

Our Young Folks.

WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

Come, children, and listen; I'll tell you in rhyme
A story of something that happened one time.

There was war in the land and each brave heart beat high,
And many went forth for their country to die;
But words fail to tell of the fear and dismay
Which swept the small village of W— one day,
When the enemy's army marched into the street,
And their own valiant soldiers were forced to retreat.
Such hiding, surrendering, and trembling with fear!
When what in the midst of it all should appear
But Grandmother Gregory, feeble and old,
Coming out from her cottage courageous and bold,
She faced the intruders who marched through the land,
Shaking at them the poker she held in her hand.
"How foolish!" her friends cried, provoked, it is true;
"Why, grandmother, what did you think you could do?"
"Not much," answered grandma; "but ere they were gone
I wanted to show them which side I was on."
Now, children, I've told this queer story to you
To remind you of something the weakest can do.
There is always a fight 'twixt the right and the wrong,
And the heat of the battle is borne by the strong;
But, no matter how small or unfit for the field,
Or how feeble or graceless the weapon you wield,
O fail not, until the last enemy's gone,
To stand up and show all which side you are on!

THE TIME TO BE PLEASANT.

"Mother's cross," said Maggie, coming out into the kitchen with a pout on her lips.

Her aunt was busy ironing, and she looked up and answered Maggie: "Then is the very time for you to be pleasant and helpful. Mother was awake a good deal of the night with the baby."

Maggie made no reply. She put on her hat and walked off into the garden. But a new idea went with her—"the very time to be pleasant is when other people are cross."

"True enough," thought she, "that would do the most good. I remember when I was ill last year; was so nervous that if any one spoke to me I could hardly help being cross; and mother never got cross or out of patience, but was quite pleasant with me. I ought to pay it back now, and I will."

And she jumped up from the grass on which she had thrown herself, and turned a face full of cheerful resolution towards the room where her mother sat soothing a fretful, teething baby.

"Couldn't I take him out to ride in his carriage, mother? It is such a sunny morning," she asked.

The hat and coat were brought, and the baby was soon ready for his ride.

"I'll keep him as long as he's good," said Maggie, "and you must lie on the sofa and take a nap while I am gone. You are looking dreadful tired."

The kind words, and the kiss that accompanied them, was almost too much for the mother, and her voice trembled as she answered: "Thank you, dear; it will do me a world of good. My head aches badly this morning."

What a happy heart Maggie's was as she turned the carriage up and down the walk! She resolved to remember and act on her aunt's good words: "The very time to be helpful and pleasant is when everybody is tired and cross."

SOME GIRLS' WAYS.

It was Saturday morning in a big farmhouse kitchen: Nell was bending over the sink picking a chicken, with a decided scowl on her face; Hattie was kneading bread, with an expression of grim determination suitable for a soldier, scaling his enemies' breastworks; and Susan was shelling peas, her pretty face spoiled by the settled discontent about the mouth. The girls were not talking—they never talked when they worked—but they often spoke sharply and unkindly. Work was to them a separate state of existence in which the Christian graces played no part.

"Did I leave my whip in here?" asked a hesitating voice at the open door, and a boy in a big straw hat appeared behind the voice.

"No," snapped Nell, "but's a wonder you didn't for you are always leaving something around for us to tread on."

"It has fallen down under your chair, Susan," he said, coming in to pick it up.

"Ned, you are always bothering somebody," fretted Susan while she arose with ungraciousness in every movement.

"Father called me to come quick and catch the chicken, and I stood it in the corner," replied Ned roughly, and gladly made his escape.

That same morning, in a neighbouring farmhouse kitchen, Lucy was kneading the bread as deftly as Hattie, but at the same time planning with Helen and Grace how to earn money for their mission boxes; Grace had a funny story to tell while she washed the dishes; and Helen told them of a meadow lark she saw while picking the strawberries that she was now hulling for the strawberry shortcake for dessert.

Sam came in with an armful of wood, threw it noisily in the woodbox, twitched Grace's curls, made believe to dive his hands into Lucy's pan of flour, snatched the largest strawberry from Helen's dish, and pranced out whistling a Sunday school hymn.

The girls smoothed out the little smile that Sam's antics always brought to their faces, and began to sing his hymn, being echoed by Fanny, who was sweeping the front stairs.

Which family do you belong to, girls?

THE LITTLE DUMB BOY.

Once a minister paid a visit to a deaf and dumb asylum in London, for the purpose of examining the children in the knowledge they possessed of the Divine truth.

A little boy on this occasion was asked in writing: "Who made the world?"

The boy took up the chalk and wrote underneath the question: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Then the minister enquired in a similar manner: "Why did Jesus Christ come into the world?" A smile of delight and gratitude rested on the countenance of the little fellow as he wrote: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

A third question was then proposed, eminently adapted to call his most powerful feelings into exercise. "Why were you born deaf and dumb, while I can hear and speak?"

"Never," said an eye witness, "shall I forget the look of holy resignation and chastened sorrow which sat on his countenance as he took up the chalk and wrote: 'Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight.'"

These are truly beautiful answers, especially the last. Many of us, I fear, think much more of our tiny troubles than did that dear boy of his one great trouble, of not being able to join in conversation with those around, and hear what is said.

Oh! let us remember that nothing happens by chance to those who call God their Father, and if trouble fall to our lot, say, like the deaf and dumb boy: "For so it seemeth good in Thy sight."

DONALD'S LESSON.

"What a blessed world this would be if all people fully realized that life is the gift of God, and the great, wonderful world one vast field for usefulness! What are you going to do, Donald, live for yourself or to promote the happiness of others?" grandfather asked.

A low, melodious laugh greeted the old gentleman, and then Donald answered quite seriously: "It must be fine to live for others, grandfather, but you see circumstances prevent my obtaining this happiness. Isn't it plain that I will have to live for self, or where will I find the bread and butter for Donald Dervey, jr.?" and Donald Dervey, jr., made a comical grimace.

"Take care of yourself, of course. A boy or man isn't worth much if he doesn't take good care of himself, body and soul. Earn your bread and butter, plenty of it too, good thick slices well spread, with a generous slice of meat added. But you needn't neglect to lend a helping hand when it's needed, for all that. The little kindly acts done will make your bread and butter all the sweeter. Friendly words don't cost much, only a little effort to utter them, but what an influence they have for good! Tears don't cost much, only a little overflowing love in the heart, but they often help weary feet up out of surging waters. Are you going to give these words, boy? Are you going to shed these tears?"

Donald laughed again.

"I don't know about the tears, grandfather," he said. "I'm not over and above given to weeping, you know, but I'll endeavour to get in a kind word now and then, and I guess my heart isn't so hard but that I can have a gush of sympathy once in a while for the broken-hearted."

"Yes, of course; but, Donald, boy, you needn't wait for a gush of sympathy now and then; keep a perpetual fountain bubbling up in your heart. I tell you, boy, want of sympathy has crushed many souls. People sink where no hand is outstretched to save them; 'tisn't to be wondered at either there are so many poor creatures overwhelmed with gloom and grief. Ah! Donald, there's no hand in the world so beautiful as a helping hand; don't forget that."

Donald did not forget. That very afternoon, as he was walking down the street, he found occasion to use the "kindly words" his grandfather had suggested, and they proved to be a rift of sunshine through a very dark cloud of grief. As for the "tears," at the suggestion of which he had laughed, they came before he was conscious of it, and the bereaved mother, who was bending over a little form "cold and still," looked up, and, seeing Donald's misty eyes, said: "Bless you for your sympathy. It is sweet in times of sorrow to know that some one cares for us."

The days are rolling on, but each and every one holds its opportunity for Donald's helping hand. Yesterday an invalid girl was made glad; to-day a neglected boy was helped a step upward; to-morrow will bring some other chance for doing good.

One of the mottoes on the walls of the temple at Delphos was "Know thy opportunity." It is a matter of great thankfulness with Grandfather Dervey that Donald seems to "know his opportunity."

DON'T FRET.

A young friend has been visiting me who was a fretter. She fretted when it rained, and fretted when it shone. She fretted when others came to see her, and fretted when they did not. It is a dreadful thing to be a fretter. A fretter is troublesome to herself and troublesome to her friends. I have lately come across a short rule for fretters, which they shall have. Here it is: Never fret about what you can't help; because it won't do any good. Never fret about what you can help; because if you can help it, do so.

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

Oct. 19. }
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THE SPIRIT OF TRUE SERVICE.

{ Luke 22
24-27 }

GOLDEN TEXT.—Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.—Phil. ii. 5.

INTRODUCTORY.

The last quiet intercourse between Christ and His disciples was enjoyed in the upper room in Jerusalem when they were met to observe the Passover Feast, at which Christ instituted the sacrament of His Supper. Several impressive and instructive incidents occurred during the progress of the feast. One of these to which our attention is called in to-day's lesson took place near the beginning.

I. **A Strife for Position.**—It is not without significance that this contention for places of honour should have taken place at this most memorable and impressive meeting. The disciples were not perfect men. They had their faults and failings, and these are not concealed in Scripture. What was good in their characters is recorded as examples to be followed. What is evil is also told that we may learn to avoid whatever is blameworthy. Judas kept the purse for the company; as treasurer he might think he was entitled to a place of honour. Peter, James and John had enjoyed special privileges on several occasions. The mother of James and John had asked that her sons might sit at the right and the left hand of the Heavenly King. Some of them had evidently pushed their claims till they strove with each other to be accounted greatest. The principles that govern in Christ's kingdom differ from those that prevail among earthly rulers. As soon as the contending disciples were in a condition to listen Jesus points out to them this distinction. "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so." The kings of the East were despotic. They looked upon their subjects as if they owned them and could do with them as they pleased. They liked to be called benefactors even though they had no claim to the title. In the kingdom of God it was to be otherwise. There would be differences in ability. Some would have greater endowments than others, greater capacities for service, only there would be an absence of self-seeking. The ambition would not be for places of honour, but who should be able to render the greatest and best service. The greater was to be as the younger, just as it was customary for young persons to respect the old and render them service, so the greatest should have the same humble and respectful disposition towards all.

II. **Service the Highest Honour in Christ's Kingdom.**—Jesus asks the disciples the question: "Whether is greater he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as He that serveth." The servant occupies the inferior position; the guests at the table occupy the places of honour. But yet much depends on the person. Outwardly honour was accorded the disciples, and in one instance Christ Himself served. It was on this occasion that He washed the disciples' feet. In the performance of that kindly and customary act He showed that true greatness was inherent in the character and in the spirit in which service was rendered. The truly great can dignify and ennoble the commonest action when performed from a right motive, and with a benevolent end in view. It has been said that the angel Gabriel would not mind whether he was sent to rule a kingdom or sweep a crossing. It is serving and obeying God that constitutes true greatness. If Jesus washed the disciples' feet, we need account no action that is done for the good of others and in Christ's name as mean or unworthy. While Jesus in the tenderest manner rebukes the faults of the disciples, He at the same time commends them for what is praiseworthy in their conduct. He says to them: "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations." They had continued with Him throughout His ministry with a rare fidelity. Temptations here mean trials. To the rulers of the people Jesus had been an object of dislike and hatred, which of late had grown more deep and bitter than ever. Yet they continued faithful, and their love and attachment had increased the more they saw of Him and the more they understood His teaching. This fidelity merits His approval. It will also obtain its reward. He says to them: "I appoint unto you a kingdom." The certainty of this reward is assured by the fact that as His Father had appointed unto Him, so He covenants with them. They are to enjoy the closest fellowship with Himself. This is symbolized by eating and drinking at His table, and they are to "sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." That is the spiritual Israel that is to constitute the new kingdom. The fulfilment of this promise may yet extend far into the future, but it is true now. What kings or what philosophers have exercised an influence so long-continued and so intensely real and spiritual as that exercised through all the Christian centuries, and never so great as now, by the apostles of Jesus Christ?

III. **Over Self-Confidence.**—Jesus turns to one of them and individually addresses him in earnest tones. Twice He repeats his name to arouse his attention. Then He tells Simon Peter plainly that he is exposed to great danger. "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." Judas had been sifted, and he proved to be as chaff. In passing through the temptations to which he was exposed he had fallen utterly. With Peter it would be different. He did not come through the severe trial without great and grievous loss, but Satan would not triumph over him. Jesus tells him: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Christ's intercession always prevails. His prayer for Peter was answered, but he had to pass through the trial. It would be blessed to him and made a means of blessing to others. The memory of his fall and the intercession of Jesus on his behalf would ever after keep him humble and would make him less presumptuous and more distrustful of himself. At this point in the very warning He is giving, Jesus conveys to Peter a hint that he would come through the temptation, severely as it might shake him, in safety, for He says: "When thou art converted." When he has repented of his sin and is forgiven and restored, he is exhorted to strengthen his brethren. Knowing by experience the dangers of temptation, he would be better able to warn others, and to strengthen their faith by recounting how by God's grace he had been enabled to overcome. Notwithstanding the warning Peter is as confident as ever. He declares his readiness to go to prison or to die for Christ. He meant it at the time and was sincere in saying it, but he did not know his own weakness or Satan's strength. The Saviour tells him plainly that before morning Peter would thrice deny Him, and the lesson ends with statements that trials await them. Again Jesus refers to His imminent sufferings, and quotes from the prophecy of Isaiah, adding that "the things concerning Me have an end," that is, in Him they would all be fulfilled.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

An unsanctified ambition leads to strife.

Contention is everywhere an unlovely thing, and nowhere does it appear more so than in connection with sacred things.

Self-renunciation is the only way to true greatness. In the kingdom of God self-denying service is the characteristic of its citizens.

Temptations come to all. Trust in Christ and His grace can alone secure our deliverance.