

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

FRED'S BLOCKS.

DEAR little Fred with eyes deep blue,
Was wondering what he next should do.

"I's tired," he said, "of Noah's Ark;
Old Shem is broke, and the dog won't bark."

"Well, get your blocks, my dear," I said,
And watched the curly, golden head

'Neath the sofa go, where lay the store
Of blocks and many playthings more;

Then smiled as the eager fingers spread
The toys in rows on the low white bed,

Most careful he, that the blocks should lie
With the red side up for me to spy.

"Mamma," he said, "now tell me true
What's 'is block say? now tell me, do."

I looked where the dimpled fingers rest,
On the scarlet block, with mute request.

Between the fingers white, a Q,
In lines of black, is plain to view.

"Why! Q's for Quaker, tall and slim,
He wears a hat with broad gray brim,"

I say, and watch his deep blue eyes,
That bluer grow with mute surprise.

He turns the block with nervous hands—
Yes, there the tall, grave Quaker stands.

Fred looks at him, then looks at me,
His whole face bright with glowing glee.

"Mamma *did* know," he gladly said;
But *how* is too deep for his small head.

Then, with his sweet face all aglow,
And eyes that said, "I love you so,"

He nearer drew, with fond caress,
And hid his head in the folds of my dress.

My darling Fred, so God doth know
All the quaint small rhymes of our life below.

He needs not even the face to see,
To know what wish in the heart may be.

But we, sometimes, with a child's surprise,
Look up to find Him great and wise.

BILL BOOSEY'S DONKEY.

BILLY BOOSEY was a quaint old man, who lived at the corner of the common years ago, when I was a lad; and while he was ready to turn his hands to all kinds of work he mainly depended for his livelihood upon the produce of a small garden and the money he would earn by means of a donkey and a cart. Billy treated his donkey as kindly as it was possible; and although he could afford neither to buy corn for it nor keep it in a grand stable, the animal was always in a good condition, and would draw a heavy load behind him or carry one on his back at a capital speed. We juveniles paid many a penny for a ride on Billy Boosey's donkey.

One day Neddy's unwillingness to "go" amounted fairly to obstinacy; and when Johnny White had paid his penny and mounted in gleeful anticipation, not a step would Neddy budge.

"Make him go, Billy," was the cry.

Thus urged, Billy shouted, whistled and flourished his arms and clapped his hands, but all in vain; only when the stick was applied pretty vigorously did Neddy condescend to start. And when he *did go* he *did go*—as people say—at full speed across the commons, boys, Billy and all shouting at his heels.

Presently Johnny White began to feel uncomfortable. Neddy was going at full speed toward the big pond; and not the slightest use was it for Johnny to pull with all his might at the reins. The cry now was, "Stop him, Billy! Make him stop!"

To this Billy could only reply, as he came panting along far in the rear, "Pull, Johnny! —pull"

The catastrophe came at last. Rushing full tilt to the edge of the pond, Neddy there came suddenly to a standstill, and over went Johnny splash into the water. A pretty picture he looked, I can tell you, when we pulled him out!

Just as we had done so, Billy Boosey came panting up, and was assailed on all hands with, "Why didn't you stop him?"

"Boys," said Billy as soon as he could recover breath sufficiently to speak—"Boys, I could make him go, but I couldn't make him stop. And do you mind, youngsters, as you go through life, do not get into bad habits, for it'll be easier to start than to stop. 'Specially take care what sort o' company you keep. Fight shy o' them lads that swear and smoke and tell lies and drink. If you get started there, you'll maybe find yourself shot over into a deeper pond than you've fished Johnny White out of."

They were simple words, but the old man's advice was good, and many of us, I doubt not, remembered it long after.

We took Johnny home and he was put to bed; but he had a terrible bad cold after his famous ride and bath. He is dead now, poor fellow! As he grew up he took no heed to Billy's counsel, but seemed never so happy as when he could get with those who delighted to do just what the old man so earnestly cautioned us against. He got into disgrace early, and more than once, before he was twenty, was Johnny taken off to the county jail. When he found his character was altogether gone, and he could get no work, he tried his hand at being a soldier. He was not in the army long. Drink was his besetment, and at last was his death. He died in the hospital from injuries received in a drunken quarrel.

It is many a long year since we used to play together on that common, but I often have those days brought to my mind, for I never see a youth neglecting his Sabbath school, and spending his time at street-corners and associating with evil companions, without thinking of the old man's words about it being easier to start than to stop. Some lads I have seen who have withstood the temptation a long time, and then given away at last. Some of these have become the worst when they have at length broken away from the restraints of home and friends; and sometimes, as I notice how such a one goes from bad to worse, I think to myself, "Poor fellow! I am afraid he has started off on Billy Boosey's donkey."—*Christian Weekly.*

IRON-SHOD.

THE safety of a mountain climber depends upon being *well shod*. Therefore the Swiss guides wear heavy shoes with sharp spikes in the soles.

On a bright July morning, a famous scientist of England started with two gentlemen to ascend a steep and lofty snow mountain in Switzerland.

Though experienced mountaineers, they took with them Jenni, the boldest guide in that district. After reaching the summit of the mountain, they started back, and soon arrived at a steep slope cover-

ed with thin snow. They were lashed together with a strong rope, which was tied to each man's waist.

"Keep carefully in my steps, gentlemen," said Jenni; "for a false step here might start the snow and send us down in an avalanche."

He had scarcely spoken when the whole field of snow began to slide down the icy mountain side, carrying the unfortunate climbers with it at a terrible pace. A steeper slope was before them, and at the end of it a *precipice*! The three foremost men were almost buried in the whirling snow. Below them were the jaws of death. Everything depended upon getting a foothold.

Jenni shouted loudly, "Halt, halt!" and with desperate energy drove his iron-nailed boots into the firm ice beneath the moving snow.

Within a few rods of the precipice, Jenni got a hold with his feet, and was able to bring the party up all standing, when two seconds more would have swept them into the chasm.

This hair breadth escape shows the value of being well shod when in dangerous places. Life is full of dangerous places, especially for the young. No boy is prepared for dangerous climbing, unless he is well shod with Christian principles. Sometimes temptation ices the track under him, and then he must plant his foot down with an iron heel, or he is gone.

A poor boy of my acquaintance signed a pledge never to taste liquor. One day his rich employer invited him to dinner. There was wine on the table, but the lad was not ashamed to say:

"No, I thank you, sir. I never touch it!"

Then came on a rich pudding, which the boy tasted, and found that there was brandy in it; so he quietly laid the tasted morsel back on his plate. The employer discovered that the boy had "pluck" enough to stand by his convictions, and he will never be afraid to trust him. He is a sure-footed boy.

God knows what steep places lie before us. He has provided the "shoes of iron and brass" for us to put on. They are truth, and honesty, and faith, and courage, and prayer.

A clear conscience will keep the head cool, and up along the hard road there is a sign-board, on which is written in large bright letters, "He that walketh uprightly, walketh *surely*."

GENEROSITY.

ONE day a gentleman entered a store, accompanied by his two little daughters.

"Buy us each a lead pencil, papa," said Ada.

"Yes, do, papa," said May, entreatingly.

He studied a moment, and then said, "I'll get you one, and divide it between you."

Which he did, but contrary to his intention, one piece was longer than the other. Laying the two pieces together, he said, "One piece is smaller than the other, daughters. What shall I do?"

I expected to see the pink lips pout, but instead, the clear voice of little May, the younger of the two, rang cheerily, "I'll take the shortest."