

Make a Beginning.

If you never make a beginning, lad,
You will never come to the end.
Why stand at the foot of the mountain, lad,
When you can to its brow ascend?

The way is weary, and steep, and long—
A toilsome journey, and slow.
But you cannot jump to a summit, lad;
Up step by step you must go.

There are many weeds in your garden, lad;
You must pull them, one by one.
In the time we waste, only dreading work,
Half life's labour can be done.

Just begin, my lad; and in years to come
That day you will surely thank
That you put your first seed in the earth,
Your first dollar in the bank.

A beginning is a promise, lad,
A foundation for vast store;
For we have sweet assurance, lad,
He who hath can hope for more.

Therefore, hesitate no longer, lad;
Hold your head up, and begin;
If you make a start, and then persevere,
Life's stern battles you will win.
—Mary E. Lambert.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Rev W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

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PRAYER.

WHEN you have prayed, does not your heart feel lighter, your soul more content? Prayer renders affliction less grievous, makes joy more pure. It gives to the one fortitude; to the other a celestial perfume. What are you doing in the world? And have you nothing to ask of him who has placed you here? You are a traveller who seeks his country. Do not walk with head bowed down. Raise your eyes heavenward that you may see the way. Heaven is your home; and when you look above, do you return no thanks? Have you no petition to make, or do you ever remain mute?

It has been said, "Of what good is prayer? God is too high above us to listen to such worthless creatures!" And who, then, has made these worthless creatures? Who has given them feeling, thought, and speech, if not God? And if he has been so good toward them, was it to forsake them afterward, and repulse them far from him? Truly, he who says this in his heart, that God despises his works, he blasphemes God.

Others have said: "Of what good is prayer? Does not God know better than we of what things we have need?" Yes! God knows better than we of our necessities, for God is himself our own first need, and prayer to God is the beginning of love in our heart. The father knows the needs of his child. For that reason should the son never return, by word or action, gratitude to his kind parent? When animals suffer, are in fear, or hunger, they utter pitiful cries. These are the prayers which they address to God, and he bows down a listening ear. Should man, then, alone of all creation, be the only being whose voice never reaches the ear of his Creator? Over the plains sometimes passes a violent hot wind, and the withered branches of the shrubs and flowers bend to the earth; but moistened by the dew they regain their freshness and raise their drooping heads. So there are burning winds which pass over the soul to wither it. Prayer is the dew which refreshes the sad and weary spirit.

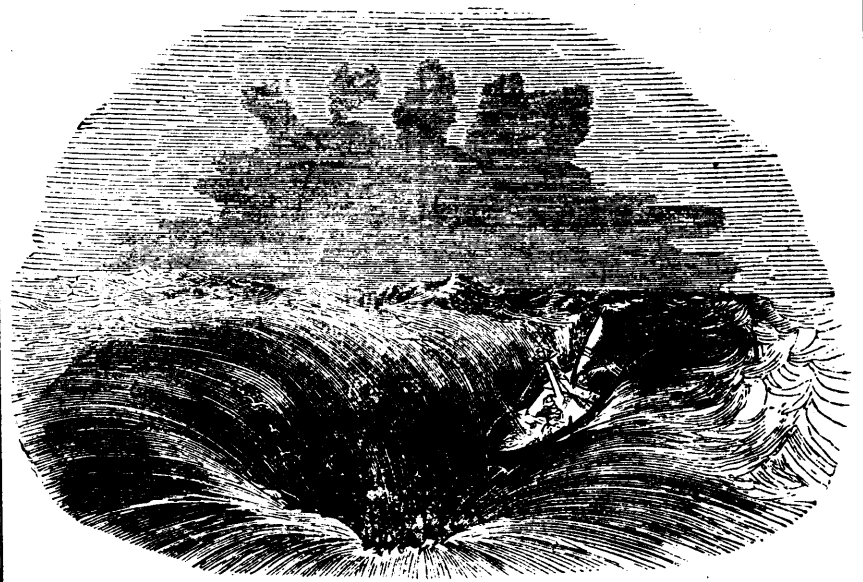
THE POWER OF CONSCIENCE.

A KAFFIR girl, in southern Africa, who had come under the happy influence of Christian missions, went cheerfully to the missionary one day and dropped four sixpences into his hand, saying, "That is your money." "You do not owe me anything," replied the teacher.

"I do," she answered; "and I will tell you how. At the public examination you promised a sixpence to any one in the class who would write the best specimen on a slate. I gave in my slate and got the sixpence; but you did not know that another person wrote that specimen for me. Yesterday you were reading in the church about Zaccheus, who said, 'If I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.' I took from you one sixpence, and I bring you back four."—*Juvenile Missionary Magazine.*

"GOD BE WITH THEE."

It is related by travellers, as an instance of how little the customs of Eastern nations have changed during many hundreds of years, that in the fields of Palestine the very same words may be heard now as in the days of Boaz and Ruth. When the master enters the harvest-field he salutes his reapers, just as Boaz did, "The Lord be with you!" and the peasants



THE NORWEGIAN MAELSTROM.

respond always in the words, "God bless thee!" It is a happy custom that may well see no change. We should all do well to use from the heart this ancient salutation, "The Lord be with thee!"

THE NORWEGIAN MAELSTROM.

OFF the coast of Norway, southwest of the Loffoden Islands, is the wonderful Norwegian maelstrom. It is a grinding or whirling stream, as we see in this picture of it. Various stories have been told about it. An old account of it represents it as being so terrific as to swallow down ships and whales, but this is not the case. This whirlpool was examined closely by Major Vibe, superintendent of the Norwegian surveys of water. In his report he stated that in summer, when the tide is at its highest and lowest points, and if there is no storm, boats may venture to pass it. But in winter, and in storms, it would be very dangerous to attempt it. When the tide is about half-way between its highest and lowest points the waters are very violent. In winter they flow constantly toward the east at the rate of six knots (or miles) an hour. At certain times the wind drives the waters into such a commotion that they boil and whirl so fiercely that the largest steamer could not safely venture on them. Instead of drawing vessels to the bottom, however, they would be hurled against the rocks and thus ruined. Smaller vessels would be sunken by filling them with water. This maelstrom runs between the islands of Vaer and Moskenes, or rather between Moskenes and a large solitary rock which lies in the middle of the strait between Moskenes and Vaer. It is caused by the currents of the Great West fiord.

AND O Lord! grant that we may not despise our rulers; and grant that they may not act so that we can't help it.—*Dr. Lyman Beecher in a public prayer.*

UNDER the present system, the State can make drunkards faster than we can hope to reform them.—*A. M. Collins, M.D.*

ECONOMY IN YOUTH.

WHILE sensible people put no faith in fortune-telling, we may on general principles predict from a boy's habits whether he is likely to succeed or fail in life. When money burns in his pocket and he is impatient to spend all that comes into his possession; when he spends every cent of his salary, and even falls into debt; when he prefers to invest his earnings in cigars, handsome clothes, and amusements to putting them at interest, we may safely predict that he will probably never attain wealth without a decided change of habits. Fifty cents a week saved in youth is often the nucleus of a large fortune. It is not so much the amount saved as the habit of saving that is important.—*Faith and Works.*

KING ALCOHOL.

BY BISHOP C. H. FOWLER, D.D.

IN dark rooms and dingy cellars, in secret conclave, he devises his plans and mixes his drugs. By night and by day he draws out the catalogues of crime. With hands polluted with blood, and locks that wriggle and crawl and hiss; with purpose fixed for slaughter, and with heart un pitying and unrelenting, he presses his infernal work. With the gold his crimes have brought him, he seeks to secure friends in the halls of legislation; to put his judges upon the bench, his advocates at the bar, his witnesses on the stand, and, to make surety doubly sure, his views in the public mind. He would control, if he could, not only our alm-houses and prisons, but also our legislative halls and our public presses. He would fill not only our cells and graveyards, but also our judgment-seats and our police commissions. This is our foe—cunning as a fox, wise as a serpent, strong as an ox, bold as a lion, merciless as a tiger, remorseless as a hyena, fierce as a pestilence, deadly as a plague. To condemn and correct such a criminal is not the pastime of an hour, but the manly, hero-born, martyr-bred work of a lifetime.