

BOYS AND GIRLS

Trees to Let.

(Hannah G. Fernald, in 'Every Other Sunday.')

Now the birds are northward winging
All the lipping leaves are singing:
'Trees, trees to let!

Here's a home for every comer,
Share with us the happy summer;
Trees, trees to let!

'Build not in the waving grasses,
They must fall ere summer passes,
Trees, trees to let!
In the bushes snakes may harm you,
Cruel cats or dogs alarm you;
Trees, trees to let!

'We will guard your nests so sure'y,
Rock your little ones securely;
Trees, trees to let!
You shall have, from our cool shadow,
Splendid views o'er wood and meadow;
Trees, trees to let!

'Come! We spread our arms to meet you,
Sing our leafy song to greet you;
Trees, trees to let!
Here's a home for every comer,
Spend with us the happy summer;
Trees, trees to let!'

Snake Stories.

(The Rev. Martyn W. Beatty, B.A., in 'Day-break.')

A snake in the grass! This does not mean much to the boys and girls who walk and run carelessly through green meadows and hay fields, and as carelessly put their hands into the holes of trees and banks and walls in Ireland. 'No snakes in our grass,' say they.

But it is a quite different story in India. And when walking in the long grass, or even on a good path, unconsciously one's eye is always open for snakes. Here are some snake stories.

Bhagwan, my native preacher, the boys, and the girls, too (for the Madam Sahib is with us), all set out one beautiful Sabbath after the evening service is over, and, picking our way in single file through the jungle, we come to Gambhirpur, a village across the Lund river valley. The first rains have fallen, and the jungle is fresh and sweet, tiny blades of grass springing like magic from the bare soil, the great broad leaves of the forest trees glittering; a clean washed green above, soft silver underneath.

In Gambhirpur the men are away busy at work in the fields, but the women come thronging to listen while we sing and talk of a Saviour—their Saviour.

Then, as the sun sinks behind Himatpur,* cresting the upland slope away to the west, and the strange light of the monsoon after-glow touches all nature with magic unreality, we come back, a chattering, happy group. The Sabbath day, with its spiritual food; the Sabbath day, with its work for Christ; the Sabbath day of rest and quiet is ending. We are happy and without care—when a black, sinuous line darts in the grass close to our feet.

'Sap! Sap! '** rises the warning shout; and as chickens fly from the swoop of a hawk, so scatters our group in a wide circle, while through the grass, first here, then there, flashes and slides a deadly cobra, its hood expanded, showing clear, unmistakable, the peculiar head marks.

Then, warily approaching, with swift, sure blow, one of the boys disables it, and grinds its head to pulp, that its power to harm may end for ever.

'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.' Gen. iii., 15.

Now, this word is true, even to this day, for the great serpent, Satan, is ever lying in our path to poison and destroy us with death.

* A native Christian village, meaning Courage-town.

** A snake! a snake!

ly sin—especially on Sunday, when we are feeling pleased and content with ourselves.

Watch and bruise his head.

We are swinging down the long slope that leads from Himatpur past Gogasar Talav,* a spot frequented by wild boar and jackals, and perhaps, occasionally, a wolf.

But of these we have not a thought. It is broad daylight, and such beasts range about only with the night; so, eager to escape the fierce sun heat, and not less trying glare, we hurry on. When, 'Take care! snake!' suddenly shouts my companion. The dread word is enough, the mind obeys at once, and a bound up and forwards, 'one blow,' as is said in Gujarat, releases from the instep of my boot a thin, yellow, whip-like line. With rapid, silent, waving movements it disappears through the sand and stunted bushes.

For a few seconds we stand, dazed a little, trying to grasp the danger that came so quickly in the bright sunlight, and as quickly disappeared—the what might have been. A slight shudder, and in silence we move on, grateful for the care which watches over us.

A snake in the grass indeed—dangerous, yet how impossible to avoid. Of a truth, we need One who cares for us—without Him we may die. And this, too, is a parable. For when we step on the snake, that is, sin—what hope if we do not OBEY—that is 'the one blow,' leaping out of the way of death at the word of warning, which He who cares for us will not fail to send.

* Talav means a pond or tank of water.

Straight as a Gun Barrel.

(Edgar L. Vincent, in the 'Visitor.')

'Is he straight?'

'Straight as a gun barrel. You can depend upon him in every spot and place.'

This was said of a boy who had asked for a place and had given as a reference the gentleman who made this firm reply. Would you not like to have men say to you, 'He is as straight as a gun barrel?'

Stop and think what that means. How straight is a gun barrel? No need to tell any boy that. He knows that in the factory where guns are made the metal is rolled and pressed and ground and polished until the most practised eye cannot detect the slightest curve in it anywhere. Not until it is so can it be permitted to go out of the factory. Over and over again it must be tested and tried until it is as perfect as men and machines can make it.

And think for a moment why this should be so. If the gun barrel were not straight, no one ever could hit what he aimed at; the bullet could not help flying wide of the mark.

And hitting the mark is the thing. That is what every boy wants to do—hit the mark. Therefore he must be true. 'Straight' is a homely word, but it is full of the deepest meaning. No boy can ever reach his aim, be it ever so high, unless he always does the true, manly thing. One little mean, underhand act, and his life may be marred forever.

The world wants men who are straight. Only straight men come up from straight boys. We cannot pass the time of boyhood and youth in doing smart, sharp, and tricky things, and then all at once, on a day when the world says we have reached manhood, drop our questionable habits and become upright men, because the gun barrel that is warped can never be made as straight as it was in the first place unless it be cast into the furnace and melted over again. And that process hurts; it means pain and sorrow and bitter tears.

Yes; if we ever expect to be straight, the time to begin is now. But how may we know whether boys are true or not? Think of these rules:

The boy who is true is not afraid to look any one in the eye.

He has a frank, manly bearing. This only right-living can give him, and that it will give him always.

If he says he will meet you at a certain time

and place, he will be there or tell you why he is not.

Only the truth passes his lips.

He honors his father and mother. He is respectful to every one.

He does not swear. He does not use tobacco. He loves God and all good things.

These are the sure signs of a true man. Can you measure up to them? God help you to do it!

Katydid.

Katy dressed her all in green—

Katy did, she did;

Fairest Nature's court had seen—

Katy did, she did.

Katy didn't?

Yes, she did, she did; Katy did.

Katy had one dear desire—

Katy did, she did;

To join the woodland evening choir,

Katy did, she did.

Katy didn't?

Yes, she did, she did; Katy did.

Singing, Katy never knew,

Katy did, she did;

There was one thing she could do,

Katy did, she did.

Katy didn't?

Yes, she did, she did; Katy did.

Happy heart! they bade her sing—

Katy did, she did;

Rhythmic measure with her wing—

Katy did, she did.

Katy didn't?

Yes, she did, she did; Katy did.

Katy found it such delight—

Katy did, she did;

She tireless played till late at night

Katy did, she did.

Katy didn't?

Yes, she did, she did; Katy did.

Katy learned, like all earth's throng—

Katy did, she did;

Silence follows after song—

Katy did, she did.

Katy didn't?

Yes, she did, she did; Katy did.

Loving life, and loath to leave—

Katy did, she did;

Katy went one autumn eve—

Katy did, she did.

Katy didn't?

Yes, she did, she did; Katy did.

—Springfield 'Republican.'

What is a Golden Deed?

(By Charlotte M. Yonge.)

It is a chain of Golden Deeds that we seek to lay before our readers; but, ere entering upon them, perhaps we had better clearly understand what it is that to our mind constitutes a Golden Deed.

It is not mere hardihood. There was plenty of hardihood in Pizarro when he led his men through terrible hardships to attack the empire of Peru, but he was actuated by mere greediness for gain, and all the perils he so resolutely endured could not make his courage admirable. It was nothing but insensibility to danger, when set against the wealth and power that he coveted, and to which he sacrificed thousands of helpless Peruvians.

There is a courage that breaks out in bravado, the exuberance of high spirits, delighting in defying peril for its own sake, not indeed producing deeds which deserve to be called golden, but which, from their heedless grace, their desperation, and absence of all base motives—except perhaps vanity—have an undeniable charm about them, even when we doubt the right of exposing a life in mere gayety of heart.

Such was the gallantry of the Spanish knight who, while Ferdinand and Isabel lay before the Moorish city of Granada, galloped out of the camp, in full view of besiegers and besieged, and fastened to the gate of the city with his dagger a copy of the 'Ave Maria.' It was a wildly brave action, and yet without