

Children's Department.

SCHOOL-BOY TROUBLES.

THE witches get in my books, I know,
Or else it's fairy elves;
For when I study, they plague me so
I feel like one of themselves.
Often they whisper: "Come and play,
The sun is shining bright!"
And when I fling the book away
They flutter with delight.
They dance among the stupid words,
And twist the "rules" awry;
And fly across the page like birds,
Though I can't see them fly.
They twitch my feet, they blur my eyes,
They make me drowsy, too;
In fact, the more a fellow tries
To study, the worse they do.
They can't be heard, they can't be seen—
I know not how they look—
And yet they always lurk between
The leaves of a lesson-book.
Whatever they are I cannot tell,
But this is plain as day;
I never 'll be able to study well,
As long as the book-elves stay.

CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

THE name of Antioch must be well known to all students of the Acts of the Apostles, for it often meets us in that sacred book. It was a stately and noble city in Syria, on the banks of the Orontes, at one time the fourth in size and splendour among the cities of the ancient world. When the disciples were scattered abroad, after the martyrdom of St. Stephen, some of them bore the tidings of salvation as far as Antioch, which being known at Jerusalem, the Apostles and elders sent St. Barnabas to strengthen the new converts. There he drew much people to his Lord; there he brought St. Paul from Tarsus, and there the two Apostles dwelt for a whole year preaching the Lord Jesus; there the disciples first were called Christians; thence St. Paul and St. Barnabas were sent on their first missionary journey throughout Asia Minor, and there they returned to gladden the hearts of the brethren with the account of their labours and their conquests.

The Church thus planted grew and flourished, and in the third century it contained a great multitude of disciples under a bishop, and a large body of clergy. Among these was a priest called Sappricius, who had for years lived in close friendship with a Christian layman named Nicephorus, till a quarrel breaking out between them, their love was turned to hatred, they refused to speak to one another, and each turned aside if he met the other in the public streets.

This dreadful state of things continued for some time, till Nicephorus, coming to a better mind, was shocked to find that he really was living in such a state of bitter enmity with a fellow-Christian, and determined to be reconciled with him. So he sent friends to Sappricius to try to make peace. They asked for pardon in the name of Nicephorus, and said that he was desirous to make amends for every injury that he had done him, but Sappricius only told them that he never could forgive the man or forget what had passed between them. Much distressed, Nicephorus sent a second and a third time, redoubling his entreaties, but with no

better result. At last he went himself to the house of his former friend, fell at his feet, owned his fault, and asked pardon for Christ's sake. But all to no purpose; Sappricius coldly turned away, and would not say one single word to him.

Soon after this a persecution of the Church broke out under the cruel emperor Valerian. The clergy were, as usual, the first sufferers, and among other priests of Antioch, Sappricius was apprehended and brought before the governor. His name was demanded, and he told it. Then the governor said, "Of what profession are you?" and he answered, "I am a Christian." "Are you a priest?" "I have the honour to be among the clergy, and we Christians acknowledge our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, who is God, the only true God, the Maker of heaven and earth. The gods of the nations are but devils."

The governor of Antioch, enraged at his constancy, ordered him to be tortured in an engine like a screw-press. The pain was excessive, but being a man of a resolute will, he bore it without being moved, and said to the judges, "My body is in your hands, but you cannot touch my soul. Only my Saviour Jesus Christ is master of that." So after he had been tortured at their pleasure, the governor pronounced sentence in these words: "Sappricius the Christian priest shall be delivered over to the executioner, that his head may be severed from his body, because he hath contemned the edict of the emperor."

You will surely think that one who could thus suffer for Christ's sake would also be able for His sake to forgive his brother. Nicephorus thought so too; and while Sappricius, with a cheerful, confident manner, was walking to the place of execution, he ran to meet him, fell down at his feet, and said, "Martyr of Jesus Christ, forgive my offence." No answer, however, met his ear. The crowd which thronged round the prisoner parted them; so Nicephorus forced his way out of it, and ran down a by-way to meet the procession at another point. Again he caught sight of Sappricius, and again asked pardon for the sake of the Saviour he had just confessed: but the unforgiving man turned his head away without even looking at him. The soldiers who guarded the prisoner laughed at Nicephorus, and said, "Was there ever such a fool as to care so much about the pardon of a man whose own head will be cut off in half an hour?" But without heeding their jeers he went on by their side to the very block, where he redoubled his entreaties, but still without effect.

When every thing was ready, the executioners called upon the prisoner to lay his head upon the block. And now was seen how little mere courage or resolution are worth without Christ's love in the heart. There was a pause: Sappricius began to falter and ask, "Why?" The men answered, "Because you will not sacrifice to the gods nor obey the emperor." Then the unfortunate Sappricius cried out, "Stop, stop, my friends, wait a minute. Do not put me to death so hastily. I will do what is desired of me; I am ready to sacrifice." "Brother," exclaimed Nicephorus, in horror and amazement, "what are you doing? Will you renounce our good Master, Jesus Christ? Will you forfeit your crown?" But Sappricius would not give heed to a single word he said. So Nicephorus, with tears of shame and anguish for a brother's fall, said to the executioners, "I am a Christian, and believe in that Lord and Saviour whom Sappricius has renounced. Take me in his stead."

All who stood round the scaffold were lost in astonishment, and the officers of justice were doubtful how to act. At last they despatched this message to the governor of the city: "Sappricius has renounced his faith, and promises to sacrifice to our gods; but here is another desirous to die for this same Christ, saying he is a Christian, and refusing to sacrifice according to the decrees of the emperor. All around stood breathless,

their eyes fixed on the two men, one shrinking with shame and fear, the other rejoicing that he was counted worthy to confess the name of Christ.

They were not long kept in suspense. Sappricius was set free, but Nicephorus's sentence came in these words: "If the man you speak of refuse to sacrifice to the immortal gods, let him be slain with the sword." Nicephorus put up one prayer, commended his soul to God, and was by the sword of the executioner joined to the noble army of martyrs, A.D. 260.

It must be very plain to you why this striking history is chosen for Quinquagesima Sunday, a day whose motto is charity. Without charity shown in the forgiveness of one who had injured him Sappricius kept up for a time the profession of a Christian; to a certain point he endured suffering, but the root of the matter was not in him, he could not die for Christ. The axe of the executioner showed the hallowness of that unforgiving heart; while to Nicephorus, who was eager to forgive and be forgiven, was it granted to lay down his life for his Master, to win the martyr's crown.

The days of persecution unto death are for the present over; we shall scarcely be tried by so fiery a trial as was Sappricius. All the more need is there for us to examine ourselves, whether the grace of charity is ours, whether it rules our daily life and conversation; else, whatever our knowledge, our gifts, our powers, in God's sight we are as nothing.

NAZARETH.

CANON FARRAR describes the scene in which the thirty years of our Lord's life were spent as follows: "The summit of the hill on which Nazareth was built, and which we may feel sure was often trodden by His sacred feet, rises six hundred feet above the level of the sea. Four or five hundred feet below lies the happy valley. The view from this spot would in any country be regarded as rather extraordinarily rich and lovely, but it receives a yet more indescribable charm, from our belief that here, with His feet among the mountain flowers, and the soft breezes lifting His hair from His temples, Jesus must often have watched the eagles poised in the cloudless blue, and have gazed upwards as He heard overheard the rushing plumes of the long line of pelicans, as they winged their way from the streams of Kishon to the lake of Galilee. And what a vision would be outspread before Him as He sat at springtime upon the green turf. To Him every field and fig-tree, every palm and garden, every house and synagogue would have been a familiar object. To the north, just beneath them lay the narrow and fertile plain of Asochis, from which rose the wood-crowned hills of Naphtali, and conspicuous on one of them was safed, the city set upon a hill; beyond these on the far horizon Hermon upreared into the blue, the huge splendored mass of his colossal shoulders white with eternal snows. Eastward at a few miles distance, rose the green and rounded summits of Taber, clothed with terebinth and oak. To the west He would gaze on the ridge of Carmel, among whose forests Elijah had found a home; and on Caiffa and Aceho, and the dazzling line of white sand which fringes the waves of the Mediterranean, dotted here and there with the white sails of the ships of Chittim. Southward, broken only by the graceful outlines of little Hermon and Gilboa lay the entire plain of Esdraelon, so memorable in the history of Palestine and of the world. The scene which lay at His feet was indeed a central spot in the world He came to redeem. It was in the heart of the land of Israel, and yet—separated from it only by a narrow boundry of hills and streams—Phoenicia, Syria, Arabia, Babylonia and Egypt lay close at hand. The isles of the Gentiles and all the glorious regions of Europe were almost visible over the shining wa-

ters of the western sea. The standards of Rome were planted on the plain before Him; the language of Greece was spoken in the towns below. And how ever peaceful it then might look, and green as a pavement of emeralds, it had been for centuries the battle field of nations, Pharaoh's and Ptolemies, Emirs and Arsacids, Judges and Consuls had all contended for the mastery of that smiling tract, it had glittered with the lances of the Amalekites; it had trembled under the chariot-wheels of Sesostris; it had echoed the twanging bow-strings of Sennacherib; it had been trodden by the phalanxes of Macedonia; it had clashed with the broad-swords of Rome. It was destined to ring hereafter with the battle cry of the crusaders, and thunder with the artillery of England and of France. No scene of deeper significance for the destinies of humanity could possibly have arrested the youthful Saviour's gaze.

THE NEW KEY.

"Aunt," said a little girl, "I believe I have found a new key to unlock people's hearts, and make them so willing."

"What is the key?" asked her aunt. "It is only one little word. Guess what!" But aunt was no guesser.

"It is please," said the child. "If I ask one of the great girls in school, 'Please show me my parsing lesson,' she says, 'O yes,' and helps me. If I ask Sarah, 'Please do this for me,' no matter, she will take her hands out of the suds and do it. If I ask uncle 'Please,' he says, 'Yes, Puss, if I can. And then if I say, 'Please, Aunt—'"

"What does aunt do?" said aunt herself.

"O, you look and smile just like mother, and that is best of all," cried the little girl, throwing her arms round her aunt's neck, with a tear in her eye.

THE THREE RATS.

ONCE a gentleman had a present from abroad of several flasks of fine Florence oil. He placed them in a cellar, which no one could enter but himself.

One day, to his great surprise, he observed that two of the flasks were empty. The next day he found another empty, and was still more perplexed to account for it. He could not for a moment think that any person on the premises had secret means of getting into the cellar, and resolved to watch.

After remaining more than an hour, he saw three rats come from a hole in the corner, and run up to the fourth flask. One rat stood upon his hind legs, and with his forefeet held the flask steady. The second sprang upon the shoulders of the first, by which means he could reach the top of the flask. With his teeth he carefully drew the cork, by means of a bit of string twisted round it, then dipping in his long tail, he presented it to the third rat to lick. They then changed places as regularly as clock-work, and continued to do so till the flask was empty, each rat having had a fair proportion of the spoil. They then quitted the cellar.

BE very careful in your promises, and just in your performances; and remember, it is better to do and not promise than promise and not perform.

FEEs AND DOCTORS.—The fees of doctors are an item that very many persons are interested in just at present. We believe the schedule for visits is \$8.00, which would tax a man confined to his bed for a year, and in need of daily visits, over \$1,000 a year for medical attendance alone! And one single bottle of Hop Bitters taken in time would save the \$1,000 and all the year's sickness.—Post.