

"Winter is coming," chirped the swallows, as they paused on their southward way; "we fly from his tyranny—but thou, poor brook, cannot escape his merciless severity. His harshness will hush thy happy song."

"Nay," sang the brook, "the secret of my happiness lies in the depths of my own being, outward circumstance cannot control it—I will sing always."

Then the crisp brown leaves floated down from the trees that bent above it, and rested on its bosom.

"Winter is coming," they sighed; "Its breath has touched us. Death will claim thee, glad brook, and thy happy song will be ended."

"Nay," sang the brook, "the source from which I draw my supply lies far above. Death has no power over me, I will sing always."

Then the chill winds moaned, as they swept over it. "Winter is coming," they wailed; "his frosts shall search thee, oh, brook, and bind thee with bands of iron, and thou wilt have power to sing no more."

"Nay," sang the brook, "the sun is my friend. We will break the frost chain with which winter would bind me. I have no fear," and it laughed in triumph as it sped upon its way.

But a morning came when the song of the brook was hushed. The inevitable law, to which all nature bows, had asserted its course, and it lay frozen and still—not dead—for the coming spring shall break its trance and send it forth upon its joyous way, and it shall forget the night of pain that benumbed it, and again its song shall arise, "I will sing always."

And thinkest thou, oh, happy soul, to whom all life has been as yet but summer-time, that thou shalt escape the inevitable pain that desolates the lives of all around thee?

Does thy glad song arise: "I will sing ever. The secret of my happiness is within me, naught outward can touch it. The source of my gladness lies far above this world of care, my supply is unfailling. God is my Friend, what can resist His power?"

True: yet thou are but human, and must bow to the stern decree that controls all human nature. Thinkest thou alone of all created beings to live untouched by the chill breath of sorrow that holds all else in its benumbing grasp—sorrow that does not oppose but fulfils God's will?

Let not faith fail then when its cold touch pierces to thy heart. Wait—patiently, trustfully—God will break the icy bonds that hold thee, and send thee forth again rejoicing upon thy way.

Thou wilt not forget the lesson, but again thy song shall be, "I will sing always," for thy cruel experience will have taught thee that no earthly grief can bind eternally that soul that holds within itself the secret of true happiness, that draws its supply of gladness from above, and that can look up confidently, saying, "God is my friend."—*Alix in Parish Visitor.*

Boys and Girls' Corner.

IN order to encourage thoughtful reading and observation among young people, it is intended to offer prizes for the best work done on subjects announced by PARISH AND HOME from time to time through the year.

The conditions of competition will be as follows:—

- (1). Competitors must be under sixteen years of age.
- (2). Must be bona fide scholars in a Sunday school of a parish in which at least twenty-five copies of PARISH AND HOME are taken.
- (3). Must send in at each competition certificates from their clergymen as to age and Sunday school attendance.
- (4). Must perform the work without the aid of others.

In accordance with these conditions, short essays, of not more than 1,500 words are asked for, which must reach the editor before February 15th, 1891.

The subjects, and prizes offered, are as follows:—

- 1.—Biblical, "The Boy Samuel."
PRIZE—*St. Nicholas* for one year.
- 2.—General, "Why birds and their nests should be protected."
PRIZE—*Boy's Own* or *Girl's Own* for one year.

Essays, etc., to be addressed

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FOR PARISH AND HOME.

A TALK WITH BOYS AND GIRLS.

Boys and girls have many temptations from morning to night, on every side snares are being laid for them and only the watchful can escape. These

temptations are of so many kinds that one can hardly give names to them all, but two or three are so prominent that they should be especially marked.

First there is the temptation to be cowardly. A group of boys are together and one of them swears or uses impure language. As a rule the other boys laugh at this or join in it. Even the boy who has been better taught at home, and whose conscience secretly condemns such talk often joins in it because he is afraid to be unlike the other boys.

Girls, too, like boys, do not care to be laughed at. None of us like this. It wounds our pride or vanity and often we feel we must be like others, even though we are not quite sure it is right. Fashion is stronger than principle sometimes.

Now, boys and girls, this is all wrong. It is not fashionable always to do what is right; it is not fashionable to be simple minded and of pure lips. It never was fashionable to be meek and lowly in heart, but Jesus was all this and more. He looked upon the petty customs, the deadly sins of men, and saw right through them. He spoke out His mind and was not afraid to do so. Wicked men tortured and crucified Him, but He endured the cross *despising the shame*—despising the shame because He knew He was doing what was right. Let us be brave as He was.

Again, springing from this very cowardice, boys and girls are often *untruthful*. I asked a school-girl once what she thought was the greatest temptation that girls have in school. She replied at once, "To be untruthful. The teacher asks did you do this or that, and the 'No' comes to the lips very promptly, even though it is untruthful to say so." Boys have the same temptation too. Fight it as you would fight death. Loose statements and exaggeration are both forms of lying. It is mean, cowardly to lie; to try to put off, perhaps on others, what we should bear ourselves. There is a little verse that every boy and girl should learn and strive by God's help to live up to. It is this:

I'd rather die
Than tell a lie.

Lastly, boys and girls are especially tempted to be *selfish*. They have more time than others for amusement and pleasure-seekers are all apt to be selfish. It is painful to see a group of children