

Youths' Department.

WEARING WHITE.

While walking out one pleasant day,
Beside a thoughtful child,
She turned to me her earnest face,
And asked in accents mild,
"There are some people dressed in black,
I very often meet;
Why do they wear that gloomy dress,
When walking in the street?"

We very often talk of death,
That little child and I;
She thought it was a happy thing,
For children, young to die.
She did not know they went to rest,
Beneath the cold, dark sod,
But pictured them on Jesus' breast,
Forever safe with God.

How could I say, "For ransomed ones,
We wear this gloomy dress,"
And not disturb her tranquil thoughts
Of heavenly happiness?
I could not bear to see the look
Of sorrow and surprise,
That such a sorrowful glimpse of death,
Would summon to her eyes.

And so I said, "That solemn dress
Is useful as a token,
That unto one who yearneth it,
"The mighty Lord has spoken."
She looked confused, then softly said,
"But *black* why should it be?
The saints wear white, and so would I,
If God should speak to me."

Again I said, "Our absent friends,
We miss, when out of sight;
And when they die, we never feel
Like wearing colors bright."
She shook her head, "Why should we mourn
For those who are so blessed?"
And I no words could find to tell
Why they in black were dressed.

ONLY BEGIN.

LITTLE FRED had a strong repugnance to early rising, though he saw very well how much time he lost by laying in bed, and often intended to cure himself of the fault; yet this intention was not carried into effect, because he had not resolution to conquer his disinclination to do right.

It was now summer, and one morning he awoke about five o'clock. Suddenly, his intention occurred to him, and he thought within himself, "I must once for all make a beginning."

With this thought he sprang out of bed; but a shiver ran through his whole body, so strongly did his indolence rebel against his determination.

He dressed himself quickly, but it seemed to him all the time as if he could not help lying down again. Once or twice he was on the point of it, but happily he resisted.

After he had clothed and washed himself and offered his morning prayer, he sat down and prepared himself upon his lessons, and he observed, with pleasure, that every thing went better with him than usual. His teacher was uncommonly well satisfied with him through the day, and his parents, who heard of this, loaded him with caresses. He was himself cheerful and happy. It seemed to him as if he had begun a new life.

Then he bethought him, "The trifling self-conquest which early rising cost me to-day has brought its own reward. I should be a fool, indeed, if I did not do the same other days."

So he did; and every morning it was easier to him to rise early. At last it became so much his habit, that he could not have remained in bed and slept, even if he had wished it.

It is just so with every thing that is hard to us at the outset. Right at it, young friends, and conquer the difficulty, and I'll be bound it will come easier to you every day, and at last yield you pleasure.

In connection with this, I will tell you a singular dream that a friend of mine once related to me. These were his own words:

"I dreamed once that I was walking on a narrow road, where many people were before me; but of these a large number turned back, and said to me, that there was no use in going farther, for in the middle of this narrow path a rock was lying, at which I should have to turn back, because no man could possibly get beyond it. I did not, however, suffer myself to be dismayed by this; because I saw that there were others before me who did not turn back.

"As I went somewhat farther, it seemed to me that I saw a small stone lying before me at some distance. But the nearer I came, the greater seemed the stone to become, and at last it was as large as a house.

"Then I was about to turn back; but some one seized me by the arm, and said, 'Thou art on the way of virtue, and this stone is the stone of disinclination

to do right. Be not alarmed at its apparent size; it is but a deception of thy sight; venture only a courageous leap, and thou art beyond it.'

"I thought, 'I'll try,' shut my eyes close, and spring right over the terrible rock.

"Then I looked round, and, to my astonishment, saw nothing but a moderate sized stone, which I might have stepped over without difficulty, and which only my imagination had made so enormously large. And now my feelings were as pleasant as if I had suddenly recovered from a severe illness.

"But as I looked round again, I saw numbers of people who shuddered at the stone of disinclination, and turned back again. I called to them as loud as I could, not to let themselves be alarmed by the stone, for it was only illusion. But they would not listen to my words. That troubled me; I began to weep, and, with sadness in heart, I awoke."

THE PEDLAR AT SWAFFHAM.

THE curious woodwork in the church of Swaffham, Norfolk, has a singular story connected with it. A pedlar, it is said, living in the place, saw one night in a dream a supernatural figure standing by him, which said, "Rise and go to London Bridge, and there shalt thou find a treasure." The pedlar was, it appears, unwilling to undertake so long a journey on this intimation, and took no notice of the apparition. The next night it stood before him again, and commanded him to begone instantly. Still his incredulity was insuperable. On the third night, I think, the figure appeared again, and more urgently commanded him to set off forthwith; and that with such a commanding manner, that, on a wing, our pedlar determined to obey. Having happily, I suppose, mounted the tedious journey, taking only his dog as his companion, he came to London Bridge; and wandered up and down it a whole day without any result. At last, as it grew towards evening, a man, who had, from one of the houses, I presume, on the bridge, watched his incessant motions to and fro, came up to him: "Sir pedlar," said he, "may I be so bold as to inquire the cause of your wandering up and down the bridge all this live-long day, without intent, methinks, to gain any advantage thereby?" The pedlar, who by this time, began himself to mistrust the reasonableness of his errand, was loth to expose what might be his only; but, at last, on being very much pressed, "Well," quoth he, "an' I must tell you, a vision bade me come to London Bridge, for that there I should find a treasure: but treasure have I found none, and unless I am the more fortunate, back shall I go as poor as I came."—"Never trust again to visions," quoth the other: "if I had been fool enough to be taken in by them, I might have been sent, ere now, on as wild-goose a chase as you have been. I dreamed, once on a time, that I saw a figure which bade me go to a town called Swaffham, in Norfolk, to a pedlar's house lying hard by the church, (naming our own pedlar's abode,) and dig in a corner of his garden, for that I should find a pot of gold there; but I never went, and never mean to go; and you, methinks, had done well to stay at home, and mind your own business, as I did."—"Good evening, friend," quoth the pedlar: "I'll warrant you I'll never come back for treasure on London Bridge again." Back he and his dog journey to Swaffham: he calls for pickaxe and spade, and falls vigorously to work in the described corner of his garden. Presently he hits on something hard: he redoubles his efforts, and turns it out: it is a large pot of gold. With part of it he builds the church, and a magnificent perpendicular erection it is: and, in commemoration of the adventure, had it carved on the wooden seats; where, however, much of it is destroyed: but the figure of the pedlar and muzzled dog occurs on the seats, and on the basement moulding of the huge tower. The inhabitants of the place fully believe the story; and I see no reason to doubt it.—*Hierologus.*

Selections.

THE MADONNA DEL LAGHETTO.—AN EPISODE OF ROMISH SUPERSTITION.

As I was issuing from my room, portmanteau on shoulder, my landlord ran against me, so hot in haste was he to bring me the news, that he had heard of a cart getting ready to carry some devotees to the Madonna del Laghetto; it might save me some miles' walk, but it was a very poor conveyance, apologized mine host; "and such company, most of them mere peasants! such as an English gentleman perhaps could not sit with; however," . . . Some way or other, we have contrived to establish such a character on the

Continent for squeamishness and fastidiousness, such a horror for every one below us, that it might be supposed we were wont only to consort with dukes and princes of the blood.

I surprised the landlord most egregiously by catching at his offer, and we sallied forth at once to secure a place in this godsend of a vehicle, which, to be sure was neither elegant nor comfortable, being literally a cart, with planks nailed on either side to serve as seats, with, however, the blessing of an awning. My travelling-companions, eleven in number, were all peasant-men and women, in their best attire, with the exception of an old priest, a young capuchin, and a jolly stout fellow in blue velvet, the usual garb of well-to-do farmers, holding on his knees a very handsome little girl of about five or six years old.

The conversation was kept up briskly, save when some more than usually terrible jerk put a forcible stop to it, by throwing all the occupants of one side in a heap over their *vis a vis*, which was the case at least once every ten minutes. The Madonna, of course, and her miracles, were the exclusive theme of the incessant talk. Every one had a story to relate more wonderful than the last; every one happened to have a son, brother, cousin, friend, or at least an acquaintance, who had had some narrow escape. A boy had fallen from a high tree without breaking a limb; a young peasant, given up by the doctor, had miraculously recovered on the application of the image of the Madonna on his chest; or a shipwrecked sailor, on the point of drowning, through a prayer to our Lady del Laghetto, had been gently lifted by the waves and deposited safe and sound on the shore. Here is the substance of one of the stories related by our fellow-traveller the old priest:

The heroine was a rich, pious, childless lady, who for fifteen years running had never omitted making the annual pilgrimage to the shrine of Del Laghetto, for the purpose of asking the Madonna to vouchsafe her a son and heir; and the son was vouchsafed at last, when the applicant had reached the age of forty-eight. A beautiful boy he was, who died of the measles, it is true, but what of that? Neither the Madonna del Laghetto, nor any other Madonna, could reasonably be expected to work two miracles for the same person within so short a time. "This is why I would impress on you, my brethren," concluded the old padre, by way of a moral to his tale, "to have faith; never to grudge a sou or two for souls in purgatory; never to be weary of asking, my brethren, and leave the rest to the Madonna. For what does the holy text say: '*Petite et accipietis, pulsate et aperietur vobis.*'"

"Spoken like a book!" exclaimed the stout jolly fellow on my right, clapping his hands in applause: "that's just my mind. Here's my little love born deaf and dumb;" and the father kissed his little love passionately. "Did I or do I send for doctors and all sorts of quacks to cure her? Not I. I know better. The Madonna is to be her physician. As soon as we found out her misfortune, I brought her to the shrine. Did I despair? Not a bit. I took Marina to the shrine the very next year, and the next, and the next still; and I shall take her there till the Madonna grants me the blessing. I'll knock and knock, ay, and wrench the door open, if necessary. I have made up my mind; and we shall see whose head's too hardest, the Madonna's or mine."

This sort of challenge to the object of his warmest adoration was offered in the simplest and most natural way possible, and was not without a touch of pathos. I looked up at the speaker in surprise: there were no traces of stupidity or bluntness about him; on the contrary, there was something refined in the expression of his intelligent countenance, lighted up as it was by fatherly tenderness, as, gently parting the curls on the forehead of his darling, he made every effort to amuse her by his pantomime. And I thought with dismay on the amount of erroneous ideas which must have been forced on this creature of God, so far to pervert his moral sense as to make him put all his hopes for his child's cure in a kind of hand to hand struggle with the powers above.

A little past the heights of Turbia, on the right, there opens a road which, by gently sloping zigzags, leads down the valley to the sanctuary. It is wide enough for carriages, and kept in good order at the expense of the Father Franciscans, I believe—of whose convent the shrine is a dependence, being, in fact, neither more nor less than the little church of the convent. The fathers deserve some credit for the sound economical notions they display in the great care they take to smooth the road for the pilgrims.

We left our springless cart and the three poor exhausted animals, which, to my great wonder, had