

Our Young Folks.

GOLDEN GRAIN BIBLE READINGS.

BY J. A. R. DICKSON, B.D., CALI.

INQUIRIES ARE LIVING FORCES, PSA. LXXI. 133.

Once committed they live on, Job xiii. 26; Lam. v. 7; Job xxi. 19.

They take hold of the wicked, Prov. v. 22; Psa. xl. 12.

They make strength to fail, Psa. xxxi. 10.

They testify against us, Jer. xiv. 7.

They sometimes prevail against the godly, Psa. lxxv. 3.

They carry men away from God, Isa. lxiv. 6; Isa. lix. 2.

They make people a reproach, Dan. ix. 16.

They cool down the love of others, Matt. xxiv. 12.

They must be acknowledged, Jer. iii. 13.

To be forgiven, Psa. xxxii. 5.

God will subdue them, Micah vii. 19.

Christ turns men away from them, Acts iii. 26.

And so blessing comes to them.

GIVING, AND GIVING UP.

"He certainly is a most generous man. He has just given £5,000 to the work of foreign missions. It's one of the most munificent gifts we have ever received."

"Not quite so," was the answer. "I know of at least one more generous giver."

"Really? Well, I was looking through the reports of the last few years, and I saw nothing like that sum on the donation list."

"No; the gift to which I allude has not appeared in print, and will be known by very few except the Lord. The other day I was calling on a friend of mine, a very aged man, who told me, with tears running down his cheeks, that his only son was about to leave home for missionary work in a far-away land. The father had discovered that the young man felt called of God to such service, but was tarrying at home for his sake. 'How could I keep him back?' said the old man. 'I had prayed all my life: "Thy kingdom come;" "Send forth labourers into Thy harvest" and with all the pain of parting with my boy, in the certainty that I should never see him again on earth, there is a deep joy in giving him up for Christ's sake.'"

I said to myself, on overhearing this conversation, surely here is a true test of love—not giving only, but *giving up*. For though love cannot exist without giving, there may be large giving without love; but we can hardly doubt that it is love alone which for another's sake gives up what is held dear.

WHAT BECAME OF A DISHONEST BOY.

Let me tell you of a boy, whom we shall call Ned, who wanted to go to the show that had come to the town in which he was living. His father could not go, and so put him off. The next day Ned coaxed to be taken to the show, but his father told him to go to school, and he would call for him there if he went. Ned thought he only wanted to put him off again, and did not expect him to call for him. So he took some money, played truant, and went to the show. His father called at the schoolhouse for him, and then went to the show. There he saw Ned with some bad boys, but he said nothing. In the evening he asked his son if he was at school. "O yes, sir!" but he knew he was telling a lie. You see how sins go together; one leads to another. He disobeyed, then he stole, played truant, and lied to conceal his sin. He soon saw that his father knew all about it. He knew he deserved to be punished, so he thought he would confess it and escape. But the confession that is made merely to escape punishment doesn't amount to much. The sorrow for sin, that doesn't lead us to forsake it, and do better, is a sham. His father said he would have to tell the teacher, and let him punish him as he thought best. Ned felt that would be a disgrace before the school to which he was not willing to submit, so he ran off.

After a few weeks he was brought home, forgiven, and restored to his old place in the home. Then he was sent to school in a neighbouring town. He did not like it there, so he ran off again. This time he was six months. He changed his name so that he

would not be known, but he got into trouble for which he would have to go to prison, unless he had some one to help him. Now, the poor rebel against his parents had to tell his name and who his father was. As soon as his father heard it, he came and helped him out of his trouble, and took him home again.

You would expect him to be a kind and dutiful son after that, wouldn't you? But he was not. He went from one thing to another, he took step after step in his disobedient way, until he was in the prison, where he told the chaplain that he was suffering the just punishment of heaven. How ungrateful is disobedience! It will wound and crush the heart of the kindest parent on earth. A noble-hearted boy would deny himself anything, and a loving, dutiful girl would make any sacrifice, to gratify a kind parent.

THE LAST FEATHER.

It is the last feather that breaks the camel's back. — *Old Proverb.*

"Could not mean one feather, Auntie dear!" Said little Mary, and lifts her eyes, so clear
That I can see, beneath their depths of blue,
A challenge that I prove the proverb true.
"Oh Auntie!" she persists, "a whole big sack
Of feathers could not break the camel's back."

"'Twas the *last* feather, child, that did the harm," I whispered, ere the voice of tender charm
Had left the lovely curving lips of red;
And as surprise grew on the face, I said,
"Though camels have large, homely backs, and strong,
And carry burdens through the years so long."

"A fateful hour these desert creatures share
With all the swifter beasts that burdens bear.
There comes a time when men may pile their backs,
And bid them rise and bear with cruel whacks;
But the poor camel, past the working hour,
Has lost, to bear the feather's weight the power."

"This proverb holds a lesson, little one:
The many burden-bearers 'neath the sun
With willing hearts will do and suffer long;
Perhaps upon life's journey pass with song,
For loving service makes a load seem light.
And hope will make a weary way all bright."

"We thoughtless, lay our burdens, one by one,
Till the long way of life is almost done,
Upon our loved ones, bearing all the years,
And telling naught of secret pain and tears.
At last, from out our selfish ease we start—
A feather's weight—the *last* one—broke the heart."

LEARNING TO TRUST.

Jennie Blaine, although so young, had passed through two severe trials.

First, the death of her mother, whom she loved and appreciated as few children of thirteen know how to do.

Three years later her father became insane, and in his wild ravings was so dangerous that his friends were forced to take him to the asylum.

Jennie was almost heart-broken, and for months her face wore a sad expression which was pitiful to see on one so young.

Every one said her father was hopelessly insane; that there was no possible chance for his recovery.

Jennie had for some time thought of joining the church, but religion was so mysterious to her that she feared to take such a step without being able to give a reason.

She often heard people speak of having prayers answered, but while she had been in the habit of repeating the Lord's Prayer all her life, she had never, to her knowledge, had any special prayer answered.

But now in this hour of trial, when her home was broken up, her little brothers and sisters scattered, when friends could give her no hope, she went to her mother's God, and begged that her father might be restored.

Five long months passed by, and one glad morning news came from the asylum that her father was perfectly well, and would be sent home in a few days.

The answer to her prayer inspired Jennie with a faith so strong that she felt eager to trust her life and all it contained to the keeping of the loving Father who had listened to her pleading cry in the time of great distress.

One bright Sabbath in September it was, with an intelligent faith in God, that she assumed the vows of the Church.

In the cross may be seen the concentration of eternal thought, the focus of infinite purpose, the outcome of illimitable wisdom.

HIS BIBLE SAVED HIS LIFE.

Samuel Proctor was a soldier in the 1st Regiment of Foot Guards, and took part in the terrible scenes of Waterloo. He had received religious impressions in early life, and these were deepened in after years, so that he became identified with the few pious men of the regiment who met for devotional purposes. He always carried his Bible in his trousers pocket on one side, and his hymn book on the other. In the evening of the 16th of June, his regiment was ordered to dislodge the French from a certain wood, from which they greatly annoyed the Allies. While so engaged, he was struck on one hip with such force that he was thrown some four or five yards. As he was not wounded, he was at a loss to explain the cause. But when he came to examine his Bible, he found that a musket ball had struck him just where the Bible rested in his pocket, penetrating nearly half through the sacred Book. All who saw the ball said that it must have killed him but for the Bible, which thus literally served as a shield. He was filled with gratitude to his Preserver, and ever kept the Bible in his house, as David laid up the sword of Goliath as a memorial. He used to say: "The Bible has twice saved me instrumentally: first from death in battle, and second from death eternal."

WHO IS YOUR MASTER?

Some months ago, five little boys were busily employed one Saturday afternoon, tidying up the garden at the back of their house, receiving now and then kind words of advice and encouragement from their father, who was preparing part of the grounds for seeds. All went well for an hour or so, until, hearing some dispute, I went out to settle it if I could.

"Well, what is the matter, Fred?" I asked the eldest boy.

"David wants to drive as well as Charley," he replied, placing a basket of stones on the make-believe cart.

"Well, Charley, why not let your brother be master with you?" I expected an answer from the young driver; but after glancing at me to ascertain whether I spoke in earnest or not, little Philip (the horse) pulled the bit from his mouth, and said: "Well, David, how silly you are! How can I have two masters? The one would say 'Gee,' and the other 'Whoa,' then what a muddle there would be!"

I perceived the wisdom of the child's remark, so I arranged some other plan whereby little David was happily engaged, and then left the garden. But the boy's words reminded me of the words of the Lord Jesus: "No man can serve two masters." Dear boys and girls, you cannot have both Christ and Satan for your master. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve."

MACAULAY'S TRIBUTE TO HIS MOTHER.

Children, look in those eyes, listen to that dear voice, notice the feeling of even a single touch that is bestowed upon you by that hand! Make much of it while yet you have that most precious of all good gifts, a loving mother. Read the unfathomable love of those eyes; the kind anxiety of that tone and look, however slight your pain. In after life you may have friends, but never will you have again the inexpressible love and gentleness lavished upon you which none but a mother bestows. Often do I sigh in the struggle with the hard, uncaring world for the sweet, deep security I felt when, of an evening, nestling in her bosom, I listened to some quiet tale suitable to my age, read in her untiring voice. Never can I forget her sweet glances cast upon me when I appeared asleep; never her kiss of peace at night. Years have passed away since we laid her beside my father in the old churchyard, yet still her voice whispers from the grave, and her eye watches over me, as I visit spots long since hallowed to the memory of my mother.

TROUBLES are hard to take, though they strengthen the soul. Tonics are always bitter.

It is always good to know, if only in passing, a charming human being. It refreshes one like flowers and woods and clear brooks.

OUR beliefs are independent of our will, but our honesty is not; and he who keeps his honesty keeps one of the most precious possessions of all true Christians and gentlemen.