

Our Young Folks.

ALWAYS A RIVER TO CROSS.

There's always a river to cross;
Always an effort to make,
If there's anything good to win,
Any rich prize to take;
Yonder's the fruit we crave:
Yonfer the charming scene,
But deep and wide, with a troubled tide,
Is the river that lies between.

For the treasures of precious worth
We must patiently dig and dive;
For the places we long to fill
We must push, and struggle, and drive:
And always and everywhere
We'll find in our onward course,
Thorns for the feet, and trials to meet,
And a difficult river to cross.

The rougher the way we take,
The stouter the hearts and the nerve,
The stones in our path we break,
Nor e'er from our impulse swerve;
For the glory we hope to win,
Our labours we count no loss;
'Tis folly to pause and murmur, because
Of the river we have to cross.

So, ready to do and to dare,
Should we in our places stand,
Fulfilling the Master's will,
Fulfilling the soul's demand;
For, though as the mountains high
The billows may roar and toss,
They'll not overwhelm if the Lord's at the helm
When the difficult river we cross!

TRUE AMBITION.

There is a real sort of success that cannot be monopolised. Our being's end and aim is to be good and to do good. Here every one may succeed, for character is a kind of wealth that knows no failure. "They truly are faithful who devote their entire lives to amendment." Every man may make his life successful in this sense. And as one is never so successful as when he least thinks of becoming so, such an one will probably gain in the long run more happiness, and exercise a greater influence in the world than his more grasping neighbour. "Oh! keep me innocent; make others great," was the prayer written by Queen Carolina Matilda of Denmark with a diamond on the window of her castle at Friendsborg. The more we know of the lives of the great, whether from history or from personal acquaintance, the more we become aware how many of them would say:

'Tis better to be lowly born,
And range with humble dwellers in content,
Than to be perked up in a glistening grief,
And wear a golden sorrow.

Earthly success is uncertain of acquisition, brief in continuance, disappointing in fruition. Not so with the success that is aimed at by true ambition. It is certain to all who seek it. It is endless in duration. It never disappoints:

'Tis not in mortals to command success,
But we'll do more, Sampronius; we'll deserve it.

Epictetus once received a visit from a certain magnificent orator going to Rome on a lawsuit, who wished to learn from the Stoic something of his philosophy. Epictetus received his visitor coolly, not believing in his sincerity. "You will only criticise my style," said he; "not really wishing to learn principles." "Well, but," said the orator, "if I attend to that sort of thing, I shall be a mere pauper like you, with no plate, nor equipage, nor land." "I don't want such things," replied Epictetus; "and besides, you are poorer than I am, after all. Patron or no patron, what care I? You do care. I am richer than you. I don't care what Cæsar thinks of me. I flatter no one. This is what I have instead of your gold and silver plate. You have silver vessels, but earthenware reasons, principles, appetites. My mind to me a kingdom is, and it furnishes me with abundant and happy occupation in lieu of your restless idleness. All your possessions seem small to you; mine seem great to me. Your desire is insatiate—mine is satisfied."

A BOY AND A BEE.

Van was in his uncle's front yard beating a drum. He had no remarkable musical talent, so he never played tunes; and as the thumping seemed at times monotonous, he varied it by striking the fence, instead of the drum. The hard, rough sound which resulted gave him much pleasure.

It was the middle of the summer, and Van and his sister Julia were visiting in a country town. Julia had come because she had been pale and weak for some time, and it was hoped that a change of air might do her good. There was no particular reason why Van should have been invited, except that his uncle thought his sister might like to have him with her.

He did not think about her this morning until he heard her call him from the porch. She stood there leaning against a pillar, and her eyes looked very dark and tired.

"Van," she said, "would you please not beat that drum—at least not so near the house?"

"Why not, I'd like to know?" asked the boy; and gave two strong strokes to emphasize the question.

"Because my head really does ache very badly, and the drum makes it worse."

"Stuff!" said Van. "You go off somewhere if you don't want to hear. I guess I can do what I like with my own drum."

Julia went into the house without another word, and Van beat the drum very furiously for a few minutes. Then all at once he felt tired, and dropped down on the grass beside a rose-bush. He threw one arm out as he went down, and it struck several petals from the only blossom on the bush.

Something flew off with the petals, but not so silently as they. A honey-bee rose into the air with an angry buzz, and came down a moment later upon the intruder's rosy cheek.

Aunt Isabel was really frightened when a sobbing boy, tears running down his face, burst into her sitting-room. But when she found out what the matter was, she seemed less excited than poor little Julia, who had been lying on the lounge. His aunt put soda upon the sting, and Julia made him lie down in her place, while she sat beside him and stroked his hair. Presently he felt a little better, and began to scold.

"I wish all the bees in the world were killed. It's a shame if one can't go out doors without getting stung."

"The bees are not to blame," said aunt Isabel. "They have stings, and they have a right to use them."

Van opened his eyes and pulled aside his bandage, to look reproachfully at his aunt.

"O! I'm sorry you have been stung," said she: "but I meant that you couldn't expect anything else from a bee. It doesn't know any better. Of course, if it had been a boy, you might blame it for doing anything which would certainly hurt you."

Van was by no means dull; he understood his lesson. To be sure, he shut his eyes again, and lay sometime without speaking. But next morning his drum lay silent in the house, because he remembered that Julia had asked him some days before to go to the creek with her, and it seemed such a lovely day for a walk.

SABBATH BREAKING AND ITS RESULTS.

A crowd of boys were standing on the street corner, one bright summer in early autumn, when George Leonard passed on his way from the afternoon Sabbath school.

"We are just waiting for you, George. A crowd of us are going nutting."

"I should like to go during the week, but can't to-day,"

"Now George, you are too good a fellow to be such a crank. The most of us have to work hard all the week and don't have any time for strolls except Sunday. You can't gain-say such argument as this. So come along."

"Excuse me, boys, I can't go to-day, but will go any other time."

John Gray spoke testily: "The balance of us are not so fortunate as yourself. If we had as much of the world's goods as you, we could afford to be as sanctimonious as yourself."

A shade of sadness passed over George's face as he said, "Every one knows that my improved circumstances are of recent date. You all know that I have always done the hardest kind of work until my uncle died and left me his property. You know I had a holiday as seldom as yourselves. And I could not dishonour my Master by using His day for my own personal enjoyment."

One of the boys, who seemed to be irresolute said hesitatingly:

"Please tell us some passage of Scripture bearing upon this point. I don't know any except the commandment, and I don't think it is very explicit: for "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" may mean more or less as we choose to take it."

George replied quickly:

"I will quote a passage from Isaiah lviii. 13, 14: 'If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words. Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord: and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.'

"You can see that this is explicit and unconditional not to think our own thoughts or speak our own words or find our own pleasures. The reward is, we shall ride upon the high places of the earth. I firmly believe my success has, in a great measure, been due to my regard for this injunction."

"I never heard that before," said Harry Maynard, "and I'm with you, George, in this," and he moved quickly to his friend's side, and turned away with him. The crowd laughed in a scoffing manner, and moved off to keep God's day in their usual manner.

Harry went with George to his room where they spent the time very pleasantly in studying and discussing their lessons for the following Sunday. Harry was away from home and its pure influences and what might have resulted from a first step in the wrong direction could be determined by the downward career of his former companions. They soon changed from nutting to card-playing, and this led to worse until they were ruined.

Harry often shuddered when he saw what he had escaped, and could say with the wisest of men:

"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

GRATEFUL BEARS.

A gentleman, making inquiries in Russia about the method of catching bears in that country, was told that, to entrap them, a pit was dug several feet deep, and after covering it over with turf, leaves, etc., some food was placed on the top. The bear, tempted by the bait, easily fell into the snare.

"But," he added, "if four or five happen to get in together, they will all get out again."

"How is that?" asked the gentleman.

"They form a sort of ladder by stepping on each other's shoulders, and thus make their escape."

"But how does the bottom one get out?"

"Ah! these bears, though not possessed of a mind and soul, such as God has given us, yet feel gratitude, and they won't forget the one who has been the chief means of their liberty. Scampering off, they fetch the branch of a tree, which they let down to their brother, enabling him to join them in the freedom in which they rejoice."

Sensible bears, we would say, are better than some people that we hear about, who never help anybody but themselves.

TOWARD THE SUN.

My dear young folks who are in the beginning of things why not stop wondering whether you are a Christian or not—whether this and that pleasure must be given up if you become one? Why not leave all this and simply and find out whether you are "turning toward the sun," as did the little Scotch girl of whom Miss Warner tells us?

Every day I set my plants out in our little glazed piazza for a taste of early summer, and stand there myself to watch them. How they love the sun!—seeming to yearn toward it—even as I, last winter, in my sunless sick-room, used to lay my face close against the window-frame to catch, slantwise, one little ray of blessed sunshine. Even so my plants lean toward the light, stretching forth their hands to grasp it and bring it home. Do you see?—it is their life, their joy, their rest. The pale leaves take strength and colour, the drooping buds lift up their heads, the new shoots spring forth to grow.

"I don't know," said a poor Scotch girl when the Session before whom she was examined doubted whether she "knew enough" to join the Church—"I can't tell about that. Maybe I don't know enough. But, as a flower turns to the sun, so my heart turns to the Lord Jesus."

WHY THEY WERE POOR.

Two ragged young men with faces pinched by hunger, stopped the other evening before a stately dwelling in one of our large cities. As the curtains were not drawn, they could catch glimpses of the bright interior, the walls lined with books and pictures, and prettily dressed children playing. A grave old man, with white hair alighted from his carriage and entered the house.

One of the men muttered a curse on the "bloated aristocrats." "Why should they live in idleness on the fat of the land, while you and I toil and starve?"

Now this was a hackneyed, popular bit of pathos, which has been effective since time began. The world invariably bestows its sympathy upon the poor man out in the cold and darkness, while it is apt to suspect the rich man, simply because he is rich, of being a selfish tyrant.

The facts in this case were that the owner of the mansion had earned his fortune, dollar by dollar, by steady hard work. Now that he had earned it, much of his time was given to considering and relieving the wants of his poorer brethren. He was sober, frugal and temperate.

The men outside were lazy mechanics who had chosen drink and gambling in pool rooms instead of work. They had their reward in rags and starvation.

The boys who read these lines will soon take their place as citizens of a nation where the antagonism between the poor and the rich is pushed by foolish and vicious men to the point of actual combat. Let them look at the matter as it is, unmoved by false sentiment on either side. A man who lives in a palace is not necessarily a Dives, forgetful of God; nor is the beggar at his gate sure of heaven merely because he is a beggar. It was not his poverty that carried Lazarus to Abraham's bosom.

In this country there are a great many men like George Peabody, Asa Packer, Stephen Girard, Johns Hopkins and Isaiah Williamson, who have accumulated great wealth by hard, honourable work, and who have devoted it to the help of humanity. And there are countless poor men who owe their poverty to idleness, dishonesty, or love of liquor.

Learn to be just, boys, to the rich as to the poor, and you will be lacking in charity to neither. If you have inherited wealth, remember how hard it is for those who put their "trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God." If you are poor remember that you are no more honest, estimable or devout because you are poor.

The man with five hundred dollars a year may trust in his money and exaggerate its value as truly as the man with millions. If you lie or cheat for a single dollar, it soils your soul the same as if it were all the diamonds of Golconda.

A GLASGOW denomination, the Children of Zion, number about one hundred and twenty. Last year they raised \$490. Their pastor is a family grocer who formerly belonged to Mr. Wells' congregation.