

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

NAN, THE NEWSBOY.

NAN, the newsboy, is among the latest of the odd characters which spring into fame from time to time out of the varied life of the great city of New York. A year ago he formed a little band, consisting of himself and two others, to patrol the East River docks at night and rescue persons from drowning.

Some charitable persons heard of the boys, gave them a floating station to live in, boats, neat blue uniforms, and a small weekly salary, to devote their whole time to the work.

Nan's real name is William J. O'Neil. He is a thorough street Arab in his manners, and uses the dialect common among ragged newsboys and bootblacks.

The regulations by which the association should be governed, according to his idea, are few and simple. As jotted down with other matters in his rough log-book, they are:

1. Members shall do whatever the president orders them.
2. No one shall be a member who drinks or gets drunk.
3. Any members not down in Dover Dock, and miss one night except in sickness, shall be fined fifty cents by order of the president.
4. No cursing allowed.

Spelling is not Nan's strong point, and I have taken the liberty to arrange this according to the usual custom. Nor does he keep records in a scientific manner. Case four, in his list of rescued, sets down only "A Jew boy." Case five is "A red-headed boy who fell in the water, but could not find his name."

The first meeting of the association took place one pleasant day in June, 1878.

"We was a-sittin' on Dover Dock," Nan says, "tellin' stories. We got talkin' about how a body was took out 'most every day, and some said two hundred was took out in a year. We heard about life savin' on the Jersey coast, too. So I says: 'Say we makes a 'sociation of it boys, for to go along the docks pickin' 'em up regular.' 'All right!' they says, and they nomernates me for president. We thought we might as well be doin' that as loafin' on the corners."

Might as well be brave and humane fellows, that is, as idle and dangerous loungers! Yes, indeed they might, and this modest way of putting it is infinitely to Nan's credit.

The three have nothing very distinctive in their appearance, excepting their plain uniform. Nan has a rosy complexion and a serious manner. He has sold papers almost ever since he can remember. Edward Kelly is paler and slighter, and has quite a decided air of dignity. Gilbert Long is sunbrowned, and has a merry twinkle in his eye. He looks as if likely to be the most recklessly persistent of the lot in any dangerous strait. The three boys were all born in Cherry street. Long has been a tinsmith's apprentice, and Kelly a leather-cutter.

They have also with them five unpaid volunteers who serve at night. The force is divided into three patrols.

Cherry street and its vicinity abound in tenements, sailor boarding-houses and drinking saloons. The upper part of South Street is a kind of breathing place for this squalid quarter. It is much favoured by idle urchins especially, who find a hundred ways to amuse themselves among the boxes and bales. A breeze blows from the water across the edge of the dusty, coffee-coloured piers and gives a breath of fresh air.

The fish dock and the old "dirt" dock in Peek Slip on summer evenings are white with the figures of bathers. Often, too, even when the law was more stringent against it than now, they found means to swim in the daytime. They wrestle and tumble over one another, remain in the water for hours, swim across the swift stream to Brooklyn and back, and dive to the muddy bottom for coins thrown to them by spectators.

This was the training-school of our life-savers. Accidents were very frequent here, and the boys made many rescues without thinking much of them. Their house is a little box of a place, painted bright blue, moored under the shade of the great Brooklyn bridge, and close to both Fulton and Roosevelt street ferries. The front door of the establishment, as it might be called, is through a hole in a dilapidated fence; then down a ladder, and perhaps across a canal-boat or two, to where it lies, wedged in, in the crowded basin. They have a row-boat, and a life-saving raft of the catamaran pattern.

Inside, the station has three bunks, some lockers to hold miscellaneous articles, a small stove in a corner, and a small case of books contributed by the Seaman's Friend Society. These are largely accounts of courage and ingenuity in danger likely to be appreciated by boys in their circumstances. When they unbend, after duty is over, Nan plays the banjo and what he calls the "cordeen," and there is quite a social time.

Nan had saved eight persons, Long six, and Kelly four, before the association was formed, and Nan had received a silver medal from the United States Life Saving Association.

His most gallant case was the rescue of three young men overturned from a row-boat by the collision with the Harlem steamer off Eleventh street. He was selling his papers on the dock at the time. When his notice was attracted to the accident, he at once threw the papers down and plunged in. He was taken out himself in a drowning condition.

"When you drowns," he says, speaking feelingly from experience, "not a thing you ever did but comes up in your head. Then, may be, after that, you hear a kin' o' noise like music in your ears."

Long's best case was the saving of a son of Police Sergeant Webb's in Dover Dock, and Kelley's of a boy at Bay Ridge, who drew him down twice in the effort.—*St. Nicholas.*

BUTTERED PEASE, IN CHOCTAW.

THERE was once a man who had studied all his life and become very wise—so wise that he could say "Buttered pease," in Choctaw. Everybody looked up to him with

great admiration, and the little children stopped their play and put their fingers in their mouths when he passed by. And when a little boy one day asked what was the use of saying "Buttered pease," in Choctaw, all the children standing near, that were properly brought up, cried out with astonishment:

"Why, you ought to know better!"

"Of course."

"Why, how can you speak so?"

Saying this gave them a feeling that they had done a right and noble thing, and made the little boy feel very ignorant and miserable.

But, at last, the king heard how wise the wise man was, and he sent a herald to him congratulating him on having attained such results of his life-study, and appointed a day when he would assemble his court and hear him say "Buttered pease," in Choctaw.

So, on the appointed day, the hall of the palace was filled with people eager to see and hear the wise man. The king and queen were seated on a splendid throne at one side of a raised platform; and, at a given signal, a herald approached from the other side and made a long speech, introducing the man who was to introduce the wise man, and when the herald had finished, the man whom he introduced made a great oration, an hour long saying how great the wise man was, and praising his self-denying life in being willing to endure severe privation for the sake of being able to say "Buttered pease," in Choctaw. And when he had finished and gathered up his embroidered robes, and passed off the stage, a little man dressed in shabby clothes, with bright eyes and a bald head and spectacles, trotted up before the king, and, stopping in front of him, put his hands together and made a queer little bow.

Then, while all the people held their breath to hear, he said "Buttered pease," in Choctaw, and bowed again, and turned about, and trotted off the stage. And all the people gave a great cheer, and, as they went home, said to one another how grandly it sounded and what a learned man he must be.—*St. Nicholas for September.*

THE USEFUL LITTLE GIRL.

HOW pleasant it is to see a little girl trying to be useful. There is little Rhoda May sitting in old Mrs. Cooper's cottage, and writing a letter for her to her absent son. It seems but a trifling act of kindness, and yet it is one of great value to the old lady; for she does not know how to write herself, and would not be able to let her "dear boy John" hear from her at all, if some one did not write instead of her. That "some one" is good little Rhoda. She has given up her play this afternoon—and no one loves play more dearly than Rhoda—in order that she may, in this way, help old Mrs. Cooper. Rhoda wishes very much to be useful. I wonder whether you are like her.

A LITTLE girl was lying in bed so ill that her disease had taken away her sight. Her teacher went to see her, and said, "Are you quite blind, Mary?" "Yes," she replied "but I can see Jesus." "How do you see Jesus?" "With the eye of my heart."