

The Family Circle

BEDTIME.

As A was sitting, fast asleep,
 "It's time for bed," said B;
 C Crept into his little Cot,
 To Dreamland off went D.

E closed its eyes, F Fretful grew;
 "Good night," G softly said;
 H Hurried up the Wooden Hill,
 To put itself in bed.

J Jumped for Joy when bedtime came,
 K Kissed good night all 'round;
 L asked for Light, M found a Match,
 The land of Nod N found.

O Owned that it was Over-tired,
 To Pillowland P Pressed;
 Q Queried why it was so Quiet,
 When R Retired to Rest.

S went in Search of Slumberland,
 Too tired was T to stay;
 U went Upstairs, V Vanished, too,
 And W led the Way.

When X 'Xclaimed "How Y Yawns!"
 With Zest responded Z:
 "I'm last of all to go to bed,
 But here's a nap for me!"

REAL HAPPINESS.

I have searched for happiness in the elegant life of the drawing-room, in sumptuous banquets, and in the dissipation of balls and theatres. I have taken part in many festivals. I sought for it also in the possession of gold, in the excitement of gaining, in the illusions of marvellous romances, but in vain, while one hour spent in visiting a sick person, in consoling one in affliction, in helping an unfortunate man, has sufficed to procure me an enjoyment more delicious than all worldly delights.—A Young Man, quoted by the Rev. Father Felix.

VALUE OF MEDITATION.

Measured by ordinary rules, the Venerable Cure of Ars should have been accounted one of the least effective of preachers. He was not a man of brilliant parts. He had made a poor course of studies, not for lack of diligence, but for a notable lack of capacity. He had not a commanding presence nor a rich voice. He was timid and retiring to a fault. Yet, the Cure of Ars. was one of the most effective of preachers, for he produced results. When he was asked the source of his wonderful sermons—wonderful only in his own mouth, for no one else can get much out of them—he pointed to the *prie dieu* where, on his knees, he made his long meditations.

It is quite the thing to refer to people who are worth knowing, and most to be relied upon, as the "thinking people." We take such people for granted as the backbone of civilisation. Why? The reason is traditional. Thinking people are the successors of the "clerks" of the Middle Ages, the clergy who kept learning in the world, and placed it under a debt of gratitude it never can repay. They were thinkers because they meditated; and it was because they meditated that they were the learned. How much more they owed to meditation than to books we may at least guess from the fact that books were scarce in their day. Now that books are plentiful and reading has largely supplanted meditation, we have no towering geniuses such as Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and Albertus Magnus. We have more superficial knowledge spread out over more people; but it was the old-day thinker who gave us the foundation for even that.

Is meditation becoming a lost art? I fear that it is, at least amongst the laity. I fear, even, that hard work is keeping it at a disadvantage amongst the clergy. But can we afford to lose it? We cannot. Meditation is the key to a storehouse without which we would be clad only in intellectual rags and tatters, the cast-off clothes of others, and often shoddy from the beginning. Meditation is the mystic vision that gives us a glimpse of the unrevealed beauties of Eternal Truth. Revelation gave us eyes to see. Meditation is the glass that gives our eyes the power to see further and see deeper. What the scientist is without his microscope, is the Christian without the practice of Meditation.—*Extension Magazine*.



THE LAST KINGS OF PAGAN IRELAND.

In 431 Pope Celestine sent St. Palladius "to the Scots believing in Christ," to be their bishop; so there must have been Christians in the island to render such a measure needful. There is no authentic account of the manner or way which these early Christians received the Faith. Conjecture, however, has it that in the many plundering excursions made by the last two kings of pagan Ireland into Britain and Gaul, the Irish (or Scots, as they were called) may have come to know something of the Christian religion. These two kings were Niall of the Nine Hostages and Dathy, his successor. It is supposed to have been during the reign of the former that St. Patrick, with his two sisters, was carried captive to Ireland. Niall paid for his love of warfare with his life. He was assassinated on the banks of the Loire in 405.

Niall was succeeded by his grand-nephew, Dathy, who inherited the military ambition of his dead kinsman. No sooner was he established on the throne than he began to make raids on the lands of his neighbors. His Druids had told him that he was to be king of Alba (Scotland), and Dathy was delighted with the prophecy. He held a great meeting at Tara, and a feast of more than usual magnificence was kept. Bonfires blazed, the Druids chanted, and, with the approval of all, the King set out on an expedition to Gaul at the head of an immense army. He pursued his victorious way, striking terror wherever he went.

The foraying went on successfully till Dathy and his host reached the Alps. In one of the solitudes at the foot of the loftiest mountain, there lived a hermit of royal race named Parmenius. The pious old man led a very austere life, shut off from all intercourse with the world. But the King had no respect for his sanctity. Dathy demolished the tower that gave the holy hermit shelter; and the legend goes on to tell how he warned the King of his coming sudden death. The elements verified the prophecy—

Forth from the thundercloud
 Leaps out a foe as proud,
 Sudden the monarch bowed.
 On rushed the vanguard.
 Wildly the King they raise,
 Struck by the lightning's blaze,
 Ghastly his dying gaze,
 Clutching his standard.

The army was terror-stricken. Dathy's son took command; and the host began its retreat, carrying the remains of the King. It is said that as many as ten fierce battles were fought before the Irish forces could finally reach the coast. Then:

Mournfully and dolefully
 The Irish warriors sailed away
 O'er the deep resounding sea,
 Till, wearily and mournfully,
 They anchored in Eblana's bay.

This carrying home of their dead King shows that the ancient Irish had, as they still have, a great reverence and love for the dead. Dathy was interred with his kin.

Broad is his carn's base,
 Nigh the "King's burial-place,"
 Last of the pagan race,
 Lieth King Dathy.