The Skylark.

THE skylark, when the dews of morn Hang tremulous on flower and thorn, And violets round his nest exhale Their fragrance on the early gale, To the first sunbeamspreads his wings, Buoyant with joy, and soars and sings,

He rests not on the leafy spray To warble his exulting lay;
But high above the morning cloud
Mounts in triumphant freedom proud,
And swells when perpet to the sky. And swells when nearest to the sky His notes of sweetest ecstasy.

Thus, my Creator! thus the more My spirit's wing to thee can soar, The more she triumphs to behold Thy love in all thy works unfold, And bids her hymn of rapture be Most glad when rising most to thee!

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Pleasant Hours:

APAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

Rev. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY 23, 1895.

WHAT TO READ AND HOW TO READ.

WHAT books should our boys read? That is a wide question. There are quantities of charming books nowadays which stre published on purpose for young people, many of which are both delightful and instructive. Dear old "Tom Brown at Rugby," for instance, is one of the best of friends and companions for any hor of friends and companions for any boy. But I should not advise a boy to depend upon this class of literature. I believe in reading for profit as well as for pleasure, and the best results will be obtained by salisations. caltivating an acquaintance with general English literature.

There are three sorts of boys in this world: those with a healthy appetite for good wholesome reading, which they take to as naturally as they do to beefsteak and potatoes; and those who because of various circumstances have not been thrown much with books and who think that they do not like to read, though they really do not know whether they do or not; and lastly, those whose taste has become vitiated by reading the trashy, exciting, chean it. cheap literature which has inundated the country like a flood, until other books seem stale and flat to them. Now this article is chiefly for the two latter sorts of boys, and for the last mentioned class I am particularly sorry, because they are not very well in their minds, and I would like to cure them if I could. I wish I could make every boy who reads this understand the unspeakable delight which comes from reading a good book; then I should be sure that whatever else might fail him in the way of earthly joys, he would be sure of one great happiness and consolation.

Boys who are in business particularly need to cultivate the habit of reading because they are apt to leave school early, and if they are not careful they will be-

come so absorbed in the fierce competition which now characterizes all sorts of business that by the time they are twenty five they will care for nothing else, and by the time they are fifty they will be in the condition of a poor man whom I once knew, who, broken in health, but with more money than he could use, still dragged himself daily to business and went on

making more, because, as he pitifully remarked, he did not know what else to do.
"But," says my business boy, who works nights during the busy season and who doesn't like reading, "do you suppose that I could study English literature?"

Cartainly I do. A how who can spare

Certainly I do. A boy who can spare on an average an hour a day for reading will be able to read a good deal in the course of the year.

course or the year.

"But," says my boy who doesn't like reading. "I can't bear poetry."

When a boy says that to me I always try him with "Horatius at the Bridge," or Tennyson's ballad of "The Revenge."

If he does not like either of these poems I or Tennyson's Danket of The Levenge.

If he does not like either of those poems I conclude that he is right in his own estimate of his taste; but I never met a boy who did not like such poetry.

OBEY HIM TO-DAY.

BY A. A. P.

"Now uncle and auntie have gone for their sleigh ride, we can sit down here by the dining-room fire and make New Year's ' said Myrtie Knapp, who, with resolutions. several of her cousins, was spending the holidays at the Knapp homestead in the

country.
"If we make fewer promises, and trust more in the promises God has made, we shall find more of blessing and less of disappointment and failure," said a voice from the depths of an easy chair.

the depths of an easy chair.

"Dear me, what a nice little preachment," said Ralph, teasingly.

"Oh, I am not preaching," replied Alice.
"I am reading from my new Hastings' birthday book. I do like a birthday book so much and this is full of practical, spiriso much, and this is full of practical, spiritual ideas.'

"I wish it was as easy to keep resolutions as to make them," said Ed. "I would promise to do everything that I know I ought to do, without waiting to be told."
"The Lord does not ask us to promise,

resolve, covenant, and agree to obey him for months to come; but he asks us to obey him to-day, and to trust him who is able to keep us from falling, for strength for the future."

'That in your new book, too?"

"It is; and it applies to us at this moment, for that invitation to the party at the village hotel this evening must be answered."

'If we had already resolved to obey God to-day, we should have to give up that party," said Myrtie. party," said Myrtie.
"Would it not be best to do so?"

"Would it not be best to do so?"

"There will be stacks of fun," said Ed.

"And we might have our frolic there tonight, and begin to-morrow to be good,"
added Ralph.

"Of what will the frolic consist?"

"Oh, dancing and card-playing, no doubt; and eating and drinking."

"To-day is not your best time to turn to God; that time has forever past. It is not the best time you ever have seen, but it is the best time you ever will see, for to-day

"Hastings' again ?"

"Yes; but you know what the Bible says?"
"Now is the accepted time; now is the

day of salvation," said Susie.
"Yes; and 'To-day harden not your hearts.' Supposing we each go away by ourselves for a half-hour and think over the matter of the party, and each write our decision on a hit of represented drop it into decision on a bit of paper and drop it into this basket. We will gather here again at ten o'clock, and read and count the votes. And taking a crumb pan and brush, Myrtie proceeded to set the neglected breakfast table in order; and each of the girls quickly set herself to work about the house, while one of the boys replenished the fires, and

others went to shovelling snow in the yards One by one the slips were written and dropped in the basket, but no word was were written and spoken, until with the house in order and the out-door chores finished, they all came together again around the cheerful open fireplace as the clock struck.

"To go, or not to go, that is the question?" said Ralph, emptying the contents of the tiny basket in Myrtie's lap.

"And we are all in accord, as I supposed

we should be, for the nays have it.

"Good! Now, Sue, please write the most elegant note possible, declining with thanks—the thanks for courtesy."

"Why, there is papa and mamma! What can be the matter?" and they all

rushed out upon the porch.
"Oh, nothing serious!" laughed mamma. "Only we found the sleighing so much finer than we expected that we drove around, inviting a party to join us, and came back for you all."

"How fortunate the work is all done up,

outdoors and in!"

And how fortunate that we declined the

invitation to that party!"
"I am glad it was done before something better offered," said Ralph. And his

father replied:

"It is always safe to do what you know to be right, my boy; and that is a good lesson for you and your cousins to take to yourselves this New Year's Day.

"We put it in this form, uncle," said Alice, but it amounts to the same thing:

Obey him to-day."

A PERSIAN FABLE.—A gourd wound itself round a lofty palm, and in a few weeks climbed to its very top. "How old mayest thou be?" asked the newcomer. "About thou be?" asked the newcomer. "About a hundred years," was the answer. "A hundred years, and no taller! Only look: I have grown as tall as you in fewer days than you can count years." "I know that well," replied the palm. "Every summer of my life a gourd has climbed up round me, as proud as thou art, and as short-lived as thou wilt be."

THE NEEDLE'S EYE.

THERE is, perhaps, no passage of Scripture more difficult of comprehension to the young mind, under the present idea of a needle, than the one, "It is easier for a needle, than the one, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the king-dom of God." When a Sahbath-school When a Sabbath-school scholar, it was, to our mind, impossible for a rich man to enter heaven, and inexplia rich man to enter neaven, and mexpu-cable why the mere fact that a man is rich should debar him from heaven; especially when the Lord gave Solomon riches and honour, so that in these he exceeded all other kings of the earth, and after Job's afflictions doubled his resessions so that afflictions, doubled his possessions, so that he was twice as rich as before, though before he had great riches and possessions, and was the greatest of all the men of the East. The thrift and economy of the industrious and saving servants were approved, while the one who received the one talent was reproved and punished for his slothfulness and neglect, and the one talent was taken from him, and given to the one who had the ten talents, thus increasing his riches, and making it more for him to enter the kingdom of God. These, to the young and active mind seeking for knowledge and a right understanding of the Scriptures, appear to be in-consistent and irreconcilable with the idea that a rich man cannot enter the kingdom of God; for it is certainly impossible for a camel to go through the eye of any needle of which the ordinary mind of the present age has any conception. But the students of Oriental literature find that there were in the cities of the East, especially in Jerusalem, large gates, in which were small and very low apertures, called, metaphorically, "needle's eyes," just as we talk of windows on ship-board as "bull's eyes." These entrances were too narrow for a camel to pass through them in the ordinary manner, or even if loaded. When a loaded camel had to pass through one of these entrances it knelt down, its load was removed, and then it shuffled through on its knees.

'I saw a camel," writes Lady Duff Gor-p, "go through the eye of a needle that is, the low arched door of an inclosure. He must kneel and bow his head to creep through, and thus the rich man must hum-ble himself."

The Wreckers of Sable Island

J. MACDONALD OXLEY.

CHAPTER IV.—" ALONE AMONG STRANGERS

BEN started as though he had been caught at some crime, and there was a sulky tone his voice that showed very plainly that resented the appearance of the questioner, he replied,—
"Only a boy and a dog."

The other man drew near and inspect. Eric closely. Prince at once sprang to feet, and taking up his position between new-comer and his young master, fixed big eyes upon the former, while his tesshowed threateningly, and a deep grossassed from between them.

It was no wonder that the sagacious matiff's suspicions were aroused, for surely new before had his eyes fallen upon so sinister specimen of humanity. The man was of its showed are the sagacious had been deadly as the sagacious of the surely new before had his eyes fallen upon so sinister specimen of humanity. The man was of its showed are the sagacious had been deadly as the sagacious had been dead

showed great strength, combined with unactivity, and one glance was sufficient mark him out as a man with whom few could not be sufficient. cope. His countenance, naturally ugly, been the playground of the strongest and coarsest passions that degrade humanity, and was rendered still more hideous by the loss of the strongest and his left eye, which had been recorded out. his left eye, which had been gouged out drunken mêlée, and by a frightful scar that clear from temple to a state of the st clear from temple to chin on the right side whis face. Through the remaining eye all vile nature of the man found expression, and the haleful clean with his face.

vile nature of the man found expression, as its baleful glare, when fixed full upon was simply appalling.

To it, perhaps more than to any other quality, Evil-Eye—for so his comrades approquality, Evil-Eye—for so his comrades appropriately nick-named him—owed his influence among them; for he was in some sort. priately nick-named him—owed his industrial among them; for he was, in some solving garded as a leader of the band of wreckers which both he and Ben belonged

garded as a leader of the band of wrecker which both he and Ben belonged.
Evil-Eye held in his right hand a cultimose sheen was already dimmed with picious stains.

"Well," he growled, pointing at Eric, was staring at him spell-bound with hord was dread, "that seems to be the last them. Let's finish him off. We want the lettales.—Out of the way, you brute." he fitted his cutlass as though to strike Principal.

first.

"Hold!" cried Ben, springing forward grasping Evil-Eye's arm. "Let the bot and grasping Evil-Eye's arm."

"Let him alone," roared Evil-Eye, with horrible oath. "That I won't. Let go me, will you?" And wrenching himself for the work of the contract me, will you?" And wrenching himself from by a tremendous effort, he swung the cutlar high over his head and rushed upon defenceless boy, who was too terror-stricked to move or cry out.

But quick as Evil-Eye's movements had been, there was another present whose move

been, there was another present whose move ments were quicker still. With a short, den growl like a distant roll of thunder, Prince launched himself full at the ruffian's throst His aim was unerring, and utterly unprepare for so sudden an onset, the man rolled upon the sand, the cutlass falling harmlessly

from his hand.

Content with having brought him to ground, Prince did not pursue his advantage further, but stood over the prostrate scould drel, who made no attempt to move, while he implored Box to draw the prostrate scould implored Box to draw the stood over the prostrate scould implored Box to draw the scould be stood over the scould be scould be stood over the scould be stood over the scould be scould be

implored Ben to drag the dog off him.
But this Ben seemed in no hurry to do. evidently enjoyed his associate's defeat, and felt little sympathy for him Then as he looked in to his von present predicament. present predicament. Then as he looker from the growling mastiff to his young master who had almost forgotten his own fear in admiration for his faithful dog, a happy thought flashed into his mind. His brightened, and there was a half-smile upon it as, turning to Evil-Eye, who scarce dared breathe lest those great black jaws, so cloth is throat, would close tight upon it, said:

to his throat, would close tight upon said:

"Look here, Evil-Eye. I'll take the do off on one condition. Will you agree?"

"What is that?" groaned Evil-Eye.

"Why, I've taken a fancy to this lad his dog, and want to keep them for a while his dog, and want to keep them for a while anyway. Now, if you'll promise me you'll let them alone so long as I want them you'll let the dog off; but if you won't I'll just let you have it out with him."

Evil-Eye did not answer at once. Twisting the want them the with the said the sai

Evil-Eye did not answer at once. Twistis his head, he looked around to see if any other of his companions were provided to the companions. of his companions were near; but there will not a soul in sight, and the storm was raging.

All right, Ben, I'll promise," he sulkily; and then a crafty gleam came his baleful eye as he added, "And say, will you give me half your share of these