

The Last Knock.

The certainest, surest thing I know,
Whatever else may yet befall
Of blessings or bane, of weal or woe,
The truth that is fatestall far of all,
That the Master will knock at my door some
night,

And there, in the silence hushed and dim,
Will wait for my coming with lamp alight,
To open immediately to him.

I wonder if I at his tap shall spring
In eagerness up, and cross the floor
With capturous step, and freely fling,
In the murk of the midnight, wide the
door?

Or will there be work to be put away?
On the taper, that burns too low, to trim?
Or something that craves too much delay
To open immediately to him?

Or shall I with whitened fear grow dumb
The moment I hear the sudden knock,
And, startled to think he hath surely come,
Shall falter and fail to find the lock,
And keep him so waiting, as I stand,
Irresolute, while my senses swim,
Instead of the bound with outstretched
hand,

To open immediately to him?

If this is the only thing foretold
Of all my future—then, I pray,
That, quietly watchful, I may hold
The key of a golden faith each day
Fast shut in my grasp, that when I hear
His step, be it dawn or midnight dim,
Straightway I may rise without a fear,
And open immediately to him!

—Margaret J. Preston.

A Distilling Insect.

BY J. K. BLOOMFIELD.

How true it is that in this nine-
teenth century knowledge is on the
increase, modes of travel more rapid,
and opportunities for making new
discoveries greater than ever before.
Animals, birds and insects are watch-
ed with interest, and their peculiar
forms and habits noted down and
given to the world by men of science.

Livingstone, the great explorer,
spent many a delightful hour in
watching the things of nature which
surrounded him in a far-away, new
country. Among the wonderful things
met with, he tells us of a distilling in-
sect, found in Africa, on fig-trees.
He says: "Seven or eight of these
insects cluster round a spot on one of
the smaller branches, and these keep
up a constant distillation of a clear,
fluid-like water, which, dropping to
the ground, forms a little puddle. If
a vessel is placed under them in the
evening, it contains two or three pints
of fluid in the morning." When the
natives are asked whence this fluid is
derived, they reply that the insects
suck it out of the trees, and natural-
ists give the same answer. But Living-
stone, after watching closely, could
never find any wounds on the bark, or
any proof whatever that the insect
pierced it.

The common English frog-hopper,
which, before it gets its wings, is
called "cuckoo-spit," and lives on many
plants, in a frothy, spittle-like fluid, is
said to be like the African insect, but
is much smaller.

Livingstone is of the opinion that
the distilling insects derive much of

their fluid by absorbing it from the
air. He found some of the insects on
a castor-plant, and he cut away about
twenty inches of the bark between
the insects and the tree, and destroyed
all the vegetable tissue which carried
the sap from the tree to the place
where the insects were distilling.

The distilling was then going on at
the rate of one drop in every sixty-
seven seconds, or about five and a
half tablespoonfuls every twenty-four
hours. The next morning, although
the supplies of sap were stopped, sup-
posing them to come up from the
ground, the fluid was increased to one
drop every five seconds, or one pint in
every twenty-four hours. He then
cut the branch so much it broke, but
they still went on, at the rate of a
drop every five seconds; while another
colony of the insects, on a branch of
the same tree, gave a drop every
seventeen seconds.

We should be tempted to call this a
singular freak of nature, were it not
for the assurance that a divine hand
has formed every living creature, great
and small, and placed them on this
earth for some wise purpose, each one
to carry out the peculiarities of its
own nature, and so balance and
counter-balance one another by feed-
ing upon those best adapted to them,
and so keep up sufficient active life
among themselves to carry out the
Creator's design.

A Terrible Thief.

BY MATTIE DYER BRITTS.

CHILDREN, you all know what a
thief is. One who takes something
which does not belong to him. There
is a law against stealing; and when a
thief is found and convicted, they put
him in prison and punish him.

But I know of a terrible thief who
has never yet been caught and pun-
ished as he ought to be. Yet the
things he steals from us are of the
greatest value—are our choicest treas-
ures.

He comes to a happy home, slips in,
and robs it of its husband and father,
takes the food from the table, the
clothes from wife and children, the
fuel from the fire-place, and the furni-
ture from the house. And yet he
goes unpunished!

He meets the young, and steals from
them good name, honour, morality,
health, beauty—all which makes youth
bright and happy. And yet he goes
free. He overtakes the aged, and
snatches from their trembling grasp
uprightness, truth, faith, hope—every-
thing which makes life endurable—
and plunges them into a dishonoured
grave. Still no one punishes him.

He fills the jails, the lunatic asy-
lums, the penitentiaries, the gutters,
and the rivers, with his victims. He
breaks hearts and scatters homes; he
makes idiots, paupers, rags, and crimi-
nals, and destroys men by thousands
every month in the year. And yet he
is not bound and conquered.

Do you know who he is, children?

This terrible thief is the Rum-thief,
the Whiskey-robber, the Alcohol-fiend,
the Brandy-murderer! Shall he al-
ways carry on his work? No, boys—
not always. The day will come when
he will be banished forever from the
land. Help with all your might to
hasten it.

"I's Put a Pebble in dat Bottle."

A HOME mission teacher of freed-
men relates the following:—

An old coloured brother, who had
toiled away his energies, and was left
with a stiffened, trembling frame,
crowned with snow-white hair, was
asked how old he was. Brightening
up at being noticed and questioned by
a white "geman," he replied:

"Well, sah, I doesn't know how old
I is. Dat is, I can't tell ye how many
years I have lived as a child. But,
bless de Lord, I kin tell ye how old I
is as de Lord's chile."

Hurrying away into his cabin, he
soon came out with a bottle, joyfully
rattling something in it, and resumed
his happy tone:

"Now, sah, if ye'll jest take and
count dem pebbles ye'll see how old I
is as de Lord's chile. I was born
again jest afore Christmas a long time
ago. When de next Christmas come
around I jest tho't I would keep ac-
count of de years I was agwine to
spend in de service of de Lord. I
couldn't write none, so I tho't I'd put
a pebble in a bottle and put it away,
and I tole 'em all in my cabin what
dat bottle for, and nobody never tech
him! So every Christmas since I was
born agin I's put a pebble in dat
bottle. And if ye'll jest count 'em,
ye'll see how old I is as a Christian.
I can't count none, and *disremember*
how many there is!"

The pebbles were counted, and *fifty*
one of them told of his long life as
"de Lord's chile."

Luminous Insects.

SIR SAMUEL W. BAKER says there
is a great variety of luminous insect
in Ceylon. The following paragraphs
are an extract from what he has writ-
ten about them:—

"A night after a heavy shower of
rain is a brilliant sight, when the whole
atmosphere is teeming with moving
lights bright as the stars themselves,
waving around the tree-tops in fiery
circles, now threading like distant
lamps through the intricate branches
and lighting up the dark recesses of
the foliage, then rushing like a shower
of sparks around the glittering boughs.
Myriads of bright fire-flies in these
wild dances meet their destiny, being
entangled in opposing spiders' webs,
where they hang like fiery lamps,
their own light directing the path of
the destroyer, and assisting in their
destruction.

"That which affords the greatest
volume of light is a large white grub,
about two inches in length. It is a

fat, sluggish animal, whose light is
far more brilliant than could be sup-
posed to emanate from such a form.
The glow from this grub will render
the smallest print so legible that a
page may be read with ease. I once
tried the experiment of killing the
grub, but the light was not extin-
guished with life; and by opening the
tail, I squeezed out a quantity of glu-
tinous fluid, which was so highly phos-
phorescent that it brilliantly illumed
the page of a book which I had been
reading by its light for a trial."—
Youth's Instructor.

Only Now and Then.

THINK it no excuse, boys,
Merging into men,
That you do a wrong act
Only now and then.
Better to be careful
As you go along,
If you would be manly,
Capable and strong!

Many a wretched sot, boys,
That one daily meets
Drinking from the beer-kegs
Living in the streets,
Or at best in quarters
Worse than any pen,
Once was dressed in broadcloth,
Drinking now and then!

When you have a habit
That is wrong, you know,
Knock it off at once, lads,
With a sudden blow.
Think it no excuse, boys,
Merging into men,
That you do a wrong act
Only now and then!

—Mrs. M. A. Kidder.

A Word to Boys.

You are made to be kind, boys,
generous, magnanimous. If there is
a boy in school who has a clubfoot,
don't let him know you ever saw it.
If there is a poor boy with ragged
clothes, don't talk about rags in his
hearing. If there is a lame boy,
assign him some part of the game that
doesn't require running. If there is a
dull one, help him to learn his lesson.
If there is a bright one, be not envious
of him; for if one boy is proud of his
talents, and another is envious of
them, there are two great wrongs, and
no more talent than before. If a
larger or stronger boy has injured you
and is sorry for it, forgive him. All
the school will show by their counten-
ances how much better it is than to
have a great fuss.

The Wish of the Heart.

A DEAF and dumb girl was once
asked by a lady, who wrote the ques-
tion on the slate, "What is prayer?"
The little girl took the pencil and
wrote the reply, "Prayer is the wish
of the heart." "The effectual fervent
prayer of a righteous man availeth
much," and we are reminded by the
above anecdote of the sentiment of
Archbishop Leighton that the man
who desires to be righteous is righteous.