

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

CHESTNUTS.

Down in the orchard, all the day,
The apples ripened and dropped away,
Tawny, and yellow, and red they fell,
Filling the air with a spicy smell.

There were purple grapes on the alders low,
But the jays had gathered them long ago;
And the merry children had plundered well
Hedge and thicket and hazel dell.

But the sturdy chestnuts over the hill
Guarded their prickly caskets still,
And laughed in scorn at the wind and rain,
Beating the burly limbs in vain.

"Hush!" said the frost; "if you'll hold your breath
Till hill and valley are still as death,
I will whisper a spell that shall open wide
The caskets green where the treasures hide."

Close at the door of each guarded cell
He breathed the words of his wonderful spell
And the bristling lances turned aside
And every portal flew open wide.

Up sprung the wind with a loud "Ho! Ho!"
And scattered the treasures to and fro;
And the children shouted, "Come away!
There is sport in the chestnut woods to-day!"

BORROWING A QUARTER.

Three city boys were on their way home from school, and as there were at least two hours before dark (and before supper time) they were quite ready to stop and look at anything, from a circus to a dog-fight.

"O, boys, just look!" cried Charlie Thorn.

"What? where?" exclaimed his companions. They were in front of a second-hand book store; and pointing to a thick, green-covered volume in the window, Charlie exclaimed:

"Why, there's the 'Arabian Nights'—real good, not torn a bit, marked 'Only twenty-five cents!' Full of pictures too!"

"Oh!" said, or rather sighed, Edgar Denny and Will Farnham.

Three faces were pressed close to the bookseller's window, three pairs of eager eyes gazed over the treasure; for to what ten or twelve-year-old is not "The Arabian Nights" a treasure?

Neither Edgar, Charlie nor Will had ever read the wonderful book; but one of the latter's cousins had done so, and had related one or two of the stories to Will, and he in turn had repeated them to his two friends.

"I say," remarked Edgar, doubtfully, "has any fellow got a quarter?"

No fellow had; what was worse, the united wealth of the three "fellows" amounted to just seven cents.

"Perhaps, if I tell papa about it, he'll buy it for us," suggested Charlie.

"Pshaw! Somebody'll snap it up before you can get to your father's store. A bargain like that isn't to be had every day."

"If Tom Baker sees it, he'll buy it, sure pop! He's always got money," sighed Edgar. "If he hadn't been kept in, like as not he'd have bought it before this."

Suddenly Will's face brightened. Putting his hand in his pocket, he drew out a one dollar bill, and announced his intention of buying the book.

"A dollar! Where did you get it?" asked Charlie in amazement.

"Tisn't mine: it's Aunt Mary's. She gave me a dollar this noon and asked me to pay fifty cents that she owed to Mr. Jenkinson, the apothecary, you know. She will not be home till late this evening; and in the meantime I can run up to grandma's and get a quarter she owes me for some eggs I sold her—my little bantam's eggs! Aunt Mary will not mind, if I do borrow a quarter from her for a little while."

So the treasury of marvels passed into Will Farnham's possession, and the three happy boys made immediate arrangements for reading it aloud, turn and turn about. At every street corner they paused to look at "just one more picture," and it was with a violent effort that Will tore himself away to "run up to grandma's."

"But you boys may look at it while I am gone, if you'll bring it to me before supper," he remarked, graciously, as he left them.

Unfortunately he got to his grandmother's just a little while after she had left home for a two days' visit to one of her sons; so the little bantam's eggs could not be paid for then.

"Oh well, it can't be helped now," Will said to himself. "Grandma is certain to give me the quarter in a day or two, and I'll tell Aunt Mary about it as soon as she comes in."

When he got home, his mother told him to put his aunt's change on her bureau and then run to the grocer's and get some sugar for tea. After supper he betook himself to his new book, and was a thousand years and a thousand miles away. He dimly heard some one ask him about Aunt Mary's money, and he gave her a dreamy answer; and his father had to speak to him three times before he realized that it was bed-time.

Of course he for the moment forgot all about the borrowed quarter. Conscious of "good intentions" he felt no anxiety about the matter.

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"Isn't it too bad, Will, that our new cook, who makes such nice cake and pie, is not honest, and mamma's got to discharge her?" said his sister Jennie the next morning.

"Yes, it is a pity! What has she taken?"

"Not very much; but, as mamma says, it shows that her principles are not good. She or some fairy (for there was not a person but her in the room from the time you went there until mamma went in and discovered it) took a quarter out of Aunt Mary's room. You put the change on her bureau?"

"Yes, on a little blue mat."

"That was where I saw it," said Mrs. Farnham.

"Then it was lucky for your purse, Aunt Mary," said Will, with a laugh, "that I had borrowed a quarter of you, or you would be fifty cents poorer instead of twenty-five."

"What do you mean? I lent you no quarter!" was the surprised reply.

"No, but I borrowed it."

"Did you, then, lay but one quarter on the bureau?" asked the mother.

"Yes, ma'am. I borrowed the other."

"Oh!" exclaimed Mrs. Farnham, with a

sigh of relief. "Then the cook is not dishonest, and I have unjustly suspected her."

"I am very sorry I did not explain sooner," said Will, earnestly.

"So you ought to be! But suppose you explain now," interposed his father, a little sternly.

And Will told the whole story, adding: "You see, Aunt Mary, I didn't know that grandma was going away, and I thought I could get the money at once."

"Oh, it is all right. You were welcome to the money," answered his aunt.

"I disagree with you, Mary," exclaimed Mr. Farnham, quickly. "I think there is a great principle at stake, and that Will did not do right. There is but one step, one very little step, between borrowing a thing without its owner's permission, and stealing."

"O, papa!" cried Jennie, horrified at the word, "our Will wouldn't steal!"

"I sincerely hope and firmly believe that he would not; but no one can tell what he may do under strong temptation. The clerk who borrows his employer's funds fully intends to restore them. Yet how often we read of a clerk or cashier involving himself beyond recall just by 'borrowing' a few thousands to speculate with. I once knew a gentleman, highly educated and very intelligent, whom I would have trusted with my whole fortune, such implicit confidence did I and all who knew him have in his thorough integrity. He had a few hundred dollars invested in real estate and felt himself honest (as our Will did), and he 'borrowed' a less sum from his employer's funds to invest in some stock that was sure to sell at a high price. Even if he lost all, he knew he could repay it in a day or two, long before his employer needed it. Unluckily, he did not lose. So he 'borrowed' again, and won, and yet again. And so on, until one fine morning the tables turned, and he lost—lost seven thousand dollars!"

"Poor man! what did he do?"

"What could he do? He confessed his dishonesty, but he could not make restitution. So he was sent to the State prison, and died there, overcome with humiliation and contrition. You see, Will, what an honest man may be led into doing, by borrowing another's goods without permission."

"Father, I am very sorry I did it; I felt so sure of being able to pay it at once. But I can understand now why you say there is such a little step between borrowing without leave and stealing. O, mamma, did you accuse cook?"

"No, I only suspected her. I waited to be very sure."

"There it is, Will! You came very near being an innocent cause of great injustice to cook, and of great trouble to your mother. It is easy to commit an apparent trifling fault, but difficult, nay, impossible to foresee what calamities may result from it. 'Abstain from all appearance of evil,' is a good motto for boys, as well as men."

To learn much, we must learn a little at a time, and learn that well.—Locke.

THE London City Mission has now 450 missionaries at work in the great metropolis.