society in providing such a beautiful retreat, where our people may, for a short time at least, get away from their cares and busy haunts of the city. Certainly these people should be congratulated for having such a beautiful place in which to spend an afternoon, and most persons would encourage them in it. None of them, up to last Sunday, ever supposed that for this little enjoyment and comfort they were incurring the divine wrath and sending themselves and families to everlasting hell. Such desecration must, of course, be stopped; and as the authorities would not interfere, four of the faithful, upon whose shoulders alone rested the entire responsibility for the three or four thousand souls assembled there, took themselves to these grounds, and upon their bended knees, began long and pathetic appeals to the Almighty to disperse this gathering of happy, innocent people, and send them immediately to their respective homes, there to ask forgiveness for the unpardonable sin of seeking recreation and fresh air for themselves and families. But the Lord, for some reason, did not see fit to answer these prayers, and the devil, in the shape of an officer, finally succeeded in driving these holy messengers from the grounds. Tally one for the efficacy of prayer.

This has been a season of much rain and unusually severe thunder and lightning. Lightning has frequently struck within the city limits; only three times to do damage. It struck the Methodist church steeple once, and the Lutheran church twice. God must have been very careless with his fireworks, or shall we tally one for the devil?

There is no evil in the world which has been the occasion for so many constant and continuous prayers, as the abolition of the liquor traffic, and the reformation of the drunkard. Yet the business keeps right on, and the drunkard is continually, and without intermission, being manufactured. Millions

of prayers have annually gone up from the pulpit and the home, from the streets, and even from the saloons, for the reformation of some lost one. The pathetic appeals of the heart-broken mother, sister and daughter for the reformation of husband, son, or brother, ought to melt the heart of a stone, yet God fails to respond. Tally another for the efficacy of prayer.

Our Congress passes a bill for the abolition of the canteen in the army. The President refers the matter to the Attorney-General, and he holds the law to be inoperative. The entire clergy of the country call upon the Lord to over-ride the Attorney-General, and to guide the President in the right. So far these prayers have been ineffectual, and we fear we must tally another for the devil.

There once lived on a farm, near the village, a noble, kind-hearted girl. She had been brought up by her parents, under strict church discipline, and was a firm, conscientious believer. Near by lived a country lad of equally good and generous ways. He, too, had been brought up in the same Christian faith. In time the friendship of these children ripened into perfect love, and they were married. In their new relation they became still more active members in the church, and active participants in all prayer meetings. In time five little ones came to still more brighten their already happy home; and ranged in age from one to twelve years. The older ones were regular attendants at the Sunday School. At this time the most dreaded of all diseases, malignant diphtheria, entered this happy home, and, despite the most frantic prayers of the distracted mother, supplemented by the broken-hearted father, and the entire community in which they lived, these innocent children, within three days, had passed away. Five little graves in the churchyard was the answer to these prayers. The mother, bereft of reason by this awful calamity, has long been a hopeless inmate of an asylum. The farm long since has gone on a mortgage, and the distracted father is rapidly approaching a drunkard's grave. Let us add one more tally for the efficacy of prayer.

There lived upon the river bank a man who was in every sense wicked and depraved. By excessive drink he had lost all chance for work, for none wanted him about. He was cruel and brutal with his children, and he beat and misused his wife, upon whom he and his family depended for their daily support. One Sunday this monster went out on the river to

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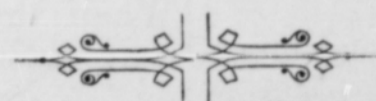
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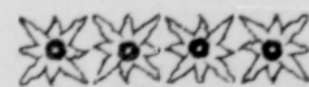
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