

Our Young Folks.

DOING ITS BEST.

I am but a tiny cricket,
Living in a summer thicket,
There I take my rest.
Many songs are gayer, prouder,
Many a voice is sweeter, louder,
But I do my best!

In my song there's no complaining,
Even when the sky is raining;
Birds fly east and west,
Silent hide in leafy covert;
But I chirp till all is over,
Doing still my best!

When the leaves are round us flying,
When the birds and bees are hieing
On their autumn quest,
You will find me in the stubble,
Though the clouds look full of trouble,
Singing still my best!

Clad in garments dark and sober,
Here I linger till October
Sunshine warms my breast.
While the wintry days you number,
Sweet and quiet is my slumber,
For I've done my best!

S. S. Times.

"PIN-MONEY."

"Here is your pin-money, Maud," said Uncle Hugh, as he handed his niece a bright silver dollar.

"Thank you, uncle; I was just wishing for some spare change," and Maud's eyes fairly beamed as she took the offered money.

"Uncle Hugh, when you give me money to spend just as I please, why do you always call it 'pin-money'?" Maud asked.

Well, my dear, I will tell you the origin of the term 'pin-money.' Pins were introduced into England by Catharine, first wife of Henry VIII. They were not, however, the well-known small-pointed instruments, such as we use, but were made of gold, silver, ivory, and brass, many of them weighing as much as six or eight ounces. Such pins as those were worn in the hair and used on different parts of the clothing to fasten folds or drapery, and were quite ornamental. Thus, you see, the first pins were much more useful to ladies than gentlemen. The Spanish manufacturers were permitted to sell their pins only during the Christmas holidays, and in that way gentlemen began to give the ladies of their respective families money at Christmas-time with which to buy pins. At first they were very expensive, costing as much as we now have to pay for a valuable piece of jewelry. However, after pins had become common and cheap, gentlemen continued the practice of giving their wives, daughters, and sisters money to buy pins; in that way the term 'pin-money' originated, and it is now applied to an allowance made to a lady to buy any small articles she may need or desire."

"I am glad you told me all about it, uncle," said Maud; "and I thank you very much."
Harper's Young People.

NEW YEAR'S DAY IN INDIA.

Have any of my little readers ever spent New Year's Day in Southern India? I think not. It would amuse you to hear about native people, who all come to salaam and wish us a happy New Year.

After breakfast we all sat in the large veranda, and greeted the numbers of writers, office men, peons, contractors, etc., who came with their offerings.

The chief men were dressed in long white coats, white turbans and white cloths. Their red or yellow slippers they left outside. Their servants carried in, on large brass trays, sugared cakes, bunches of plantains, oranges, vegetables, pomeles, custard apples and curious figures of rajahs made of colored sugar.

Then they put around our necks garlands of yellow chrysanthemums, or larger ones made of pale pink oleander flowers. We were given bouquets of the same flowers, with a yellow line in the centre covered with gilt paper. Sometimes the bouquets were made of rows and rows of

cloves, with a tinsel bird on the top. These had a most fragrant scent.

How we used to laugh at each other. Often I had as many as four or five large garlands around my neck. Then, when I felt too crowded, I offered my arm, and on that they hung the garlands. We did look dressed up. Very pretty parrots made of narrow green leaves, for feathers, they brought, wonderfully made, and looking quite natural. Our little girl used to look through the pillars of the veranda and call out, "More men coming, mother, with garlands and cakes."

This ceremony used to take us all the morning, as the men used to make us little speeches about happiness and health in the coming year, and we had to thank them.

Often we received ten or twelve cakes and hundreds of plantains. You will wonder what we did with such loads of fruits, cakes and sweets.—Mrs. F. F. Smith, in Our Little Ones.

CHILD LIFE IN SIAM.

When the Siamese young folks get up in the morning they do not go to the washstand to wash their faces, for the simple reason that Siamese houses can boast of no such article of furniture. So our little Siamese friend just runs down to the foot of the ladder—for the house is built on posts—to a large jar of water with a coconut shell dipper. There she washes her face by throwing the water over her hands and rubbing them over her face. She needs no towel, for the water is left to dry. She does not brush her teeth, for they are stained black by chewing the betel nut. Her hair does not require combing, either, for it is all shaved except a little tuft on the top of the head, and that is tied in a little knot, and not often combed.

After breakfast is over, the children go off and find some pleasant place in which to play. The girls play at keeping house, and make dishes of clay dried in the sun. Little images of clay washed with lime are their only dolls.

The boys of Siam are very fond of pitching coins, and spend much of their time in this game. They play leap frog, and very often jump the rope. Now that so many foreigners come to this country, they have learned to play marbles, too.

In the month of March, though usually dry and hot, winds are blowing. At this time, the Siamese, young and old, are much engaged in playing games with kites, which are fitted with whistles, and the air resounds with the noise produced by the toys and the shouts of the multitudes of people engaged in the sport.

As the streets in Siam are almost all rivers and canals, the Siamese boys and girls early learn to row, and paddle their little boats almost as soon as they learn to swim, which they do when they are only four or five years old.—Selected.

THE SHEPHERD DOG.

The shepherd dogs of Scotland are famous for their sagacity. It is said that one of them will do more than ten men could do in driving a large flock of sheep and keeping them in order. Indeed, the shepherds would find it a very difficult thing to discharge the duties expected from them if they were not assisted by these useful and faithful animals.

If the flock is passing near a field of grain, you will see the dog lead them carefully away from it. He keeps his eye on those who trespass, and overawes them by his bark and his quick movements. The obstinate he punishes without doing any serious harm.

Does it not seem as if reason were at work in his brain? If he had not learned to know the grain from the proper pasture of the flock, how could he know it was not to be eaten?

He seems to feel all the importance of his office, and to know the habits of the sheep even better than his master. If a lamb is too weak to follow the flock, he will call the attention of his master to the fact, and then lead him to find it. Watchful and brave in his duties, he never neglects his work for play. He does not even allow sleep to prevent his taking a proper care of his charge.

Teacher and Scholar.

Feb. 19, 1893. | REBUILDING THE WALL. { Neh. 4: 9-21.

GOLDEN TEXT.—We made our prayer unto God, and set a watch against them.—Neh. 4: 9.

Nehemiah's sad countenance being noticed by the king gave an opportunity of laying before him what had for four months been matter of continual prayer. The king proved favorable, and Nehemiah was sent as governor to Judah. Letters to various persons were given him, so as to aid his undertaking. Arrived in Jerusalem, Nehemiah concealed his purpose until he had made a secret personal inspection of the city walls. Then summoning the leaders of the Jews, he laid before them his plans, and encouraged them to build. The work was begun amid derision from the leaders of the heathen around. The plan is detailed in chap. 3. All classes of the people joined in the work, the inhabitants being strengthened by helpers from the small towns of Judah. Divided into working parties according to families, the workers portioned out the entire wall amongst them, every man building over against his own house. Thus public zeal and private interest were united. The people had a mind to work. Soon the progress of the building was such, that the scorn of the opposers changed to angry threatening and conspiracy. The golden text in the first verse gives the key to the entire lesson. In the face of opposition the people persevered, looking to God in prayer and taking every precaution possible.

I. The Opposition. Three sources are mentioned. Though not so intended, the discouragement of the workers constituted a real opposition. The vastness of the work discouraged them, when compared with the small part each could accomplish. On the long wall the little bands were far separated from one another (v. 19), and now that some were drawn off to act as watch, they were still further weakened. Then the work was laborious, so toilsome that, as they said, the strength of the burden bearers was decayed. The hard work became still more discouraging in view of the lack of results. The great heaps of rubbish hardly seemed to grow less, and even the removal of this, necessary though it was to further progress, did not itself shew the looked for result of rising walls. An additional cause of discouragement was the next mentioned source of opposition, that of avowed enemies. These on their part were encouraged in their hostile conspiracy, by the discouragement of Judah. They openly boasted that they would suddenly surprise the builders, and put them to death, so causing the work to cease. Open opposition to Christian work is most to be feared when it can draw strength from discouragement within. Another source of opposition rose from the Jews who dwelt among these adversaries. Living among the conspirators, too readily they caught somewhat of a disaffected spirit, and thinking the work a hopeless one, they repeatedly came to Jerusalem, from all parts, to urge their fellow townsmen to give up their fruitless undertaking, and avoid the threatened danger, by returning unto them (R. V.). Christian work has still much to endure from professed friends, whose interest is so slight, and whose apprehension of difficulties is so great, that they simply cry down the efforts of others.

II. Divine Reliance. In the face of this opposition God was the refuge of His people. Reliance on Him is put in the forefront, when danger threatened without. Prayer was made unto God the people sharing Nehemiah's spirit, and joining in it. When discouragement was like to spread within, Nehemiah encouraged their hearts in the remembrance of Jehovah (v. 14). If they must fight, let them nerve themselves by the thought that Jehovah is great to defend His own, and terrible to His enemies. The warfare is not their own. God will fight for them (v. 20). In the thorough conviction that their work is Jehovah's they have the assurance of a strength against which no other can prevail. But Nehemiah did not allow

prayer to or confidence in God to degenerate into indolence. The divine side has a corresponding human side.

III. Precautions Taken. Reliance on Jehovah goes hand in hand with the use of every means that Nehemiah's wisdom could suggest. The measures he took were the natural channels through which flowed the answer to the people's prayer. God by blessing these efforts justified the reliance placed upon Him. They make prayer to God and set a watch that they may not be surprised by any sudden attack. The weakest spots are fortified. Where the wall was lowest, and so most exposed, Nehemiah stationed in the open places behind (R. V.) armed forces, disposed of by families, who would thus be the most determined in defence, by acting as guards for their own households. The enemies, finding their plan known, gave up the intended assault. God had disappointed their devices. All the people were again able to return to work on the wall. But henceforth they constituted a permanent guard. Nehemiah's servants, probably a special band attached to his person, were divided into two companies. While the one wrought the other acted as guard, with spears, shields, bows and habergeons (coats of mail). The rest of the workmen, with their rulers standing behind to encourage and direct, wrought with the one hand, and held the weapon with the other, or, as in the case of the builders, had it girt at the side ready for either work or war. Provision is made for concerted action in case of attack. Nehemiah, overseeing and watching, kept constantly beside him the trumpeter. His blast was the signal for all to gather wheresoever it sounded. For further protection laborers from the surrounding country were instructed to lodge in Jerusalem by night. So untiring was the vigilance that Nehemiah and his own immediate band slept in their clothes to be ready at any instant.

Lessons. God's servants must expect opposition, both from without and within. Watchfulness and prayer should unite in all Christian work.

Electric search lights are being adopted by customs officers in England in order to avoid the possibility of explosion while rummaging for goods on board tank and other vessels carrying petroleum or explosives. Ruby-colored lights for the examination of imported cases of photographic negatives in a dark chamber are also to be supplied to obviate the risk of premature development.—New York World.

The strength of some of the spiders which build their webs in trees and other places in and around Santa Ana, Cal., is astonishing, says the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. One of them had in captivity in a tree in that town not long ago a wild canary. The ends of the wings, tail and feet of the bird were bound together by some sticky substance, to which were attached the threads of the spider, which was slowly but surely drawing up the bird by an ingenious pulley arrangement. The bird hung head downward, and was so securely bound with little threads that it could not struggle, and would soon have been a prey to its great, ugly captor had not an onlooker rescued it.

Prof. Leo Lesquereaux determined before his death that the flora that existed on portions of our continent years ago was different from that now existing, but that the existing flora partakes of the characters of the old, and so certainly was not a flora imported from some other region. In other words, the present American flora came into existence on the spot where it is now found, and it is a new creation following the old, which also came into existence here in its day and generation also. The manner of its introduction, whether by direct genesis from the old, or by special formation, was once a question, but the evolutionary view is now generally accepted.—Meehan's Monthly for December.

It is a fact well established by students of heredity that children are apt to inherit not only the physical, mental and moral traits of their parents, but to be influenced by their age as well. Children born of very young fathers and mothers never attain so vigorous a growth of mind or body as those of older men and women, while children of old people are born old. One of the most surprising cases in medical history is that of Marguerite Cribbawna, who died in 1768 aged 108 years. When ninety-four she was married to a man aged 105. Three children came of this union, but they had gray hair, no teeth, were stooped, yellow and wrinkled, decrepit in movement, and could eat only bread and vegetables.—New York Sun.