

Sunday-School Advocate.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY 27, 1864.

SPRING IS COMING.



SPRING, gentle Spring, is coming. She will bring the warm sun, the soft balmy air, the green grass, and lovely flowers in her train. Aren't you glad, my children?

I am, for I confess that rough old Winter with his fierce blasts, biting frosts, and fleecy snows is no favorite of mine. I accept him because God sends him; but I am always glad when Spring sends the rude old fellow to the North Pole, and I al-

ways bless my heavenly Father for sending Spring.

Yes, praise God for Spring! Don't you all say so? Very good. But what are you going to do the coming Spring? If you live in the country each of you ought to have a garden and grow flowers in it. I advise you to ask your parents to let you do so. Flowers are beautiful things and children should learn to grow them.

There are some flowers that may be grown in your hearts with which God is much pleased. There is a little violet called humility, a climbing vine named faith, and the sweet little plant of love. God is very fond of these flowers, and I hope you will grow a large crop of them in your heart-garden.

OUR COUNCIL-CHAMBER.

WHAT are you laughing about, corporal? I heard your merry ha, ha, ha when I was on the stairs. It is well, I think, for your face that it is not made of plaster, for if it were, your habit of laughing would make a great many cracks in it.

"Ha, ha, ha," laughs the corporal again, evidently tickled at the idea of having cracks in his face. But he restrains his humor a moment and replies, "I was laughing, Mr. Editor, because in coming to the office I saw a short fat boy slip down. I think he hurt himself, for as he fell his head hit the pavement with a heavy thud. But, instead of crying, he sat up, looked round with a most comical face for a moment, and then throwing himself on his back with his heels in the air, he broke into one of the merriest fits of laughter you ever saw or heard. I caught the boy's humor and laughed all the way up stairs."

That boy was a philosopher, corporal. He was no doubt hurt, but like our mutual friend, Mr. Merton, who always grows merry when his rheumatism pinches him, he laughed away his pain.

"You believe in laughing, then, do you, Mr. Editor?" inquires the corporal.

Certainly, corporal. I think with King Solomon, the ancient moralist, that there is a time to laugh. Laughing shakes cobwebs from the brain, rallies the spirits, benefits the health, and improves the heart. I like to see good people cheerful.

"Then you don't like Mrs. Sour-Godliness?" observes Mr. Forrester.

No, squire, not a bit. I don't believe that long-faced, gloomy-hearted lady has any right to claim a place in the kingdom of heaven, which, you recollect, is made up of love, peace, and joy.

"Ha, ha! Here is a letter from Q-in-the-corner against laughing," observes the corporal, proceeding to read:

"DEAR CORPORAL TRY,—I was at the — Church last Sunday and feel bound to tell you what I saw there. There was one boy who kept up a giggle all the morning because the venerable old Squire Fussy wore a red silk handkerchief over his head. He kept pointing at the old gentleman, and made all the boys in his own seat and in the one behind him laugh during the whole service. I pitied his teacher very much, and should have been pleased if the preacher had given the boy a public rebuke.

"In the other gallery was a girl who also kept up an almost constant laugh over an odd-looking woman with a very tall bonnet filled with staring flowers and covered with feathers. It was a funny sight, I confess. There were flowers enough to fill a good-sized vase, and feathers enough to satisfy a bird of Paradise; but I thought that girl did very wrong to keep looking and laughing at it as she did. Will you please to tell her what you think, sir?"

"Then, sir, as I was quietly walking home, I saw a poor man without legs creeping with great effort along the sidewalk. Two or three of the Sunday-school boys walked behind him, whispering such words as 'erab,' 'squatter,' 'creeper,' 'jumper,' and the like, and then bursting into a rude laugh. I report them to you, sir, for, from what a quiet lad said to one of them, I fear they belong to your Try Company. I am, dear corporal,

"Q-IN-THE-CORNER."

There, my corporal, you have your friend Q-in-the-corner against your laughing theory.

"Not at all, Mr. Editor. Q's face is as merry as mine—exactly. When I laugh he laughs. Indeed, I believe he would sneeze if I were foolish enough to take a pinch of snuff. But Q and I believe in *not* laughing as well as in laughing. While there is a time to laugh, there is also a



time not to laugh. There are also *places* where one should not laugh, and *things* which one should not laugh at. It is, for example, wrong to laugh in a church, or at persons anywhere. That boy and girl in church did wrong, very wrong. They were in God's house. Their eyes should have been fixed on the minister, and their thoughts on God, instead of on 'Squire Fussy or Lady Furbelow. The boys who laughed at the poor cripple were both heartless and wicked. Q must be mistaken about their belonging to the Try Company. Why, sir, one of my rules requires that we should love and pity the unfortunate. Laugh at a cripple, sir? It's abominable. I would expel any boy or girl who should do so in a moment. I hope Q will find out the names of those rude fellows he saw do it, and if they do belong to me I'll make an example of them. I will, sir, indeed I will. But here is a Scripture puzzle to sharpen your wits, and to set you studying holy writ:

"1. Find the name of a bird which God sent twice in great numbers to appease the hunger of his people.

"2. The name of a valuable ornament worn by Jewish high priests.

"3. A name given to Jesus by the most eloquent of the prophets.

"4. The name of a business of which one Aholiab was a master.

"5. The name of a plant which grows in vast quantities on the land of lazy farmers.

Put the first letters of these names together skillfully and they will give you the title of a lady much celebrated for her admiration of a wise and ancient monarch. The same title is now borne by the noble lady represented in the above picture.

And here is the answer to the Scripture puzzle in our last:

(1.) Theophilus, Luke i. 3. (2.) Lois, 1 Tim. i. 5. (3.) Jordan, Matt. iii. 6. (4.) Isaac, Gen. xxii. 2. (5.) Myra, Acts xxvii. 5. (6.) Shephatiah, 2 Sam. iii. 3. (7.) Herdman, Amos vii. 14. "The Lord is my Shepherd," Psa. xxiii. 31.

"Here is a letter from R. A. A., the superintendent of a flourishing school in ——. He says his heart is grieved because death has taken three of his little flock to Jesus. They all, especially 'little Willie,' loved your paper well."

Tell the good man his pupils are gone to a better school than his. They have angels for teachers and Jesus for superintendent now. What next, corporal?

"H. C. W. writes me of Eddie, who has gone from his class to the same heavenly school. O how many of our dear ones leave us! There must be more than one child per minute passing in at the gate of paradise. I think the angels must love to listen to the patter of their tiny feet as they walk the golden pavements of the glorious city.—Here is a long letter which inquires:

"Do you permit strangers to enter your council-chamber? If so, we wish to make application for our Sunday-school to join your excellent Try Company, provided you receive whole schools at one time. Most of our school have been drilling for some time, so that they are really veterans, and we think will do good service. Our school is organized into a 'Missionary Try Battalion,' and one of our mottoes is, 'We cannot tell what we can do until we try.' We are interested in sending the gospel to the heathen, as well as distributing tracts here and getting scholars into our school, where they may learn of Jesus and help sing our sweet Sunday-school songs. None of us are promoted in the Try Battalion except from real merit, and already many of us have been promoted to majors. We do not fight with guns and swords, as soldiers of our loved country do, but with kind words and the 'sword of the Spirit,' and we hope that all the children and young people in our town will become soldiers for Jesus. We have a strong foe to contend with. Many swear, break the Sabbath, get drunk, and do many other wicked things, and some parents do not encourage their children to attend Sunday-school; but we are sure the Saviour's army will be victorious.

"We do not think it well to say too much of ourselves, but we must tell you what victories our Captain, the Saviour, has helped us to gain. Not quite three years ago we organized a Sunday-school with only about five children in a private house. The children were glad of a place where they might come and learn of Him who died that they might live, and we think the grown-up people were glad too, for the great wickedness for which this place was noted seemed to grow less. Some ceased Sabbath-breaking and drunkenness, and some got to be Christians. Now we have a nice church, and our Sunday-school room is sufficiently large to accommodate about four hundred scholars, and we think it is about as good as any Sunday-school room in Canada that we have seen or heard of. We want about \$2,000 to free our Church from debt, but we do not think it will take long to get this amount as almost every one seems to know that it takes money to carry on God's work, and many are willing to do what they can. From the small seed that was sown and 'watered with the dews of heaven,' our school has grown to nearly a membership of two hundred and fifty, and we have room in our Church and in our hearts for all who will come. A few of us have given our hearts to Jesus, and we meet every Sabbath evening for a Sunday-school prayer-meeting. The Lord has blessed us with a good and faithful pastor, and many faithful teachers. Some come a great distance, and never miss a Sabbath for bad weather. One of them is from your own city. If you have any more such we can use them to good advantage."

A long story that for the budget, my corporal, but it is a good one. I know it pleases you by the light in your eye.

"Of course it does," replies the corporal. "Very few of my companies could give as good an account of themselves. I admit them with my blessing.—Here is a letter from W. C. N. B., who says:

"I want very much to be a good boy and, if I live, a good and useful man. I have had your good little paper for two or three years. My mother often reads it through at the dinner-table on Sundays and wishes it was twice as large. Will you accept me in your Try Company?"

Certainly I will, my Willie. Your mother is a wise and good lady, I'm sure, and you may tell her that when the Advocate family are able to do every fortnight more duties than we teach in a single number of the Advocate, small as it is, we will give a bigger sheet.