

## OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

### ANGELS HEARKENING.

Psalm cxlii. 20.

Why are the Lord's holy angels so strong,—  
Wings never weary, though journeys be long?—  
Ah, my child! couldst thou but see the white throng,  
They are hearkening, hearkening!

Why are the Lord's holy angels so swift  
Up their bright ladder our loads to uplift,  
O'er earth and sea to bear blessing and gift?—  
They are hearkening, hearkening!

Why are the Lord's holy angels so sure  
Aye where to go?—Ah! their eyes are so pure,  
How can they smile, and earth's darkness endure?  
They are hearkening, hearkening!

So, my child, wouldst thou for God's work be strong?  
Swift at His bidding, be way short or long?  
Sure-eyed and pure-eyed, 'mid darkness and wrong?  
Oh! wouldst thou join in the angels' sweet song?  
Then be hearkening, ever hearkening!

### THE GOOD ARAB.

The Arabs have a good many stories which are not true, but which are valuable because they illustrate important and useful lessons, and this is one of that kind.

A rich Arab was once travelling through a wilderness, when he was attacked by a band of robbers. They ordered him to give up everything he had, and threatened, with their drawn swords in their hands, to kill him in a moment, if he hesitated. He ordered his servants to give up all they had. They did so. Then he handed over to the robbers three bags of gold which were hid away under the cloth of his saddle. He gave them, too, a small cabinet of precious stones, which was carefully stowed away with his other baggage. He also delivered up his silver-hilted sword, with its ivory sheath, and his splendid turban, made of blue silk, with red tassels and sparkling with diamonds and other jewels.

When he had done this, he said to the robbers: "Now, masters, I have given you all I have. You are welcome to them. Take them, and let me go."

"Nay," said the captain, "I can't let you go yet. I see a silken cord hung round your neck. We must see what is at the end of it before we part."

The Arab calmly pulled this cord from his bosom. At the end of it was a small phial, or glass bottle, that seemed to be filled with water. Taking it in his hand, he said:—

"I have given you freely everything else I had; but I cannot give you this. If I should give it to you, it would be of no value to you, for you know not how to use it. But it is worth all the world to me. I never can part with it while I live."

"Tell us," said one of the robbers, "why you give up your gold and jewels, and set so much value on this little phial?"

"This little phial," said the good Arab, "is the most valuable thing in the world to me. When all my worldly goods are taken away from me, and nothing is left but the sandy shore and the barren wilderness, I have only to put this little phial to my eye and look through it, and immediately I see wonderful things. The barren waste changes into a fertile field. Wells of clear, cool water are bubbling up, refreshing streams are flowing

through the beautiful plains, tall palm trees are spreading out their refreshing shade, and flowers in all their loveliness are blooming around me."

"Let me look at this wonderful phial," said the chief of the robbers, stepping up to the Arab. He handed it to the robber, who put it to his eyes and looked through it very earnestly, but it made no change in anything. The desert was desert, and the rocks were rocks still. Not a tree, or flower, or single beautiful thing appeared to him. He handed it back, and said, "Why, I can't see anything through your phial."

"That's just what I told you," said the Arab. "This phial was given to me by a prophet of God. It is the phial of hope. But no one can see the bright and beautiful things which it shows, till they learn to know and love and serve God. Once I could see nothing more through this phial than you do now, but God has taught me how to use it; and now, whenever I look through it, everything is bright and beautiful. It always gives me comfort, and makes me happy. so I carry it round my neck. It is the greatest blessing that I have, and I would rather part with everything else I have in the world than part with this."

Then the story says that the robbers gave back to the good Arab all the things they had taken away from him, and he went on his way feeling very happy. And this story affords a good illustration of the blessed hope which Jesus gives to those who love Him. This hope is just the same to us as if there were a door into heaven set open before us. We can look through that door whenever we are in trouble, and see all the blessed things that the Bible tells us of, and which God is preparing for His people.

### BREAD BETTER THAN PEARLS.

I shall first tell you a story, and then teach you a lesson from it. The story I shall translate from a German book, and the lesson I shall teach, as well as I can myself.

An Arab once lost his way in a desert. His provisions were soon exhausted. For two days and two nights he had not a morsel to eat. He began to fear that he should die of hunger. He looked eagerly, but in vain, along the level sand for some caravan of travellers from whom he might beg some bread.

At last he came to a place where there was a little water in a well, and around the well's mouth the marks of an encampment. Some people had lately pitched their tents there, and had gathered them up and gone away again. The starving Arab looked around in the hope of finding some food that the travellers might have left behind. After searching a while, he came upon a little bag, tied at the mouth, and full of something that felt hard and round. He opened the bag with great joy, thinking it contained either dates or nuts, and expecting that with them he should be able to satisfy his hunger. But as soon as he saw what it contained, he threw it on the ground, and cried out in despair, "It is only pearls." He lay down in the desert to die.

Pearls are very precious. If the man had

been at home, this bagful of pearls would have made his fortune. He would have received a large sum of money for them, and would have been a rich man. But pearls could not feed him when he was hungry. Although you had your house full of pearls, if you have not bread you will die. The Arab knew the value of the pearls he found; but he would have given them all at that moment for one morsel of bread—would have given them, but could not, for there was no bread within his reach. So, although he was very rich, he was left to die of want.

Pearls and gold cannot preserve the life of body, far less can they satisfy the soul. Bread is more precious to a hungry man than pearls, and the bread of life is more precious still. Christ has expressly said, "I am the bread of life." How foolish it is to spend oneself in gathering things that cannot feed us if we are hungry, and cannot save us from our sin! "Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness," and keep other things in a lower place. The chief thing for each of us is to get in Christ the life of our souls for ever, and then we may gladly accept whatever good things in this life God may be pleased to give us. "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

He who is rich, when he comes to die, but is still without Christ for his soul, is like the Arab in the desert, with his bagful of pearls, but perishing for want of bread.

### A RUMSELLER'S STORY.

A man named Stacy, the owner of a splendid drinking-saloon in New York, signed the pledge lately and closed his house. Hearing that a party of lads had formed themselves into a temperance society, he went to them and gave them his experience as a rumrunner. We repeat some of his recollections for our larger audience.

"I sold liquor," said Mr. Stacy, "for eleven years—long enough for me to see the beginning and end of its effects. I have seen a man take his first glass of liquor in my place, and afterward fill the grave of a suicide. I have seen man after man, wealthy and educated, come into my saloon, who cannot now buy his dinner. I can recall twenty customers worth from one hundred thousand to five hundred thousand dollars, who are now without money, place or friends."

He warned boys against entering saloons on any pretext. He stated that he had seen many a young fellow, member of a temperance society, come in with a friend and wait while he drank. "No, no," he would say, "I never touch it. Thanks all the same." Presently, rather than seem churlish, he would take a glass of cider or harmless lemonade. "The lemonade was nothing," said the rumrunner, "but I knew how it would end. The only safety, boys, for any man, no matter how strong his resolution, is outside the door of the saloon."

CHRISTIANS are often employed in digging wells to find comfort, and the deeper they go the darker they get, the Fountain of life, salvation and comfort is above.