

My Neighbour's Baby.

A sturdy, fair-haired laddie
Was Roger, my neighbour's son,
With the innocent look in his blue eyes
Of a life that was just begun.
When I see a crimson dress,
Hear a sweet, child voice at play,
It always, somehow, reminds me
Of the baby over the way.

He was two years old that summer,—
I had never noticed the child,
Till one day, when I was passing,
He looked through the gate and smiled.
He made a pretty picture,
With the sunlight on his hair;
He wore a red dress, I remember,
And his little feet were bare.

I had always a weakness for children,
So I stopped and spoke to the lad,—
He told me what his name was,
And how many kittens he had.
He filled my hands with blossoms,
In spite of all I could say,
Then he lifted his face to kiss me
Before I turned away.

I guess I may as well tell you,
That my neighbour and I were—well,
Now I've begun the story,
I hardly know what to tell;
It was such a little matter
At first, but it ran along
As things will, if you let them,
When they've started to go wrong,

Until—I'm ashamed to say it,
Living as close as we do—
After a bitter quarrel,
When a cutting word or two
Passed back and forth between us,
We did not speak again.
Childish, you say! I know it,
But I didn't think so then.

But we were the best of comrades,
The little Roger and I,
After that day when he kissed me,
As I was passing by.
I might turn toward my neighbour
A face that was hard and grim;
But Roger, my neighbour's baby,
I had always a smile for him.

And so it went on all summer,
Till at last there came a day,
When strangely hushed and darkened
Was the cottage over the way.
A few words told the story,—
A few words carelessly said,
But freighted with so much sadness,—
"The baby, you know, is dead!"

I filled my hands with the flowers
I knew he loved the best,
And just as the sunset glory
Was fading out of the west,
I entered my neighbour's gateway,
Went up the path to the door,—
The months had grown into years since I
Had trodden that path before.

But we who are very wilful
By a little child are led,
As I entered the darkened chamber
And stood beside the bed,
Where the silent form of Roger,
Half-covered with flowers, lay,
All my bitterness to my neighbour
Forever passed away.

It needs no words to explain it,
I think you will understand;
Over the little sleeper
I clasped my neighbour's hand.
The bond that was formed will never
Be broken till time shall cease,
For Roger, my neighbour's baby,
Has spoken the words of peace.

—Good Housekeeping.

BEGIN the study of the Sunday-school lesson early in the week.

Stop Before You Begin.

Success depends as much upon not doing as doing; in other words, "Stop before you begin," has saved many a boy from ruin.

When quite a young lad I came very near losing my own life and that of my mother, by the horse running violently down a steep hill and over a dilapidated bridge at its foot.

As the boards of the old bridge flew up behind us, it seemed almost miraculous that we were not precipitated into the stream beneath and drowned. Arriving home and relating our narrow escape to my father, he sternly said to me:

"Another time hold in your horse before he starts."

How many young men would have been saved if in early life they had said, when invited to take the first step in wrong-doing:

"No, I thank you."

If John, at that time a clerk in the store, had only said to one of the older clerks, when invited to spend an evening in a drinking saloon, "No, I thank you," he would not to-day be an inmate of the inebriate asylum.

If James, a clerk in another store, when invited to spend his next Sabbath on a steamboat excursion had said, "No, I thank you," he would to-day have been perhaps an honored officer in the church instead of occupying a cell in State prison.

Had William, when at school, said, when his comrades suggested to him that he write his own excuse for absence from school and sign his father's name, "No, I thank you," he would not to-day be serving out a term of years in prison for having committed forgery.

In my long and large experience as an educator of boys and young men, I have noticed this, that resisting the devil in whatever form he may suggest wrong-doing to us is one sure means of success in life. Tampering with evil is always dangerous. "Avoid the beginnings of evil," is an excellent motto for every boy starting out in life.

Oh, how many young men have endeavored, when half-way down the hill of wrong-doing, to stop, but have not been able! Their own passions, appetites, lusts and bad habits have driven them down to swift and irremediable ruin.

My young friend, stop before you begin to go down the hill; learn now to say to all invitations to wrong-doing, from whatever source they come, "No, I thank you," and in your old age, glory crowned, you will thank me for this advice.—*Golden Days.*

THE United States, with their forty millions of people, according to the internal revenue report, spend annually for liquors as much money as is spent for all the food of the people, and twice as much as is spent for the clothing of all the men, women, and children.

At Sabine Pass.

BY JOSEPHINE POLLARD.

THE wind blew fiercely through the Gulf,
The waters shoreward sweeping;
O'er barriers there, and high in air
The watchers saw them leaping.
Yet felt no fear at first; for they
Had passed through many a danger,
And some power, they knew, would soon
Subdue
This mighty Texan ranger.

Still higher, higher dashed the spray—
The wind more loudly roaring,
While clouds o'erhead the deluge fed
With generous outpouring,
Until the land for miles and miles
Lay underneath the waters,
And menaced by the sea and sky
Were Sabine sons and daughters.

Night added horror to the scene;
And dreadful doom awaited
That garrison as the storm swept on
With fury unabated.
And soon—ah! who can tell the hour,
Or guess the fearful slaughter?—
The whole of Sabine Pass, alas!
Lay 'neath the cruel water!

Above the sea, the light-house tower
So lonely and forsaken,
Stood bold and brave, by wind and wave
Still rudely tossed and shaken;
And now and then, from depths below,
A wave of wondrous power,
Like Python came to quench the flame
That glimmered in the tower.

For two long dreary days and nights
The tenants watched and waited,
Nor broke their fast; while loud the blast
Roared and reverberated.
And wife and children nestled there,
Close bound in loving tether,
Willing to share each other's fare
And starve or drown together.

Hope dawned at last. A boat draws near!
Vigil and fast are ended,
And in the night from cerie height
The keeper slow descended:
Barefooted, ragged, almost spent,
He paused, his glances turning
Toward the lamp o'erhead, and calmly said,
"It's half a light, sir, but it's burning!"

The oil was scant, but he'd made it last,
And though shorn of its wonted beauty,
It had burned as guide across the tide,
And it told of unerring duty,
Of one who lost neither hope nor heart;
With heroes a tribute earning
From the hand of Fame; for though small
The flame
He had faithfully kept it burning!

Keep Clean.

I WANT to tell you something; yes, bright, clean-faced boys and girls, whom I often used to meet on the city streets, and whom I meet now in the country, sometimes. But, in the first place, I do not want you to say, as you look at the two words at the head of this article, "Funny sort of thing for a Sunday-school paper to talk about!"

I do not think so. There is a good deal in it—more than meets the eye; and, besides, the Bible often alludes to it. "Clean hands and a pure heart," "our bodies washed with pure water," and lots of texts besides, bear on the same subject; so it is not out of place to say to you young people, "Keep clean." Keep clean mouths and sweet lips, while you keep your hearts pure by praying every day and every hour the beautiful snow-prayer, "Wash me, and

I shall be whiter than snow." But what I sat down to write was to tell you about some friends of ours who searched the Bible through and through to find this text, "Cleanliness is next to godliness."

Did they find it! Of course they did not, because it isn't in the Bible at all—though I dare say half the grown-up people who read this will exclaim, "Oh, yes! I know it is! I've read it in Paul's epistles somewhere." I should like to see them hunt for it! But it does not hurt us to "search the Scriptures," even though it be for some impossible text.

It was John Wesley, that great and good man, who said, "Cleanliness is next to godliness," and I believe it to be true; and though the words of the text are not to be found in the Bible, it is full of the spirit of the text. So I say, as I began, dear young people, "Keep clean," in body and in spirit.—*The Myrtle.*

The First Fruit.

LUELLA was once made the owner of the grapes upon a large vine in her father's yard. Very anxious was she that they should ripen and be fit to eat. The time finally came.

"Now for a feast," said her brother to her one morning, as he pulled some beautiful ones for her to eat.

"Yes; but they are the first ripe fruit."

"Well, what of that?"

"Father told me that he gives God the first out of all the money he makes, and that then he always feels happier in spending the rest; and I want to give the first of my grapes to God, too."

"Ah! but how can you give grapes to God?" said her brother. "And even if you were able to do such a thing, he would not care for them."

"Oh, I have found out the way," said she. "Jesus said, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me;' and I mean to go and give them to Mrs. Martin's sick child, who never sees grapes because her mother is too poor to buy them."

And away ran Luella, with a large basket of the "first-fruit" of the vine and other good things, all beautifully arranged, to the couch of the sick child.

"I've brought Mary some ripe fruit," said she to Mrs. Martin.

"Dear child, may God bless you a thousandfold for your loving gift! Here, Mary, see what a basket of good things has been brought you."

The sick one was almost overcome with emotion as she clasped the hand of her young friend and expressed her thanks.

Do you not think that this little girl enjoyed eating the rest of her grapes better than if she had kept them all for herself?

READ the Sunday-school lesson at least once every day.