

Our Young Folks

Jack Frost.

I hunted for flowers, and cried when I found
Their poor withered leaves lying dead on the ground.
The blue and the pink and the white were all lost;
I'll never forgive him, that cruel Jack Frost!

He waited and watched for the very first day
When Summer was tired and turning away;
Then came in the night, with his shivery breath;
And all the sweet flowers were frozen to death.

But when we gathered where the maple trees grow,
And oaks, and the sumacs all crowding below—
Why then, as we played in the sunshiny air,
We laughed just to see that Jack Frost had been there.

He touched with his finger the bitter-sweet vine.
He turned to red coral that garlanded mine.
He opened the burrs of the chestnuts of brown,
And then they came rattling and pattering down.

And, oh! how he painted the vines and the trees!
They smiled in the sunbeams and waved in the breeze.
With purple and scarlet and crimson and gold—
Far more than a million of gardens would hold.

Perhaps he was sorry for what he has done,
And wanted to make up ere Winter came on.
Well, well! poor old Jack! He was doing his best.
And so we had better forgive him the rest.

—N. Y. Independent.

How the Leaves Come Down.

SUSAN COOLIDGE.

I'll tell you how the leaves came down,
The great Tree to his children said:
"You're getting sleepy, Yellow and Brown,
Yes, very sleepy, little Red;
It is quite time you went to bed."

"Ah!" begged each silly, pouting leaf,
"Let us a little longer stay;
Dear Father Tree, behold our grief,
This such a very pleasant day,
We do not want to go away."

So just for one more merry day,
To the great tree the leaflets clung,
Frolicked and danced and had their way;
Upon the autumn breezes swung,
Whispering all their sports among.

"Perhaps the great Tree will forget
And let us stay until the Spring,
If we all beg and coax and fret,
But the big Tree did no such thing;
He smiled to hear their whispering."

"Come, children, all to bed!" he cried;
And ere the leaves could urge their prayer
He shook his head, and far and wide,
Fluttering and rustling everywhere,
Down gusted the leaflets through the air.

I saw them: on the ground they lay,
Golden and red, a huddled swarm,
Waiting till one from far away,
White bed-clothes heaped upon her arm,
Should come to wrap them safe and warm.

The great bare tree looked down and smiled,
"Good night, dear little leaves," he said;
And from below each sleepy child
Replied, "Good night!" and murmured,
"It is so nice to go to bed."

DAVY AND THE GOBLIN.

BY CHARLES CARRILL.

CHAPTER VI.—THE MOVING FOREST.

The place was so dark that at first he could see nothing, although he heard a rattling sound coming from the back part of the shop, but presently he discovered the figure of an old man, busily mixing something in a large iron pot. As Davy approached him, he saw that the pot was full of watches, which the old man was stirring about with a ladle. The old creature was curiously dressed in a suit of rusty green velvet, with little silver buttons sewed over it, and he wore a pair of enormous yellow-leather boots; and Davy was quite alarmed at seeing that a large leathern belt about his waist was stuck full of old-fashioned knives and pistols. Davy was about to retreat quickly from the shop, when the old man looked up and said, in a peevish voice: "How many watches do you want?" and Davy saw that he was a very shocking-looking person, with wild, staring eyes, and with a skin as dark as mahogany, as if he had been smoked in something for ever so long.

"How many?" repeated the old man impatiently.
"If you please," said Davy, "I don't think I'll take any watches to-day. I'll call—"

"Drat 'em!" interrupted the old man, angrily beating the watches with his ladle, "I'll never get rid of 'em—never!"
"It seems to me—" began Davy soothingly.

"Of course it does!" again interrupted the old man as crossly as before. "Of course it does! That's because you won't listen to the way of it."

"But I will listen," said Davy.

"Then sit down on the floor and hold up your ears," said the old man.

Davy did as he was told to do, so far as sitting down on the floor was concerned, and the old man pulled a paper out of one of his boots, and glared at Davy over the top of it, said angrily:

"You're a pretty spectacle! I'm another. What does that make?"

"A pair of spectacles, I suppose," said Davy.

"Right," said the old man. "Here they are." And pulling an enormous pair of spectacles out of the other boot he put them on, and began reading aloud from his paper:

"My recollectest thoughts are those
Which I remember yet,
And bearing on, as you'd suppose,
The things I don't forget."

"But my recollectest thoughts are lies
Alike that they should be;
A state of things, as you'll confess,
You very seldom see."

"Clover, isn't it?" said the old man, peeping proudly over the top of the paper.

"Yes, I think it is," said Davy, rather doubtfully.

"Now comes the cream of the whole thing," said the old man. "Just listen to this:

"And yet the meekest thought I love
Is what no one believes—"

Here the old man hastily crammed the paper into his boot again, and stared solemnly at Davy.

"What is it?" said Davy, after waiting a moment for him to complete the verse. The old man glanced suspiciously about the shop, and then added, in a hoarse whisper:

"That I'm the sole survivor of
The famous Forty Thieves!"

"But I thought the Forty Thieves were all boiled to death," said Davy.

"All but me," said the old man decidedly.

"I was in the last jar, and when they came to me the oil was off the boil, or the boil was off the oil, I forget which it was, but it rained my digestion and made me look like a ginger-bread man. What larks we used to have!" he continued, rocking himself back and forth and chuckling hoarsely.

"Oh! I was a precious lot, we were? I'm Sham-Sham, you know. Then there was Anamanamona Miko—he was an Irishman from Hullahoo—and Barcelona Boner—he was a Spanish chap, and boned everything he could lay his hands on. Strike's real name was Gobang; but we called him Strike, because he was always asking for more pay. Haro Ware was a poacher, and used to catch Welsh rabbits in a trap; we called him 'Hardware' because he had so much metal about him. Good joke, wasn't it?"

"Oh, very!" said Davy, laughing.

"Frown Whack was a scowling fellow with a club," continued Sham-Sham. "My! how he could hit! And Harico and Barico were a couple of bad Society Islanders. Then there was Weo Wo; he was a little Chinese chap, and we used to send him down the chimneys to open front doors for us. He used to say that sooted him to perfection. Wac—"

At this moment an extraordinary commotion began among the watches. There was no doubt about it, the pot was boiling. And Sham-Sham, angrily crying out "Don't tell me a watched pot never boils!" sprang to his feet, and pulling a pair of pistols from his belt, began firing at the watches, which were now bubbling over the side of the pot and rolling about the floor; while Davy, who had had quite enough of Sham-Sham by this time, ran out of the door.

To his great surprise, he found himself in a sort of under-ground passage lighted by grated openings overhead; but he could still hear Sham-Sham, who now seemed to be firing all his pistols at once, he did not hesitate, but ran along the passage at the top of his speed.

Presently he came in sight of a figure hurrying toward him with a lighted candle, and as it approached he was perfectly astounded to see that it was Sham-Sham himself, dressed up in a neat calico frock and a dimity apron like a housekeeper, and with a bunch of keys hanging at his girdle. The old man seemed to be greatly agitated, and hurriedly whispering, "We thought you were never coming, sir!" led the way through the passage in great haste. Davy noticed that they were now in a sort of tunnel made of fine grass. The grass had a delightful fragrance, like new-mown hay, and was neatly wound around the tunnel like

the inside of a bird's nest. The next moment they came out into an open space in the forest, where, to Davy's astonishment, the Cockalorum was sitting bolt upright in an arm-chair, with his head wrapped up in flannel.

It seemed to be night, but the place was lighted up by a large chandelier that hung from the branches of a tree, and Davy saw that a number of odd looking birds were roosting on the chandelier among the lights, gazing down upon the poor Cockalorum with a melancholy interest. As Sham-Sham made his appearance with Davy at his heels, there was a sudden commotion among the birds, and they all cried out together, "Here's the doctor!" Before Davy could reply, the Hole-keeper suddenly made his appearance with his great book, and hurriedly turning over the leaves, said, pointing to Davy, "He is n't a doctor. His name is Gloopitch." At these words, there arose a long, wailing cry, the lights disappeared, and Davy found himself on a broad path in the forest with the Hole-keeper walking quietly beside him.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Judge Thyself.

No life of man was ever long enough to make the passage of another year a trifling event; and no man can be so young as to be wholly absorbed in the future and have no good reason in his mind for turning to the past and casting at least one serious thought backward over the completed stadium, of which it takes so few to fill out the round of his allotted destiny on earth.

There is a Judgment which is future, and which we call final, though the momentous issues that hang on it invest it more properly with the awe not of an end, but of a solemn and eternal beginning.

There is also another Judgment which is in no sense final, and which goes on in life, in its great crises and events, in deep experiences, sufferings or fateful histories, when we are brought, in the nakedness of our personal responsibility before the tribunal of eternal law and eternal reality, and compelled to furnish in our own persons both judge and court and jury, to sit on our own case under penalties and bonds to God and our own souls.

It is a poor life with no great promise of good things in it, and with no indication of the stuff that true and useful lives are made of, which has had no such experiences in its history, or which refuses to meet them with honest frankness when they come and try the case through to the last appeal.

We do not envy the frivolous creature who is ready to tell you that he makes nothing of things like these, that he lets them pass, that they slip easily off his heart, that he hangs them up for the present, that he has never been overwhelmed by the great questions which others find so troublesome, nor by the tremendous realities that are assumed in the problem of an immortal and responsible life. Heaven pity its farwandering, deep-sunken child, who is not called up often, by the imperious voice of his own heart, to the bar of God, to have the sentence of the law pronounced on him, or who glides gayly by one year's ending and another without some deep plowing of his heart, some plain dealing with himself, some reopening, and resettlement of the principles to which he is willing to commit his destiny!

At this season of the year we have more to do than to balance the accounts of our annual trade. We have open accounts with ourselves to review and close. While a man is greater than what he may possess, while character is of more importance than the accidental circumstances of our condition; and while the eternal hope abides to anchor life upon, a sane mind has a supreme interest to be looked after in the Day-book and the Year-book, that show what he is, where he is, and whither he is bound as a man.

All truth and all reality have hard and unyielding sides, which neither bend nor listen to excuses. Woo to the man who lacks the courage of mind or the force of character to reckon with them early! Life is crowded with questions which, though asked in a whisper, persist until the decision is reached. To postpone them is not to evade them. To have no opinions about them is only to be out of right relations with the facts and verities of life.

These hard, stern and imperative realities are neither softened nor lost out of sight in Christianity. To ignore them in the Christian faith would be to drop the solid bottom out of its foundation. The most pitiful mistake ever made about the Gospel is to identify it wholly with mercy, forgiveness, and a kind of soft motherhood of love. One of the best uses for the close of another year is to make it a private and personal day of Judgment, each man for himself, to come to a settlement with truth and duty and so get ready to start on the New Year with a heart lightened by the recollection of the apostolic principle, "If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged."—*New York Independent.*

Pearls From Ceylon.

For the last hundred years Ceylon has been one of the main sources of pearls, the best coming from the western coast of the island, where the oyster producing them is of a different kind from that on the eastern coast. The pearl-oyster banks are under control of the government, which allows fishing only for a short season, and may stop it altogether if the banks seem to be in danger of exhaustion. A large number of boat-owners from Ceylon, and India, from 150 to 200 in all, will enroll themselves, and assemble in March at the banks, where they are divided into two fleets, one sailing under a blue and the other under a red flag. These fleets fish on every other day. Each boat provides its own crew and divers, and has on board a government guard, whose duty it is to see that no oysters are sold without their knowledge.

The oysters are caught by divers. When one of these men is about to go down, he stands on a flat stone attached to the diving rope, draws in a deep breath, and holding his nostrils closed with one hand, is lowered swiftly to the bottom. There he hastily collects as many oysters in his basket as he is able to scramble up, and when unable to endure it longer, gives a signal, and is hauled to the surface. A diver who can remain under water a whole minute is thought to be doing unusually well.

At a given signal the boats all sail for shore, and the oysters are placed in the government's receptacles. Each boat is then given its share for its services, and the rest are sold by the government at auction. Before the pearls can be washed out the oysters must rot, and are spread out upon cemented floors while they undergo this process. The smell of this decay is so great that no one can live near the place, and formerly diseases like the cholera nearly always broke out in the neighborhood before the end of the season.

The product varies greatly, but at present from fifteen to twenty millions of oysters are annually caught in Ceylon, during about forty days' fishing, and the pearls yielded are worth about \$500,000.

Youthful Humorists.

While her mother was taking a fly out of the butter, little Daisy asked: "Is that a butterfly, mamma?"

A little girl suffering with the mumps declares she "feels as though a headache had slipped down into her neck."

A little girl on Long Island offered a rather remarkable prayer a few nights ago when she said, "I do thank Thee, God, for all my blessings, and I'll do as much for you some time."

"Johnnie, what are you doing up stairs?" said Johnnie's ma. "Oh, nothin' much, ma." "But, sir, I want to know." Oh, well, then, I'm skinning a freckle to see what she looks like inside.

"Mamma," said a little boy, "I gave Carrie a pretty good hint to go home, to-day." "What did you do, my son?" said his mother. "Oh, I filled her mouth with mustard and called it apple sauce, and she took the hint."

As little Edgar's mother was about to punish him for some misdemeanor, he begged that he might be allowed to say his prayers before the chastisement. When upon his knees he remained there so long that his mother finally relented.

A little girl having found a shellless egg under a bush in the garden brought it in, and showing it to her aunt said: "See, auntie, what I found under the currant bushes. I know the old hen that laid it and I'm just going to put it back in the nest and make her finish it."