

Our Young Folks.

THE CHURCH BELL AND THE RATTLE-SNAKE.

The shadows fleeing from the sun were hurrying out of the West over the valleys and up the slope of the Meeting House Hill, when Little Six sought the study and rushed to the assault.

"Please, papa, tell me a story."

With inward rebellion, but outward meekness, the tired minister surrendered unconditionally.

"What sort of a story do you want?"

"Tell me a made-up story."

"I can't think of any; I'm too tired."

"Tell me about the church bell and the rattlesnake," said the ever ready Little Six without hesitation, uttering the first thing that came into his mind. It had been a common practice of his to think of two incongruous subjects, and ask for a tale that related to them both.

"Church bells and rattlesnakes? That is worse than ever," thought the parson; but he had been so long under the government of deacons and committees that he was prepared to submit to young America without a murmur, and he began:

"Once a little boy, who sometimes didn't want to go to church, grew to be a large boy, and still wished now and then to stay at home. So one morning he thought he just wouldn't go to church that day, and he slipped out of sight when the rest started off. It was a beautiful warm morning in the early summer, and he wanted to stay out of doors and chase the butterflies and find birds' nests and ramble along the brook and climb the glen ledge. After he started off the bell began its musical call to worship. 'Come, come! come, come!' it rang. 'No,' said the boy to himself. 'I don't want to come. I've come times enough already. I don't like Parson Wiseman; he's as dull as a mill wheel. I'd rather hear the birds than our choir; they talk just as plain most of the time, and they don't pronounce so awfully the rest of it. Then I won't have to give any of my pennies, nor get some more of Miss Wheeler's hints because I whispered in church, and didn't have any Sabbath school lesson. This is ever so much nicer,' and he threw another pebble at the tiny pickerel in the brook to see them shoot away.

"But presently more urgently came the bell call tolling 'Come, come!' It always had a solemn sound to him, like a divine invitation, and he had to use all his will power to prevent himself from hurrying back. But on he went with uneasy conscience and a determined spirit of resistance, such as the renewed and more impressive calls of duty and of God ever arouse in one that disobeys His known bidding. 'No, no, no, no,' his thoughts responded more and more firmly to the bell's ringing 'Come.' But there was none of its sweet music in his heart. The butterflies were not to be caught, the nests hid themselves with unusual skill, it was wet about the brook, and too sloppy altogether. Nothing was just right anyhow. But he was uneasy, for conscience was within him, a voice against which he could not stop his ears, and saying things he did not like to hear. It was worse than the bell, yet he succeeded in disregarding that too as he penetrated farther into the woods.

"Up the Glen Ledge, over the Rocky Hill, and along a wood road into the wild region of the West Rocks he went, looking for a cave that he knew was there. It was several years since he had seen it as a little boy, and in vain he tried one and then another of the faint tracks. At last he was clambering over some rocks that looked like the right ones when he heard a sound that made him pause and start, while the perspiration began to ooze from every pore. It was a rattlesnake! None had been seen for several years, but there was one of them close by with his hissing and rattling warning, 'Hist-st-st-st, skitter, skitter.' Back he ran, stumbling, panting and sweating, but never stopping until he was well along the highway. Then he brushed himself up as well as he could, and went straight toward the church, and as he came near the bell began its cherey 'Come.'

"How much better it sounded now. Conscience had seemed to reprimand in vain, but it had helped him to interpret the reptile voice into a threatening command, which he dared not disobey, and which led him to hear the music that was in the invitation of the bell. When he was grown up he was always thank-

ful for the two voices; and he often since has been heard to say that for our leading and keeping in the right way there are always two things needful, the church bell and the rattlesnake."

"What does that mean?" said Little Six.

"Candy and Birch," said Carl, looking up from his book.

"Love and fear," said mamma; "both help us to do right."

THE MISSION BAND.

Our Mission Band was formed one day,
With purpose good and true;
To teach the wise and helpful way
To children and to you.

The wise and helpful way is one
Which useful makes our lives;
Which shows some loving-kindness done,
And for some goodness strives.

Now if you think we are too small,
To work in cause so high,
Remember that the oak tree tall
Did in the acorn lie.

Remember, too, the Saviour was
The Christ-child first, then Man.
He loves our work, and us, because
We do the best we can.

The good we do lives evermore;
For we are sowing seed
Which God Himself is watching o'er,
Whose care is all we need.

Our Mission Band has done some good,
We feel that we can say;
And now to do still more, we would
Ask all your prayers to day.

We'll join in work our hearts and hands,
Until at last the song
Of Christ that's sung in Gospel lands
Shall to the world belong.

A FEW WORDS ON PLAY.

Play is neither idleness nor folly. It is one of the many good things which have come into your life from heaven. It is a gift from God. It is one of His wonderful works. When He made the beautiful earth and the sky, and the body and soul of man, he made the happy play of childhood. It is a part of your life as truly as prayer is, as truly as the soul itself is. And it is a part of the life of children all the world over. If it were possible to journey with the sunlight, and see all that it sees, and go round and round the globe with it, we should everywhere see children at play.

Now, the first thing that I want you to see is, that this playing of you boys and girls in the streets, or anywhere else, is a pleasure to God. He is a God so kind and loving, that He delights in everything innocent that is a delight to you. Just as He delights in the songs of the birds, and in the colour and fragrance of flowers, He delights in the play of childhood. It was because He was thinking of it as a pleasure, that He sent Zechariah to tell the builders of Jerusalem the good news that children should soon be playing in the streets.

I know a poet who made a song on the happiness of poor children at their first day of play in spring. All the winter they were shut up in their homes for want of shoes. But now the winter is past, and the sun shining, and the air warm. And "the bairnies," barefooted and happy, "were out on the pavement again."

Then wee, shoeless feet have forgotten the pain,
As they walk in the sun on the pavement again.

God has made play a part of your life, because He wants you to be strong. He has work waiting in the years to come for every boy and girl on earth. And although it is not all the same kind of work, all of it is work which will want strength for the doing. Therefore He will not have you always at tasks. He has divided the time for the task with the time for play. He will have you out in the open air. By your games He will have your bodies in endless motion. You shall run and not be weary. You shall leap and dance and race and climb, so that every part of you may be made strong for the work that lies before you in life.

For another thing, God wants you to have a happy gateway into life. Nobody can tell beforehand whether your after life will be happy. But God in His love has secured that the time of play shall be happy. In your games you are joined together just

as we who are old are in our toils. The playground is a little world. You cannot have any pleasure in any of its games unless you try to have the others playing with you as happy as yourself. To be unkind, unjust, unfair, or ungenerous in a game, is to spoil it or bring it to an end. Surely this is a new, rich addition to our knowledge of God, when we discover that the same kind Father who gave His Son to die for us, that He might deliver us from sin and death, made the joy and play of boys and girls in the streets and in the house. May you carry something of the joy of it all through life with you, and may you remember that God has been so good to you, that He has set your life between two worlds of joy—the world of your happy childhood, and the world that awaits you in heaven.

ADVANTAGES OF EARLY POVERTY.

It is far from being always a disadvantage to young men to commence life in poverty. In fact the worst thing that can happen to a young man at college is to have a father or mother so injudicious as to keep him amply supplied with pocket-money. It is fatal to studious habits, and, in the end, generally fatal to good morals. This is equally the case with a young man in business, who is made to feel that to him "salary is no object"—that a wealthy father's purse is always open to his most extravagant demands. Nothing develops a young man like fighting his own way in the world. Some spur of necessity, some bracing of adverse surroundings, is needful to most men, if they are to put forth their whole power. The rich man's heir, nursed and petted in infancy, and shielded from battling with the world, never fairly learns to stand erect and walk alone. If by any chance he is stripped of his inherited wealth, and has to learn to take and give hard knocks like others, he nearly always goes under in the struggle—at any rate, he seldom regains by his own efforts the fortune he has lost. Nearly all the wealthy and successful men in this country are poor men's sons. Nearly all the scholars, poets, orators, statesmen are poor men's sons. Wealth has its advantages, it is true; but, after all, the son of a rich man begins life with odds against him. The poor man's son has all the odds in his favour. He must work or starve. He has nothing to lose, and everything to gain. The rich man's son has already social position, and everything that money can give him. There is much less to strive for, and infinitely less inducement to strive.

THE WORK OF A MOMENT.

Did you ever write a letter, and just as you are finishing it let your pen fall on it, or a drop of ink blot the fair page? It was the work of a moment, but the evil could not be effectually effaced. Did you never cut yourself unexpectedly and quickly? It took days or weeks to heal the wound, and even then a scar remained. It is related of Lord Brougham, a celebrated English nobleman, that one day he occupied a conspicuous place in a group to have his photograph taken. But at an unfortunate moment he moved. The picture was taken, but his face was blurred.

Do you ask what application we would make of these facts? Just this.—"It takes a lifetime to build a character; it only takes one moment to destroy." "Watch and pray," therefore, "that ye enter not into temptation." "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

BRAGGING BOYS AND DOING BOYS.

Have you not heard how some boys brag about what they intend to do? They are always going to do wonders. "You must wait," say they, "and we will show you some day what we can do." "Now is your chance," we would say to you. "You are old enough now, and you will never have a better time. Better begin now."

A QUAKER was once advising a drunkard to leave off his habit of drinking intoxicating liquors. "Can you tell me how to do it?" said the slave of the appetite. "Yes," answered the Quaker; "it is just as easy as to open thy hand, friend." "Convince me of that, and I will promise upon my honour to do as you tell me," replied the drunkard. "Well, my friend, when thou findest any vessel of intoxicating liquor in thy hand, open the hand that contains it before it reaches thy mouth, and thou wilt never be drunk again." The toper was so well pleased with the plain advice that he followed it.