

JOHN BURROUGHS' SCHOOL-DAYS.

We had a mile and a half to go to school, part of the way across a very windy hill, and during the severe blizzards of that high altitude I used to suffer a good deal from the cold, frequently freezing my ears, and once one of my little fingers. But my feet suffered most, encased in stiff cow-hide boots, unprotected by rubbers or arctics. Often I would reach the school-house with my boots frozen as stiffly as if they were cast-iron. And the chilblains I suffered from, and the intolerable itching of my heels as they began to thaw out on the approach of spring, is not pleasant to think about.

Till the age of about twelve I went to school winter and summer; but after that time my help was needed on the farm, and I went to school only winters. Then I mastered Dayboll's arithmetic, and remember yet the "sum" on the last pages of the book, which was considered the toughest problem of all—the sum of the hare and the hound. What a wilderness the book seemed to the beginner; with what a curious interest we used to look forward into "Tare and Tret," "The Rule of Three," the "Double Rule of Three," etc., as to strange mysteries into which we should by and by be initiated.

When about fifteen I began the study of algebra and grammar, and I recall what trouble I had to get the books. My father was a fairly prosperous farmer, but did not hold very liberal ideas on the subject of education. He thought reading, writing and arithmetic enough for his boys, and it proved enough for all but me; I wanted an algebra. This was a new fangled notion that father did not approve of. He had never before heard of such a study, and refused to get the book. One Saturday, when I was going to the village on some errand, I labored with him the best I knew how—that is to say, I "coaxed" him all the morning to allow me to buy an algebra. But he sternly refused, and I started off with a heavy heart and wet eyes for the village. Mother was always on the side of her children, and had vigorously seconded my request before I started. Before I had got a quarter of a mile from the house, and while yet in sight of it, she made it so hot for father that he yielded, and shouted to me that I might get the book. But my blood was up, and I resolved not to get it till I could do so with my own money, which I was soon able to do. Sugar weather was at hand; I tapped some trees, and got some small cakes of very fine sugar in the market early. These brought me money to buy this and other books, among them my first grammar.—*John Burroughs in Wide Awake.*

WORKING FOR GOD.

There is a great deal said in these days about working for God. All over the country young people are being gathered together into little bands, with the objects before them of doing what they can, day by day, for the good of those around them, and so working for God. All this is good, very good. But there is something that comes even before work for God, and that is, love to Him. Which would your own dear mother, or, perhaps,

your dearest friend, care for most, that you should do work for her, or that you should love her? Of course, she would choose to have you love her. And in having your love, she would have your work, too; for then you wouldn't be able to help doing little things for her all the time.

Now, God feels to each one of you with a mother's heart, and He can no more be satisfied to have your work without your love than your mother would be. No, He wants work that springs out of love. He asks for your heart. Do you think He will be satisfied if you offer Him work instead?

He asks for your heart first. Why? Because He knows this is the starting-point. We hear people say very often nowadays, "Begin to work for God, and by and by you will love Him." God never says so. Working for any one is not apt to produce love. And especially love for God is not apt to come by working for Him. People may work for Him all their lives, and yet be without any real love to Him.

Take God's way, dear young friends. Do as He asks, and give Him your hearts and He may put His love into them. Then everything else will follow. Then working for Him and trying to please Him will be the sweetest thing in your lives.

THE DIAMOND RING.

A MERCHANT named William, who had travelled into a far country over the sea, and obtained a large fortune by industry and skill, after many years returned to his native country.

When the ship landed, he heard that his relations were just then assembled at a jovial supper in a neighbouring country-house. He immediately hastened thither, and in the joy of his heart did not even take time to put on a better coat instead of his grey cloak, which was tolerably well beaten about by the voyage. But as he came into the brilliantly-lighted room his relations testified but little pleasure at seeing him back again, since, in consequence of his shabby dress, they supposed that he had returned poor.

A young Moor, whom he had brought with him, was very indignant at the relations, and said, "These are bad people, who do not even welcome their friend with affection after so long an absence."

"Only wait," said the merchant aside to him; "they will soon change their countenances."

He then put a ring, which he carried with him, on his finger; and lo! all their countenances immediately brightened up, and each pressed towards their "own dear cousin William." One squeezed him by the hand, another embraced him, and all contended for the honour of receiving and entertaining him at their houses.

"Has the ring some hidden power to bewitch the people?" asked the Black, in amazement.

"Oh, no!" said William; "they only see by the sparkling ring, which is worth some thousand crowns, that I am rich; and riches are all in all to them."

"O you blinded men!" cried the Moor; "it is not, then, the ring, but covetousness, which has bewitched you! Can they indeed value a bit of yellow ore, and a transparent stone, at a higher rate than a man so noble as my master?"

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