

Poetry.

PERSEVERANCE.

Young man, toiling on obscurely,
Struggling 'gainst an adverse tide,
With a high and honest purpose
Which the mocking world deride ;
Faint not, fear not, brave the current,
Face the tide, however rude,
Truth will triumph, thou wilt conquer,
God will ne'er forsake the good.

Do the proud deride their calling,
Mock thine efforts at the start,
With a scoffing coldness, galling,
To thy proud and honest heart?
Persevere! Attain a station
With the gifted and the great ;
Those who now scorn thy vocation,
Then will gladly kiss thy feet.

Has the venom'd breath of slander,
On thy lonely name been blown,
From the serpent soul of envy
That would keep the worthy down?
Persevere! With manly patience,
Time will heal the wound you feel,
From thy name such taint will vanish
As the breath from burnished steel.

For encouraging example,
Scan the names on history's page,
Those who most their race have honored,
Giving glory to their age ;
Names of Newton and of Franklin,
And a hundred more as bright,
Names that gain increasing glory
With the world's increasing light.

Persevere! Unceasing effort,
Humble though, and weak it be,
May o'ercome what'er opposes.
And work miracles for thee ;
Be assured reward will follow,
Good will come to him who delves,
Honest industry will prosper.—
Heaven helps those who help themselves.

Tales and Sketches.

JOHNNY.

Johnny was a very important personage in the family ; none the less so for being wholly unconscious of the fact. It was "Johnny run here," or "Johnny run there," from morning till night. And he did run ; down to the mill for father ; over to the store for mother ; round the corner, to the tailor's shop for Susan ; besides upon many an errand for lazy Jack. Johnny hardly ever went to school, because he was always going somewhere else. Johnny hardly ever went to school, because he didn't get up in time, "his head ached," or "he didn't like the teacher."

Johnny's mother meant to do right, but her life had been one long disappointment, and she couldn't bear it patiently. "She was poor and sick," and "had seen such troubles." It stared her in the face remorselessly ; it came and took up its abode with her ; it was not for a moment to be ignored or shaken off. She thought of it so much that it made her selfish, but she didn't know it. Johnny's father was a good-natured man, but weak. He had been tried and tempted and had fallen—fallen so low that, one day, his little son, seeing him on the street, turned and ran home with a white and frightened face, forgetting the errand for which he was entrusted. Susan was her comforter then, though her own heart was heavy enough ; Susan, who worked hard from sunrise till bed-time—who swept and dusted, washed and ironed, baked and brewed, besides making vests for the tailor's shop near by ; Susan, who felt that she could take care of herself and Johnny too, if she could only get out into the great world, and look about her. It was a giant "if" that kept the door fastened upon her. Bolts and bars she would have scorned, but how could she leave a feeble, nervous mother? So she toiled, with little hope of reward, and saw her hard earnings swallowed up in the vortex of family necessities. She didn't complain. What was the use? She took up her burden daily ; and if it seemed too grievous to be borne, the family were seldom the wiser for it.

"Johnny," said she one morning, pointing to a large bundle upon the table, "take those vests over to Mr. Walker's place, and wait for the money."

He shouldered the bundle with a business-like air. "How much will it be?"

"Oh, five dollars, or more."

"I wish 'twas a hundred. If 'twas a hundred, Susan, I'd have a pair of shoes."

"How do you know you would?" laughed Susan, at the same time looking anxiously down at the little feet. "What's the matter with those shoes? How they look!"

"I guess they didn't wear well ; this piece trips me up." And he showed a huge gap between the sole and upper leather, through which the bare toes were peeping.

"This won't do," said Susan, in her quick decisive way. "I think we can afford a pair of shoes, if we haven't got a hundred dollars. Run along now, and I'll see about them this evening."

"And Johnny," called a faint voice from the bed-room, "step in to Doten's and get my camphor-bottle filled, will you?"

"Yes'm," answered Johnny's cheery voice. "Where's your money?"

"Oh! you'll have enough. Take some of Susans'; and I'll pay her back."

Susan's lip curled involuntarily. "Mother," cried Jack from his perch upstairs, "can't he go down to Randall's and see if my boots are mended?"

"Can't you go yourself?" asked Susan.

"No, I can't."

"Yes, I'll go," replied Johnny. "Shall I pay it all out of yours, Susan?" he enquired, looking into his sister's darkening face.

"I suppose so ; it's always the way."

Poor Susan ! It was hard, for her own boots were wearing out, and her best dress was threadbare and shabby. Her words and tone were ungracious enough, but she tried to smile as she met her little brother's questioning gaze. "You shall have your shoes, remember that."

So the little fellow trudged off, well pleased. Arriving at the tailor's he exchanged his bundle for another nearly as large, and was off. He was a man of business, was Johnny, and never let the grass grow under his feet. The bottle was filled, and Jack's boots paid for ; but how to carry them all was a puzzling question, until the ingenious shoe-maker suggested putting the bottle into one of the boots, which was done.

Jack laughed heartily as the comical little figure staggered in with its load. Johnny joined in the merriment, as he caught a glimpse of himself in the small looking-glass, but Susan's face was very sober.

"You look like a beast of burden," said she. "Stand and let me unload you."

"The 'beast' seemed disposed to cut up a few antics, but he thought of the camphor-bottle and his worn shoes, and restrained himself. He submitted patiently to the unloading, then stretched himself out upon the floor.

"Johnny," called the feeble voice again.

"Yes, mother," he answered quickly, starting up.

"Couldn't you bathe my head awhile, as Susan used to? She never gets time for it now."

He ran down stairs for some cool water, then he folded the cloth as he had often seen his sister do, and for half an hour he sat perched upon a corner of the bed (such a little, little corner!) passing his thin fingers over the white temple and faded hair. At last the tired eyes closed. She was asleep. He crept softly down and went into the sitting-room, where Susan stood, looking anxious and perplexed.

"Do you know where Jack is?"

Johnny shook his head.

"Mr. Blake has forgotten us to-day. We haven't a thing in the house for dinner." Shall I run over to Townsend's?"

"Yes, if you will, Johnny. I hate to ask you."

She gave him his errand, smiling a little sadly, as she took the money from her purse.

"Your shoes are in here, yet, Johnny."

He laughed gaily. "They'll be on my feet to-morrow, won't they Susan?"

She stooped and kissed him. She watched him from the window until he was out of sight. She stood there very quietly, waiting till he re-appeared with the ever-present bundle (not a large one this time, alas!) in his hand. She looked so very grave as she opened the door, that Johnny was almost frightened.

"What are you thinking of, Susan?"

"I'm thinking how good you are, and how hard you work for us all. Next week you must go to school, Johnny. We must manage it somehow."

"What will mother do?"

"Poor mother! Perhaps she'll be better," replied Susan, evasively, resolved to carry her point at all hazards.

The errands seemed numberless that afternoon, and never were poor little Johnny's feet in greater requisition. He found time, however, to take his old slate from the shelf where it had lain neglected so long, and almost got an answer to the long example in addition which Susan had "set him."

Supper was over at last, but not until the dishes were washed and put away could the brother and sister start upon their shopping expedition.

Johnny was a happy as a king, and frisked about like a young monkey, until suddenly brought to a stand still by the troublesome sole.

"Take care," cried Susan. "You're as bad as Lizzie Lambert's baby. Hadn't you better take hold of my hand, sonney?"

"I guess so!" (ironically) and off he started upon a run. It was a very lame, one-sided run, however, and he stopped at the first corner, and waited for Susan to catch up.

The shoe-store was reached and the purchase made. They were coarse, thick shoes, humble enough—but the best that the poor girl's half-exhausted purse would allow. In Johnny's eyes, however, they were beautiful. They fitted to a charm—and he put out his newly shod feet triumphantly.

"Can anything be done with these!" asked Susan, hesitatingly, holding up the old ones.

"No, they aren't worth it. The leather was poor in the first place. It's always cheapest to buy a good shoe."

"Of course it is if you have the money," said she with a sigh. "Come Johnny—Why, what are you doing?" as she saw the little fellow take off his new shoes, and wipe them carefully with his bit of a handkerchief. "Put them right on again. We're going now."

"Oh—Susan! In this mud? Can't I wear my old ones?"

"What a silly boy!" laughed Susan.—"These horrid old things!"

"Do let me,—can't I?"

"Why, yes. I suppose you can. Make the most of them to-night, for you'll never see them again."

So the "horrid old things" went on, for the last time. She could laugh at him now, as he stumbled along hugging up his new treasure so lovingly.

They were very merry upon their homeward walk, stopping at the shop windows to admire the pretty things, some of which seemed perfectly gorgeous in the blazing gas-light, to Johnny's unaccustomed eye.

"If I had a hundred dollars, Susan," said he, "I'd buy that big yellow jar at Doten's. I'd put it up in our front window, and mother could look at it all the time."

Susan smiled at the thought of such an establishment for their small pances. "You'd have to build a house for it, Johnny," said she, as they turned away.

"So I would! I'd build a nice one, I'd—I'd—"

"Be careful, Johnny," as the little figure, its eyes half-blinded stilly by the bright gas-light, started to run across the street, down which two spirited horses were coming rapidly.

"Oh, there's plenty of time—I can run."

There was plenty of time as he said, and Johnny was fleet of foot, but ah! he forgot the treacherous sole. It gave him no warning until he had reached the middle of the street, then he stumbled and fell, just as the horses were close upon him.

They were going furiously, and could not stop. There was a piercing shriek as the pitiless hoof came crushing down upon the small ankle. Then Johnny was very still.

A kindly crowd gathered at once. Very tenderly they lifted him from the ground (he was not a heavy weight), and carried him home, Susan walking silently before, pale as death. She made up the little bed in the sitting-room, and they placed him upon it ; then the old white-haired doctor came, and she went hither and thither for the necessary articles as he called for them, hardly conscious of her mother's frightened questions, which, however, she answered quietly. She made no outcry, shed no tear, only when some one put into her hands the precious shoes (alas! they were muddy after all), she forgot herself for an instant, but almost immediately became calm again.

Once Johnny opened his eyes, and whispered her name, then closed them again, unconscious.

All the long night she sat there watching. "He must be kept very quiet," the doctor said. "It was a bad break—very bad. He might walk again, sometime ; but just at the ankle so—it was bad." And Susan shuddered as she thought of the active little feet, and wondered how they could bear it.

The next day he was brighter, and asked for his shoes. She polished them until they shone again, and placed them in a chair by the bedside.

"Where are the old ones?" he inquired at length.

"In the fire," replied Susan half spitefully.

"Ugly old things! They threw me down. If I'd worn my new ones, Susan, as you said—"

"I wouldn't talk about it now, dear."

"But it was too bad," (in a plaintive tone).

"It wouldn't be quite so bad, Susan, if I could just move my foot a little. Could I?"

"No, Johnny ; try and be patient. I'll find a nice story ;" and she took up Jake's new Reader (there were very few books of any kind in the house), and read until the heavy eyelids closed again.

Four long, long days followed, during which fatigue and constant pain made Johnny restless and uneasy.

"He was so tired!" he would say wearily ; he hated to have his foot all boxed up like that ; it was so large, too, as large as his father's ; he couldn't wear his new shoes—never. And then the poor little fellow would moan in a hopeless kind of way that it almost broke Susan's heart to hear ; or, perhaps, cry piteously.

And then she would wet the heated bandage, and bathe the fevered cheeks, and scotch him with loving words, or tell him some funny story, until he forgot his troubles for a time.

But on the fifth morning the good old doctor looked very sober. The limb was doing well, but the boy was sinking. Very gently he told Susan of his fears, as they stood together, looking at the motionless figure upon the bed. There were tears in his eyes, as he saw her white haggard face, but there were none in hers.

All that day Johnny slept quietly, but toward night he awoke. The blue eyes followed Susan lovingly, as she made preparations for the evening meal. "How busy she was,—and how smart. He didn't believe many boys had such a sister." So the eyes watched her proudly. She couldn't resist them, but paused often in the midst of her work for a smile or a kiss.

"How well he looked ! The doctor was too anxious altogether." Alas ! poor Susan !

Father and mother went to bed as usual—Jack brought his comforter, and lay down upon the floor near them (he was very kind to Johnny now), and Susan took her accustomed seat beside her patient.

"Susan," said he, looking steadily at her, "you won't send me to school now, will you?"

"Not quite yet," she answered, trying to smile.

"You never will," he said quietly. "I heard what the doctor said."

She was silent.

"Won't it be funny," cried the little voice, almost exultant, "to go to God's school! I shan't be afraid of Him, shall I, Susan?"

"I hope not, Johnny."

"But I shan't, I know I shan't. I like Him. He's good to me."

Brave, loyal, little heart! She thought of the short life, so full of trial and hardship, and couldn't speak.

"Susan," said he after a pause, "you're real good."

It was too much. She laid her head down on the pillow beside him, and cried as if her heart would break. "I'm not good, she sobbed ; I'm wicked, wicked. I wish I was going with you. How can I live without you ; oh, Johnny, Johnny!"

He looked troubled. "You'll come too, Susan, sometime, won't you?"

"I hope so, but there are so many days first, so many, many days?"

"Don't cry so. You mustn't!" he pleaded anxiously. "God's good to you. He likes you. He does, truly, Susan."

She stopped, suddenly remembering with keen self-reproach, what the doctor had said about keeping very quiet.

"I know He does, darling. I'll try and remember it for your sake."

She took the little, thin hand in hers, and stroked it gently. He fell asleep with a smile upon his lips, and when he awoke, some hours afterwards, there was a look upon the placid face that she had never seen there before.

"Jack," she called softly.

He was up in an instant.

"Wake father and mother—tell them to be quick."

They came at once—they caught a glimpse of the dying eyes before they opened upon the glories of the celestial city. There was a loving glance for all, but the last look and smile were for his sister.

Susan would suffer no hand but hers to touch him. Lovingly, almost reverently, she smoothed the tangled hair, and folded the small hands, but her tears fell like rain upon the poor, bruised feet. Dear, little, loving, patient feet! Always willing, though often tired. Well, they were at rest now.

A week afterwards she found the old slate, with the sum nearly finished, just as he had left it, and in an instant the childish words came back to her, "Won't it be funny to go to God's school?"

"God's school keeps here, too," thought poor Susan, trying to see the crooked figures through her tears. "Perhaps we may be schoolmates, Johnny."

And again she seemed to hear the little voice, this time with a world of comfort in its clear, sweet tones, "God's good to you. He likes you. He does, truly, Susan."

SAVED BY LIGHTNING.

"It looks like a shower, don't it Reuben?" said a young, fair looking matron, standing in the doorway of a cabin just as the sun was drooping behind the tree tops to the west, in an American state.

A young man, hardy and strong, was coming up from the "clearing" down by the river, with the axe he had been wielding all through the day thrown over his shoulder. These words from his wife saluted his ears as he came near, and caused him to turn his head, and glance away to the southward, where a great bank of sable clouds was piled high against the evening sky.

"Yes, Ruth, it does look like it," he answered. "I thought I heard it thunder just before I left work."

"It looks as though it would be a heavy one," she said, a little apprehensively, for to tell the truth, she was a little cowardly in this respect.

To this her husband made no reply, but playfully pushing her aside from the doorway, he entered the cabin, and at once took down his rifle from the hooks where it was hanging.

"What have you seen to shoot, Reuben," she said. "Don't go out again to-night, for supper is waiting now."

"I am not going," he answered quietly. "I am only making sure that my rifle is in good order. But still I may have occasion to use it before morning."

The young wife turned pale.

"You don't mean to say that the savages are here again?" she asked.

"You may as well know the truth, Ruth," said her husband, looking her full in the face. "There are redskins hanging about here, and I'm afraid they mean us mischief. I've seen no less than three at one time within an hour, skulking along in the edge of the wood. Their motions tell me we'd better be on our guard to-night. Were they friendly, they would have come out openly to me, or to the cabin."

"Oh, Reuben, what shall we do?" and her eyes sought the bed, where a rosy-cheeked boy of some two summers was lying fast asleep.

"We must do the best we can. The cabin is stout and strong, and I doubt about their being able to break in, should they try it. But you must have a lot of courage, Ruth. Maybe it won't be needed, and I hope it won't. Now let us make sure that the cabin is all tight, and then we will have that supper which you say is waiting."

He spoke cheerfully, but could not dispel the fears that filled her heart, and made her face as pale as death.

The heavy oaken shutters of the two small windows were put in place, and made secure there, and then the door was closed and barred, and a large stick of timber, that was kept for that purpose, was placed against it. When the preparations had been completed, Reuben announced that he was ready for his supper. This was soon placed upon the table, and it must be confessed that the danger which hovered over them did not in the least diminish his appetite. But Ruth could hardly swallow a mouthful and she wondered how it was that her husband could. She was thinking only of the danger that menaced them, and listening for the slightest sound that came from without.

The darkness increased, and the sound of distant thunder broke upon their ears. Through a chink in the shutter they saw that the cloud in the south was fast rising and spreading itself over the heavens, hastening on the fast coming darkness.

"We shall get a good shower," said Reuben.

"I hope so," answered his wife. "If there is, it may keep the savages under cover of the forest to-night."

"Hark!" said Reuben. "what was that?"

Both were silent, and held their breath to listen. It was footsteps without. Ruth trembled with apprehension. Then another and another was heard.

"They have come," cried Ruth in a low tone.

"Yes," said Reuben. "Hark! let us see what they mean to do."

A minute later and the door was shaken violently. Then a savage without exclaimed in broken English, "White man open door : Ingins want to come in."

To this appeal Reuben made no answer. He had no idea of granting the request, and words he knew would do no good. Again the demand was made. But, as before, no answer was returned. The mutterings of the thunder were nearer and deeper. The tempest was coming. Suddenly there came so fearful a blow upon the door, that it made the entire cabin tremble, while Ruth gave utterance to a shrill cry of alarm.

"Courage," said her husband : "they are trying to batter the door down, but I hardly think they can do it. They cannot so long as the prop holds as well as it does now."

"It is not for myself I fear," she said. "It is for our child, Reuben."

"We will do our best to save him, and our own lives," he answered. "Even though the door give way, with my rifle I can do much to save us."

Once more a terrible blow was dealt upon the door, and at the same moment came a vivid flash of lightning followed by a peal of thunder that seemed to shake the solid earth. So tremendous was the blow the savages dealt that the prop against the door gave way, and the door itself trembled as though it were coming down. The heart of Reuben sank within his breast. Another such blow must place them at the mercy of the savages. Only his rifle would stand between them and death. But at this moment Providence interposed its hand. As though the peal of thunder had been a signal for the tempest to confidence, the rain came down in torrents. Not knowing the execution their last blow had done, the savages hesitated as the storm broke upon them.

A little way from the cabin stood a large oak that the settler had spared for its beauty and grateful shade. To the shelter of this the savages fled, to wait until the tempest was over. Thus our friends had a respite for a time. Hastily Reuben replaced the prop, and did his best to make the door secure again.

Ten minutes passed and the rain came down as though there were a second deluge upon the earth. He heard nothing of the savages ; but he thought he knew where they were, and that the attack would be renewed as soon as the rain had cleared.

Suddenly there came a vivid flash of lightning, followed by a report that seemed to shake the earth as though it were a leaf suspended in mid-air. For a long time they sat half dazed and stunned by the report ; and when at last they were themselves again the rain had ceased. A bright light shone without, and Reuben gazed through the crevice to see what it meant.

The oak was riven into a thousand pieces, and its trunk was on fire. Scattered among the debris, lay the mangled forms of the savages. The same blow that blasted the oak, had deprived them all of life.

In after days, Reuben and Ruth told their grand-children how it was they were saved by lightning.

For first-class Book and Job Printing go to the office of the ONTARIO WORKMAN, 124 Bay street.

Good Fun.—A young lady gives a recipe for having fun. She says :—Invite half a dozen boys and girls to your house when your ma and pa are away ; put a shilling in a dish with molasses an inch deep in it, and offer it to the boy who gets it with his mouth. The more the boys who try to get it the more fun will there be.

A lawyer, to avenge himself on an opponent, wrote "Rascal" in his hat. The owner of the hat took it up, looked ruefully into it, and turning to the judge, exclaimed, "I claim the protection of this honorable court ; for the opposing counsel has written his name in my hat, and I have strong suspicion that he intends to make off with it."