

Our Young Folks.

HOW AN ANGEL LOOKS.

Robt, holding his mother's hand,
Says "Good night" to the big folks all,
Throws some kisses from rosy lips,
Laughs with glee through the lighted hall,
Then in his own crib, warm and deep,
Robt is tucked for a long night's sleep.

Gentle mother with fond caress
Slips her hand through his soft brown hair,
Thinks of his fortune all unknown,
Speaks aloud in an earnest prayer;
"Holy angels keep watch and ward,
God's good angels my baby guard!"

"Mamma, what is an angel like?"
Asked the boy in a wandering tone;
"How will they look if they come here,
Watching me while I'm all alone?"
Half with shrinking and fear spoke he;
Answered the mother tenderly:

"Prettiest faces ever were known,
Kindest voices and sweetest eyes—"
Robin, waiting for nothing more,
Cried with a look of pleased surprise,
Love and trust in his eyes of blue,
"I know, mamma, they're just like you!"

SEED THOUGHTS.

We are in captivity. Satan is our captor. Sin is the chain which binds us.

This chain binds us all, and none of us are without sin. He who is held in the devil's bondage is away from God. The problem is, How to get back?

God wants us to come back to Him. He has no pleasure in the captivity of the wicked.

We must desire to return. God will not force us to return against our will.

The foundation of return must be sorrow for the sin that took us away from Him.

We shall need His help to regain our lost position. It was to render this assistance that Jesus Christ dwelt on earth and died on Calvary.

Since we are condemned to captivity because of broken law, we must have the pardon of the Law-giver to obtain freedom.

We cannot purchase pardon or merit it, but we can have it freely by believing in Christ and asking for it in His name. The sinner is a long way off from God, but the journey back is a quick one if he takes the right road.

What a gracious God, that He provides a way for His banished children to return to Him. What strange children, that so many of them have no desire to return.

There is no hope for anything but misery in the bondage of sin; there is certainty of happiness in the presence of Jehovah.

Cause and effect are nowhere more sure; sin and sorrow are root and fruit—so are righteousness and joy.

Repent and be saved. Come away from Babylon. The gates of the new Jerusalem wait to open for you.

You cannot build a ladder long enough to reach to heaven, but you can enter at one step through Jesus Christ. "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

DRY THINGS.

"Somebody sent me 'Sesame and Lilies' for a birthday present," a bright young girl told me. "I supposed that I should hate Ruskin, but really," with surprise, "he is delightful!"

A few weeks later she overtook me on the street. "You like morning walks. May I go with you to-morrow—early—before breakfast?" "Yes," I replied, smiling at her earnest crescendo and rosy cheeks, "I shall be delighted; but what restless spirit has been pricking you? Did you ever in your life see the sun rise?" "That is just it. Do not for the world let the girls know, but I have been reading Browning a little. Why do people talk so about his hidden meanings? That description of the sunrise, who could not understand that? Understand—why, it is as easy as Longfellow, and—now I want to see it!"

The next morning she was waiting for me at the gate. "It is well that Browning rang the bell. I should have taken another nap for all of anybody else. Just see the dew on the grass! Why, it is like rain. And hear those birds sing! I should like to run. Everybody is asleep—can't we have a race? What fun this is! and I have always thought that if one thing were worse than another it was getting up in the morning. See those clouds breaking; now I must say it:—

Day!
Faster and more fast,
O'er night's brim, day boils at last;
Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim
Where spurting and suppressed it lay;
For not a froth-flake touched the rim
Of yonder gap in the solid gray
Of the eastern cloud, an hour away,
But forth one wavelet, then another, curled
Till the whole sunrise, not to be suppressed,
Rose, reddened, and its seething breast
Flickered in bonds, grew gold, then overflowed the world.

There was a mist over the girl's eyes. Ruskin is right, I

said to myself, when he wonders, not at what men suffer, but at what they lose.

My companion was silent while we walked down the hill. As we turned toward her home she said suddenly: "I shall never dare say again that I dislike history, or that I cannot endure Thackeray, or that the old paintings in the galleries are hideous. I shall be discreetly silent about things I cannot appreciate; for I believe now that dry things are just things we do not know enough about to care for."

THINGS GOOD TO KEEP.

Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.

Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

Keep thee far from a false matter.

He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life.

Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently.

Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

My son, keep thy Father's commandments

My son, keep sound wisdom and discretion.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Keep yourselves in the love of God.

Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it.

AN ENGINEER TAUGHT BY AN INSECT.

It has been said that the operations of the spider suggested the art of spinning and weaving to man. That may be doubtful, but it is quite certain that to a hint from an insect was due the invention of a machine instrumental in accomplishing one of the most stupendous works of modern times—the excavation of the Thames tunnel.

Mark Isambard Brunel, the great engineer, was standing one day, about three quarters of a century ago, in a ship-yard, watching the movements of an animal known as the *Teredo navalis*—in English, the naval wood worm—when a brilliant thought suddenly occurred to him. He saw that this creature bored its way into the piece of wood upon which it was operating by means of a very extraordinary mechanical apparatus.

Looking at the animal attentively through a microscope he found that it was covered in front with a pair of valvular shells; that with its foot as a purchase, it communicated a rotary motion and a forward impulse to the valve which, acting upon the wood like a gimlet, penetrated its substance; and that as the particles of wood were loosened, they passed through a fissure in the foot, and thence through the body of the borer to its mouth, where they were expelled.

"Here," said Brunel, to himself, "is the sort of thing I want. Can I reproduce it in an artificial form?" He forthwith set to work, and the final result of his labours, after many failures, was the famous boring shield, with which the Thames tunnel was excavated.

This story was told by Brunel himself, and there is no reason to doubt its truth. The keen observer can draw useful lessons from the humblest of the works of God.

GIRLS, LEARN TO BE HOUSEKEEPERS.

Here is a capital little sermon on housekeeping. Our friend, *St. Nicholas*, preaches it: Begin with your own possessions. Reform your upper bureau drawer; relieve your closet pegs of their accumulation of garments out of use a month or two ago. Institute a clear and cheerful order in the midst of which you can daily move, and learn to keep it so that it will be part of your toilet to dress your room and its arrangements while you dress yourself, leaving the draperies you take off as lightly and artistically hung, or as delicately folded and placed, as the skirts you loop to wear or the ribbon and lace you put with a soft neatness about your throat. Cherish your instincts of taste and fitness in every little thing that you have about you. This will not make you "fussy"; it is the other thing that does that—the not knowing, except by fidgety experiment, what is harmony and the intangible grace of relation.

Take upon yourself gradually—for the sake of getting them in hand in like manner, if for no other need—all the cares that belong to your own small territory of home. Get together things for use in these cares. Have your little wash-cloths and your sponges for bits of cleaning; your furniture brush, and your feather-duster and your light, little broom, and your whisk and pan, your bottle of sweet oil and spirits of turpentine and piece of flannel, to preserve the polish and restore the gloss where dark wood grows dim or gets spotted. Find out, by following your surely-growing sense of thoroughness and niceness, the best and readiest ways of keeping all fresh about you. Invent your own processes; they will come to you. When you have made yourself wholly mistress of what you can learn and do in your own apartment, so that it is easier and more natural for you to do it than to let it alone, then you have learned enough to keep a whole house so far as its cleanly ordering is concerned.

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Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

July 10,
1891.

CHRIST'S FIRST MIRACLE.

John 2:
1-11.

GOLDEN TEXT.—This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory—John ii. 11.

INTRODUCTORY.

These first lessons in John's Gospel have to do with beginnings. The first told of His becoming man; the second of His first disciples; and this records the first of His miracles. The place where this first miracle was wrought was Cana, a little village eight or nine miles north-east of Nazareth, in Galilee. Thither Jesus went with His disciples.

I. The Marriage Feast.—The third day is supposed to refer to the time that had elapsed since the call of Philip to the discipleship. Among the Jewish people, several days were given up to feasting when a marriage was celebrated. "The Mother of Jesus was there." It is inferred from the fact that she speaks to the servants as if she had been on intimate terms in the household, that she was a relative of one of the parties being married. Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding feast. The disciples at that time probably were Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, Nathanael, John, and possibly his brother James. Jesus came to bless and sanctify all the relationships of life. His first miracle was at a marriage feast. He is present where His presence purifies and enhances the joy. He is present too in times of sadness and of sore distress. He went to a marriage and he was present in the homes where death entered. Jesus still sympathizes with the joys and sorrows of life. The fact that the first of Christ's miracles was performed at a wedding feast gives no countenance to the ascetic and gloomy views that were common amongst ecclesiastics in the middle ages. Some of them were disposed to frown upon many of the common joys of life, and to represent that the highest form of life was to retire into the desert or to be shut out from the world within gloomy, monastic walls. This is nowhere taught in the New Testament. Jesus went in company with His mother and His disciples to the marriage feast.

II. An Unexpected Want.—Hospitality was largely exercised by the Jews. On the occasion of a marriage feast it would be as lavish as the circumstances of the family permitted. It is supposed that the home in which the wedding took place was an humble one. The coming of Jesus and His disciples had added considerably to the number of the guests, and the supply of wine was insufficient. It failed. The Mother of Jesus went and told him that they had no wine. She no doubt thought that He would be able to get them out of the difficulty. By this time she probably believed that He was the Messiah. She had heard of His baptism, the temptation in the wilderness, and the testimony of John the Baptist. She may have expected that He would exercise miraculous powers. At all events she quietly informs Him that the wine had failed. His answer to her has nothing in it that is disrespectful to His mother. As He uses the term woman there is no lack of tenderness. The words "What have I to do with thee?" are literally "what is there to Me and thee?" In the manifestation of divine power, there was nothing in common. She was human; He was divine and human. The exercise of divine power was His alone. The hour for its exercise had not yet come. He and He only could decide when and how that power was to be exercised. When all human power is unavailing it is then that Christ's power becomes most conspicuous. There is nothing therefore in these sayings of Jesus that indicate the slightest disrespect to His mother. He had not come to destroy but to fulfil the law. In all the relations of life He yielded a perfect obedience to God's law. He who had given the commandment: "Honour thy father and thy mother," would not disobey it. His sense of duty comprehended also His immediate relation to God's purposes, therefore He and He only could determine the time and methods for the manifestation of His glory. It was for Him to decide when His hour was come.

III. The Miracle.—The mother of Jesus did not understand His words as being a refusal. On the contrary she expected that in some way He would supply the want. So she tells the attendants to obey His commands. In a warm climate like that of Palestine and in obedience to the requirements of the ceremonial law, washings were frequent. It was nothing unusual, therefore, that large earthen water jars should be there. In the court of the house there were six of them, each with a capacity of about nine gallons. Jesus tells them to fill these jars with water. This the servants eagerly did, for we are told "they filled them up to the brim." The narrative conveys the impression that this miracle, like those that followed it, was instantaneous. The command to fill the jars is followed by the other "Draw out now and bear unto the governor of the feast." The governor of the feast was the one who presided at the table. The ruler of the feast received the wine from the hands of the servants. He did not know how it had come, but he pronounced it to be specially good. The servants knew that they had filled the jars with water, and what they had drawn off was wine, which the ruler of the feast declares to be good. He then compliments the bridegroom on the excellence of the wine thus provided, though he as yet knew not how it had come. There could, however, be no doubt of the reality of the miracle. The marvellous manner in which the wine had been replenished would soon be known to all present, and none could say that there had been the least collusion. The servants had done as they were told. They were certain that the water jars had been filled to the brim with water. They had drawn from the contents and handed to the master of the feast, who bore open testimony to the excellence of the wine that had been produced. In the performance of this first miracle Jesus manifested His glory. It was a new display of His power and goodness. It was a manifestation of His power over nature. He could so change by His will the forces of nature and make them subservient to His divine purposes. These miracles are also called signs. They were signs to all who witnessed them that Jesus was Lord of nature, that He was the Sent of God. They were confirmations of the truth of His claims, and evidences that He was able to accomplish the divine work of redemption. The effect produced by this miracle was also immediate. "His disciples believed on Him." They believed on Him before this. They followed Him because they believed that He was the Messiah. This marvellous display of His power confirmed and strengthened their belief in Him, and their faith, though by no means perfect, went on increasing.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

In all the pure joys of life we can have the presence of Jesus with us.

Where He cannot be present we have no right to be. Let us desire no joys where we cannot ask Christ's presence.

We can make all our wants known to Jesus, and He can supply all our need out of His own inexhaustible fulness.

This miracle gives no countenance whatever to anything approaching intemperance. The conditions of life in Palestine in our Saviour's days were very different from what they are now here in Canada.