

January 31st

Memory verse:


Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

Luke 11:35

See yesterday's lesson for information about this memory verse.

Something to listen to – and sing¹



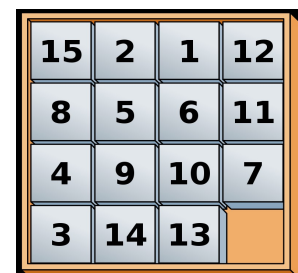
The composer Schubert (1797-1828) was born on 31st January. He lived all his short life in Vienna and wrote very beautiful melodies. Many of his closest friends were poets and he set hundreds of their poems to music to be sung as songs with piano accompaniment. These songs are usually known by their German name of *Lieder* (pronounced “leeder”) which is the plural of the word *Lied* meaning a song. Schubert’s piano accompaniments always set the scene or give a picture that is part of the poem. In his “Cradle Song” for instance there is a gentle rocking figure to represent the rocking of the cradle. In *Hark, hark! The Lark*, the piano has a lively rhythmic figure  that gives a feeling of joyful forward movement to the song. This song also demonstrates one of Schubert’s other characteristics as a composer. He was very skilful at modulation or changes of key. He changes key in his music in a way that has a surprising and beautiful effect. Look at the line beginning “and winking Marybuds...” (b.19). Here the accidentals carry the music into the key of A flat major which is a long way from the “home” key of C in which the song starts. Listen to the effect.

Both these songs are in today's optional resources files so that you can learn to sing them. Find a recording of both to listen to.² Of course, most of Schubert’s songs were originally written in German. The *Cradle Song* is given here in an English translation. *Hark Hark the Lark* was originally written in English because the words are from Shakespeare, although it is often sung in German.

Also in today's optional resources files is the song *The Brook*. When you listen to this song notice the accompaniment. How does Schubert make the accompaniment express the words of the song?³

A puzzle and a game to play⁴

Do you enjoy doing puzzles? I expect you have seen this one. Little plastic versions of it are common as toys and you may even find one in a party cracker. Sometimes there is a picture rather than numbers and sometimes the puzzle is simpler, with just nine spaces in the tray and 8 tiles. The tiles have to be slid into position and the objective is to get them all into the correct order from 1 to 15. This puzzle, sometimes known as a “gem puzzle” became hugely popular in the 1870s in America. The craze became so intense that employers put up notices in offices, forbidding workers to play with the puzzle during office hours when they should be working. At first the puzzles were wooden and came in a little box, unlike the modern plastic versions where the piece interlock and cannot be removed from the tray. The wooden tiles were simple removable blocks. The number 16 was included, filling all



1 Adapted from material on the *Mothers' Companion* flashdrive, available from <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com/>

2 I suggest <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mD5EFzJrZwE> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2OUu2JGXXuc> both student performances.

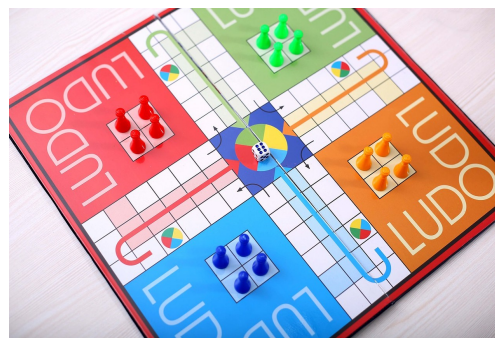
3 Listen to it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ih3Q-wmsWy8>

4 Information from file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/15_puzzle_reduced.pdf and other sources.

the spaces, and the challenge was to arrange the numbers so that they made 4 rows each adding up to 34.

The vogue for the puzzle was given an added fillip, by a puzzle-maker and chess expert, Samuel Loyd (1841-1911) who was born on 31st January. Loyd realised that of the total number of possible arrangements of the numbers 1-15 in the tray, *only half* could ever be solved by the sliding method. The other arrangements, could never “come out right” however they were slid about. Armed with this valuable piece of information, Loyd issued a challenge. The tray was set up with all the numbers in the correct places except the last two. These, tiles 14 and 15, were reversed so that the last row was: 13,15,14, space. Loyd knew that this was one of the *impossible* combinations. He offered a prize of \$1000 secure in the knowledge that no one would be able to produce a series of moves that would solve the puzzle.

In fact, Samuel Loyd, though good at chess and a skilful mathematician, was a bit of a trickster and a notorious self publicist. He even claimed to have invented Pachisi or Parcheesi – the game we call Ludo. This was a blatant untruth. Ludo is a form of a very ancient Indian game, India's national game in fact, originally played with people in place of counters – on a very large board, of course! I have heard of giant human ludo being played on a “board” marked out in the sand in some countries – there's something to remember next time you go to the beach! If you have a Ludo set you could get it out today and play a game. If you made a tetotum for the lesson on September 14th last year, you could use it for Ludo.⁵



Something to read from History⁶



Today is the anniversary of the death of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) sometimes called “the prince of preachers” whose sermons and books are still widely read today. If you did these lessons last year you might have read his talk “Try” from his *John Ploughman's Talks* which was included in the lesson for 19th June. Spurgeon had a dry wit and his *John Ploughman's Talks* and *John Ploughman's Pictures* were very popular – and still are today.

At the end of his life Spurgeon was involved in a controversy. There were few Christian leaders who would stand against the errors that were creeping into the church. In 1887 Robert Schindler wrote some articles called “The Downgrade” in the *Sword and Trowel* magazine⁷. The articles concentrated on Nonconformist churches and the first one traced the deterioration in the churches after the Great Ejection of 1662, tracing its beginnings to attacks on the person of Christ. Schindler’s article showed how the 18th century revival reversed this trend. The second article brought the story up to date and described the lack of faith in the late 19th century with the loss of belief in the inspiration of Scripture being the first wrong step on the road to serious error. Spurgeon himself continued on the same theme, pointing out that there were men at the top of almost all the denominations who did not believe that the Bible was literal fact. Through the theological colleges of the denominations the ideas of higher criticism had come in. He

5 If you want to make you own gem puzzle out of cardboard there is a template here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NcHgOhwAdaAnIg6wiwtN7WlGG-EHYU9/view>

6 Adapted from *The Story of God's Dealings with our Nation* Volume 2 which is available here: <https://www.creationresearchstore.com/s/search?q=The%20Story%20of%20Gods%20Dealings%20with%20our%20Nation> A version of this chapter also appears on *The Mothers' Companion Flashdrive* available here: <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com>.

7 The church magazine of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London where Spurgeon was minister.

bluntly associated higher criticism with apostasy and was surprised to find that almost no one agreed with him. Most Christians seemed to think that so long as people were being converted, it did not matter if there were men at the top of the denominations who “did not see the truth of the Bible in quite the same way” as they did. A controversy began in the religious press of the day with Spurgeon under attack from all sides. When the matter was discussed by the Baptist Union even some of the men supported financially by Spurgeon and trained in his own excellent college did not support him and he was defeated. Spurgeon left the Baptist Union and continued to call attention to the departure from the faith, urging all churches to stand firm on the Bible and denouncing the worldliness that came into the churches with the new heresy. After Spurgeon’s death in on 31st January, 1892 the Bible League Trust was formed to continue his work.⁸

Here is one of Spurgeon's *John Ploughman's Pictures* that I think you will enjoy reading. It is called “Never Stop the Plough to Catch a Mouse.”

THERE'S not much profit in this game. Think of a man and a boy and four horses all standing still for the sake of a mouse! What would old friend Tusser say to that? I think he would rhyme in this⁹ fashion

*A ploughman deserveth a cut of the whip,
If for idle pretence he let the hours slip.*

Heaps of people act like the man in our picture. They have a great work in hand which wants all their wits, and they leave it to squabble over some pretty nothing, not worth a fig. Old master Tom would say to them

*No more tittle tattle,
go on with your cattle.*



He could not bear for a farmer to let his horses out for carting even, because it took their work away from the farm, and so I am sure he would be in a great stew if he saw farmers wasting their time at matches, and hunts, and the like. He says

*Who slacketh his tillage a carter to be,
For groat got abroad, at home shall lose three;
For sure by so doing he brings out of heart,
Both land for the corn, and horse for the cart.*

The main chance must be minded, and the little things must be borne with. Nobody would burn his house down to kill the blackbeetles, and it would never answer to kill the bullocks to feed the cats. If our baker left off making bread for a week while he cracked the cockroaches, what should we all do for breakfast? If the butcher sold no more meat till he had killed all the blow-flies, we should be many a day without mutton. If the water companies never gave the Londoners a drink till they had fished every gudgeon out of the Thames, how would the old ladies make their tea? There's no use in stopping your fishing because of the sea-weed, nor your riding because of the dust.

Now, our minister said to me the other day, “John, if you were on the committees of some of our societies you would see this mouse-hunting done to perfection. Not only committees, but whole

⁸ <https://www.bibleleaguetrust.org/>

⁹ One of the best-selling books of Elizabethan poetry was Thomas Tusser's (c. 1524-1580) instructional poem *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*, We will meet him again in the lesson for 3rd May.

bodies of Christian people, go mouse-hunting.”

“Well,” said I, “minister, just write me a bit, and I will stick it in my book, it will be beef to my horseradish. Here's his writing:

“A society of good Christian people will split into pieces over a petty quarrel, or mere matter of opinion, while all around them the masses are perishing for want of the gospel. A miserable little mouse, which no cat would ever hunt, takes them off from their Lord's work. Again, intelligent men will spend months of time and heaps of money in inventing and publishing mere speculations, while the great field of the world lies unploughed. They seem to care nothing how many may perish so long as they can ride their hobbies. In other matters a little common sense is allowed to rule, but in the weightiest matters foolishness is sadly conspicuous. As for you and me, John, let us kill a mouse when it nibbles our bread, but let us not spend our lives over it. What can be done by a mousetrap or a cat should not occupy all our thoughts. The paltry trifles of this world are much of the same sort. Let us give our chief attention to the chief things, the glory of God, the winning of souls for Jesus, and our own salvation. There are fools enough in the world, and there can be no need that Christian men should swell the number. Go on with your ploughing, John, and I will go on with my preaching, and in due season we shall reap if we faint not.”