

Our Young Folks.

Words.

Words too lightly spoken
Come not back again,
And sweet buds are broken
By the softest rain.

Only a Pin.

I would like to tell the boys the story of a Frenchman who made his fortune by a pin.

He was born in a country home, and his parents were poor. There were many children, and being the oldest of them, he was regarded as soon as he was old enough to leave home, to go to Paris and get work there.

His first application in the city was made to a very rich merchant of whom he had heard.

"Will you give me a place in your business house?" he asked. "I am poor, but strong, and willing to work."

"I have no place for you now," said the merchant. "Perhaps by-and-by I shall be able to receive you," he added kindly, for he saw the lad was disappointed.

Fairly trembling, and almost ready to weep, the poor boy walked out of the office. As he went down the stone steps he saw a pin shining in a dusty corner. He stooped and picked it up and stuck it in his coat. The merchant was looking out of the window, and saw what he did. He opened the window and called the boy in.

"Quick powers of observation, love of order and economy, will make a good business man," said the merchant to himself.

To the boy he said, "You may go into my counting-house; I will give you some business to attend to."

From that hour he never left the merchant. His industry, honesty, punctuality, and good nature won him the confidence of his employer, the love and respect of all in the house. In a few years he became book-keeper, and afterwards cashier; by-and-by partner, and one of the most honoured and useful men in France.

"There's a pin, pick it up," I once heard a mother say to her little boy.

"Oh, it's nothing but a pin; what's the use?" was his answer.

Speak Gently.

The little face paled, and the rosy mouth trembled, as little Ellie stole from her accustomed corner, and passed silently out of the comfortable sitting room; but the small, white teeth were closely clenched, and pride forced back the tears that were ready to start from the great brown eyes.

"Nobody loves me," was the piteous cry, as she threw herself down on the bare floor, and gave way to her grief. "Mamma calls me a provoking little elf, that's always getting into mischief and annoying some one. Papa says, 'Send her off to bed; and nobody loves me.'" She sobbed herself to sleep.

"Where on earth can that child be?" said Ellie's mother, when the nurse came in for the little ones at bedtime. "She must be broken of this sulking at the slightest reprimand. I will punish her for this."

They searched the library and parlors, and even the spare bedroom. None thought of the lonely garret.

"Praps 'e can sarjeet a place to look," said old Beck, the colored cook. "De Lord bress you, missis, but dat chile ain't sulky. 'Pears like to me dat she am jest brim full ob lub, and don't know where ter send it."

Under the garret window, on the cold, bare floor, lay little Ellie, fast asleep. The full moon, as if in guardianship, shone down lovingly on her, giving the pale, sorrowful face the semblance of death. Great tears rested, as if frozen, on the long, dark lashes, and sobs, deep and trembling, shook the tender breast.

As that mother knelt beside her little one, and heard the loving "mother," come from those quivering lips, a new life was given her, more perfect than aught she'd known before, and the knob her child.

Mothers, speak gently to the erring ones, and let them carry through their lives a loving remembrance of home and mother. It will be greater and better protection against temptation and sin than a guard of grenadiers.

THAT great untruth, imputed sanctification! Those who hold it, forget the completeness of the work of Christ.

Did you ever lie on the top of a mountain, whence you beheld a wide landscape with its fields and cottages spread in silent repose before your eyes? In your bosom also perfect quiet reigned. You forgot your cares, no sorrow weighed upon your spirits, no unpleasant remembrance disturbed the calm, no intruding passion dared to break the holy peace of your soul, and a voice within whispered, "Blessed were I, could I remain forever thus!" What you then felt was a fleeting foretaste of heaven, which sometimes even passionate, unquiet spirits are allowed to enjoy, in order that they may look into themselves and earnestly reflect how they might perpetuate this tranquil and blessed state. You were happy because you had forgotten your self, because you were free from earthly desires.

Sabbath School Teacher.

Dr. Aveling on Sunday Schools.

The following extract from Dr. Aveling's address, delivered at the Congregational Union, last week, is so entirely in accordance with what we are constantly advocating, that we have much pleasure in copying it. Our pleasure would have been somewhat enhanced, had there been some generous recognition, however slight, of the efforts which the Sunday School Union has made and is making, by the very means suggested, for securing a more instructed and efficient staff of teachers.

OUR SABBATH SCHOOLS.

Their momentous worth, as a part of our educational apparatus, is universally admitted, and the good they have been the means of effecting, incontestable. But a higher degree of efficiency than has ever yet been attained is most desirable, and must be sought and reached. The advancement of the educational standard on all hands necessitates this; and especially the fact that is becoming increasingly patent, that to the Christian Church principally, if not exclusively, must we look for the religious instruction of the young.

Preparation classes are indispensable. They are not less important to our teachers than is preparatory training to ministers, and should be as conscientiously attended to, where possible—and I must be pardoned if, considering the importance of the matter, I say it ought to be made possible, even at large cost of time, and strength, and thought—it should be in the hands of the minister. This is about all he can do, actively, for the school; but with this, and by his counsel, and sympathy, and frequent reference to the teachers and their charge, in his prayers and preaching, he will keep the fact of their existence and operations before his own mind and the minds of his people. For otherwise, in these days of separate services, the majority of the congregation would know little about them, and think and pray less.

I wish I could impress the minds of teachers with my own estimate of the vast importance of their work, and awaken a trembling dread of the responsibility they assume which should lead to most determined efforts to meet it by diligent preparation.

Our waterwork must be, "A more instructed, disciplined, specially trained class of teachers; and so more efficient staff of workers." It is not so much an increase in the number, as the efficiency of those who teach, I desire. Gideon's three hundred men are better fitted for the work assigned them than the ten thousand, or even the thirty-two thousand would have been, without the required qualification. It becomes a matter that imperatively demands the most anxious consideration of all interested, how to raise the standard of Sunday School instruction so as to make it more effective.

The most natural method of accomplishing this is to raise the standard of our teachers. They must be much superior in knowledge to those whom they instruct, or they will never draw or keep the young. In order to secure this superiority there must be more of our best educated men and women engaged in the work; so that it shall not be left almost wholly, with the exception of the officers, to the younger members of our churches. Far be it from me to think otherwise than gratefully of the self-denying labours of those young people who give the best part of the best day to this work. Their motive, in most instances, I doubt not, is praiseworthy and pure. But goodness of intention is not enough for a mechanic to work with: there must be goodness of tools and materials, and skill, or he will turn out a poor article. So while, with the Sunday School teacher, excellence of motive is an important qualification, that alone is not sufficient. There must be knowledge of his business, and skill in the work he undertakes; and this can only be looked for as the result of judicious training.

Into these schools all the children of the congregation should, if possible, be brought—not the children of the poor merely, but those of a higher social standing—as in America—(applause)—where the schools are home-circles multiplied, in the midst of which many of the heads of households are found teaching their own and other children, whose parents are not so well qualified to give instruction in spiritual things; and, alas! their names, in both continents, is Legion.—S. S. Chronicle.

Honesty.

"Honesty is the best policy," said Harry, aloud; "and I mean always to be honest."

"What does 'best policy' mean?" asked his sister Ada, looking up from her work.

"Why, this," replied the boy; "that if you are always honest, even though it may not seem the wisest thing for yourself at the time, you will get best off at the end."

"I don't think," replied his sister, "that is a good reason; because if you saw dishonest people getting on better for a long time you would, perhaps, get tired of waiting for the time to come when you would be 'best off,' and begin to be dishonest too."

"Ada is right," said her mamma, coming into the room; "be honest because it is right, my son; that is the only safe reason. Try to please God whether any gain comes from it or not. You will sometimes not be able to see how doing the right thing is profitable in a temporal point of view; but it will matter little, when you come to die, whether you have been 'best off' in this world or not."

"Thank you, mamma," said Harry. "In future I will endeavor to do right because it is right, and is pleasing to God, whether it seems to my advantage or not."

EVERY man blameth the devil for his sins; but the great devil—the house devil of every man that eateth, and lieth in every man's bosom, that doth that killeth all—is himself. Oh, blessed are they that can deny themselves, and put Christ in the room of themselves.—Rutherford.

Rev. Prof. Witherow's Address at the Opening of Derry and Omagh Synod, April 24th, 1877.

Fathers and brethren, the Church to which it is our honor to belong has been for years past in a state of great prosperity and peace, and there is nothing, so far as I know, to come under your attention now except that formal but necessary business which usually comes before you at your annual meetings. But we cannot close our eyes to the fact that the enemies with which the Gospel has to contend are every year growing more powerful, and that two of these in particular—situation and Rationalism—have come closer to us of late than either of them did a very few years ago. It is true that neither of them has for many years given our section of the Church any trouble, but it would be folly to conceal from ourselves that on the other side of the Channel there is a little cloud rising, at present no larger than a man's hand, that may in a very short time overspread the sky. It was to be expected that the abolition of Tests in the national universities would sooner or later make its influence felt in the churches, and that the clergy also, following in the wake of the teachers of science and philosophy, would in due time attempt to throw off the restraint of creeds, and endeavor to secure for themselves the dangerous liberty of teaching the people not a well-known system of recognized truth, but that which seems to every man right in his own eyes. Laxity of religious belief is a characteristic of this age. Some men, more venturesome than wise, ignoring the charts laid down by those who have passed the same way in past generations, wish to sail across the sea of truth without regard either to the lights or landmarks which make the navigation safe. If the Bible itself has not escaped a hostile criticism, we need not feel surprised that some find fault with the very creeds to which they have voluntarily and deliberately attached their names. In various quarters this dangerous state of the ecclesiastical mind has given indications of its presence. As yet it has not shown itself, so far as I know, in our section of the Church, but it is as difficult to shut out the influence of the age as it is to shut out the air, and we must not suppose that here in Ireland we by any means are proof against the danger of the infection. Should, however, the anti-dogmatic and sceptical spirit show itself among us, there is no place in the Presbyterian world where it ought to do less harm, except history has been written in vain. Long ago Ireland witnessed a fierce rebellion against creeds, and has long ago discovered how utterly barren and useless the movement proved itself to be. It is now nearly 160 years since the Belfast Society began to sow tares in Ulster. It originated an intellectual movement for securing what was called freedom of thought, and it started a strong opposition to subscription to all humanly-composed creeds in general, and to the Westminster Confession in particular. The movement enlisted on its side nearly all the talent and culture then in the Synod of Ulster, and was supported by the great names of Abernethy, Halliday, and Kirkpatrick—men whose memories we would not venture to depreciate unduly by comparing them in intellectual force and power of logical analysis with the Gillferrals, Fergusons, and McCraes of the present generation. Nobody in 1719 knew what the crusade against creeds was likely to produce; to some it may have seemed introductory to a declaration of spiritual independence—the emancipation of the human mind from the shackles of the past—a new career of religious light and liberty on which we were to enter. But now in 1877 we can look back on the path over which the movement led us, and can tell distinctly what came out of it all. It produced, in the first place, a painful controversy, which distracted the Synod for seven years, followed by a miserable disruption. Alarmed at the results of what seemed a great strictness, but which in such a case was really the path of wisdom, some of the Presbyteries, oversteering their rights, took it on themselves to relax the subscription formula. They adopted, in fact, the very remedy now in favor at Clifton and at St. Andrews. Instead of the existing formula of subscription they substituted, as Principal Tulloch has suggested, a declaration of general adhesion to the Confession. The formula in use in the Presbytery of Bangor in 1774 was so lax and so liberal that it would probably give satisfaction at the present hour both at Gonrock and Dundee. It was in these words—"I believe all the important doctrines of the Christian religion are contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith." A Mohammedan might sign such a formula without much scruple of conscience. But, strange to say, all the fine things now expected in Scotland from the relaxed formula of subscription did not follow in Ireland. The Presbyteries which opened a wide door to men of all opinions soon differed among themselves. Their tone and spirit acted on other Presbyteries, which did not imitate their laxity. There came a whole century of faintness and torpidity as if the best blood of the Church had been drained out of her; and when the chill of death at last showed symptoms of passing away, and life began to return to ministers and congregations, there originated another controversy, short and sharp, followed by another disruption, in which the Church, by a violent effort, shook herself clear of the elements of doctrinal evil which had been working in her constitution for more than a hundred years. The grand movement for so-called liberty of conscience, disguised as it was for a time, ended in avowed Arrianism and in open secession; and thus more than a hundred years was needed to enable the Church to recover the wound which was inflicted on her by those who first in 1719 unwisely stirred that element of bitter strife. No good whatever came of it, but very much evil is all concerned. The lesson of our history in this country is, as I read it, therefore that our usefulness and prosperity as a Church are bound up with subscription to the Confession of Faith, and with attachment to the truth of God, and that unfaithfulness to subscription, or the desire to get free from it, is associated in

all our experience with nought but error and division and decay. Far am I from saying that a Church has no right to revise her standards and to expunge from them anything that she has found to be inconsistent with a more mature study of the Word of God; but the time for that has not yet come, and at no time ought it to be undertaken by any solitary ecclesiastical communion, but rather by a congress of the Presbyterian Churches of the world adhering to the creed of Westminster. A mere regiment, and a small regiment, in the grand army, we must not act alone; we must wait for a general movement all along the line. Meanwhile, in regard to doctrine, the Presbyterian Church in this country is very content to remain as she is. We want no such liberty as some are clamouring for beyond the sea. There is nothing human, perhaps, that is absolutely perfect; but any attempt at present to alter an instrument, which at once a bond of union and a test of orthodoxy is found to serve its purpose well, is more likely to spoil than to improve it. Our Confession does not press at all upon the laity, and gives them a reasonable guarantee that from every one of our pulpits they may expect to hear a well-understood system of sound principles and morals announced. They can worship God in any of our churches without their being personally tied down to the words of the Confession, or without being committed to more than a general agreement in our principles. Men, on the other hand, desirous to serve God in the ministry of the Gospel, but who scruple to accept what they call over-lengthy and elaborate symbols, can find ample scope in sister churches, some of which profess a shorter creed than ours, and some of them no creed at all. For the accommodation of the scruples of the few, we cannot agree to dispense with or to modify, apart from a general consent first sought and obtained, what has been shown on experience to be so useful to the many. What we are entitled to insist upon is that if men voluntarily sign our creed, and are in consequence admitted to places of trust among us, they shall be faithful to the principles which they have voluntarily and solemnly accepted; and should they at any time see reason to change their minds, and to adopt opinions on any important subject at variance with what they have publicly professed, we regard them as in truth and honor bound to retire from the position, to which without subscription they know well that they could never have attained. We expect ministers, in a word, to be honest men; and if so, they cannot long continue in the official service of a Church whose principles they once professed but now disown. No man is under any compulsion to put his name to the promissory note of our Confession, but if he do attach his name we hold that he is bound to pay. Should a minister prove unfaithful to his signature and claim to be exempt from the obligations which he has incurred, while, at the same time, he enjoys the honour and emoluments of office to which his subscription admitted him, it is the interest as well as duty of the Church to get clear of such a minister as soon as it can. Dishonesty does not enter into the doctrine or ethics of any Church in Christendom; and there are few blemishes in any creed as bad as the blemish of a clergyman standing on a platform or in a pulpit to repudiate the obligations which he voluntarily incurred in order to enable him to enter it. No section of Christianity can afford very long to submit to such a scandal. For the mistakes of the human mind, we are, indeed, to have every reasonable indulgence. Though not prepared to say with the poet—

"There is more faith in honest doubt; Believe me, than in half the creeds."

yet for doubt that is really honest we should have respect and even sympathy; but when a man sets himself up to denounce what he has solemnly subscribed, and still holds the position to which that subscription admitted him, while by his example he teaches others to do the same, he has forfeited every claim, in my opinion, either to sympathy or respect. Every reason that Presbyterianism can show for its existence is connected with the profession of the faith of the Gospel, and with close attachment to the truth; but should it ever come to pass that a man in our communion can be allowed to set at nought his ordination promises, and to teach any dogmatical whim that comes into his head, instead of those things which are most assuredly believed among us, we fall in our toleration of such an abuse so gross to discharge our duty to Christ. Whenever a Church ceases to be the pillar and ground of the truth, there is no need that I can see for its existence as a Church. It may, indeed, continue a useful literary, social, or political association, but it has ceased to be what every Church should be—a beacon light raised on a rock to warn passers-by of their danger—a witness to the message of mercy sent from heaven to earth. Truth saves: error destroys "All a habitation of God through the spirit." All our ecclesiastical experience goes to show that they who are false to those grand principles of doctrine and religion, which have in all generations enlightened the minds and comforted the hearts of poor sinners struggling through darkness and sorrow, enter on the downward career of spiritual decay and death, and that there is no way to true usefulness and religious prosperity except that of honesty and orthodoxy and faith. Few parts of the Presbyterian Church supply a clearer illustration of this truth than the part of Ulster over which this Synod exercises its jurisdiction. Two hundred years ago there were only about a dozen of our ministers in the north-west, and when, in April, 1677, they met in Presbytery at St. Johnston, where Mr. Trail, the minister of Lifford, occupied the place which I fill at present, there were but seven ministers in attendance. On the same district of Irish ground there are now, in April, 1877, a Synod of over a hundred ministers, all engaged in the same great work, all laboring for the spiritual good of men, all standing "fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel." Whatever prosperity has come our way is owing, under God, partly to the growth of the population, to a wise exercise of the legislative and administrative powers of the State, and to the industry and social prosperity of our

people, but owing very much to this also that our ecclesiastical progenitors were as a rule faithful to sound Presbyterian principles, and kept themselves free from the floating heresies of their times. They did not relax the formula of subscription, nor surrender the test of an orthodox ministry. Had they done so, they, too, like the Presbyterian Church of England of the early part of the last century, would have been turned into a pillar of salt—a warning and a caution to after ages—and at the present time, perhaps, might have had no name in this land. Let us follow the wise and good example of our forefathers, and in all our religious instructions keep, as we have hitherto done, within the lines of orthodoxy and truth. Fathers and brethren, let us be on our guard against strange practices and opinions, come from what quarter they may. Let us give no countenance, on any pretence, to parties and divisions. Let us fill our minds with good thoughts for the good of men, and let our heads be busy and active in the discharge of practical duty. Plans for the religious education of the young and the old, for the moral and social improvement of the people among whom we labour, attempts to spread the Gospel at home and abroad—among the Jew and the Gentile, and in the young empires which now, under the name of British Colonies, are quietly girdling the world—works in which everyone almost that I see before me is every year striving to do his part—such are the avocations that are most worthy of our attention as ministers of Christ, and from which most practical good is likely to result. Barren speculations, exhausted Germanisms, and dogmatical eccentricities may well be left to others. Be it ours to study devoutly the Holy Scriptures, and to act in our everyday intercourse with the world in such a way as is best calculated to "save our own souls and the souls of them that hear us."

"I Was Sick, and Ye Visited Me."

Come within these silent gates,
Come, and gaze with bated breath,
Here the stricken pilgrim waits
Issues high of life or death;
Here the Man of sorrow feels
Every pang His pity heals.
Lord of mercy, at Thy word
Be these healing waters stirred;
Bid the sufferer, pale and wan,
"Go in peace," his anguish ban;
Or "Come hither to the shore
Where there are no sick and sore."
Bending o'er the weary bed,
In the watches of unrest,
Pillow every throbbing head
On Thy tender Brother's breast;
Weeping when Thy people pine,
Jesus, what a heart is Thine!
Though to-day our pulses beat
Thoughtful music in the street,
We may live to-morrow low,
Full of tossings to and fro;
Let us heal the sick man's moan,
So shall Jesus hear our own.
He will lush the stormy fear,
When the hour of death is near;
He will make the midnight pall
Radiant with His silver call,
"Hither come to your reward,
For ye loved your fainting Lord!"

Transient Troubles.

Many of us have troubles all our lives, and each day has brought all the evil that we wished to endure. But if we were asked to recount the sorrows of our lives, how many could we remember? How many that are six months old should we think worthy to be remembered or mentioned? To-day's troubles look large, but a week hence they will be forgotten and buried out of sight. Says one writer:

"If you would keep a book, and every day put down the things that worry you, and see what becomes of them, it would be a benefit to you. You allow a thing to annoy you, just as you allow a fly to settle on you and plague you; and you lose your temper (or rather get it; for when men are surcharged with temper they are said to have lost it) and you justify yourselves for being thrown off your balance by causes which you do not trace out. But if you would see what it was that threw you off your balance before breakfast and put it down in a little book, and follow it up, and follow it out, and ascertain what becomes of it, you will see what a fool you were in the matter."

The art of overlooking is a blessed art, but the art of overlooking is quite as important. And if we should take down the origin, progress, and outcome of a few of our troubles, it would make us so ashamed of the fuss we make over them, that we should be glad to drop such things and bury them at once in eternal forgetfulness.

Life is too short to be worn out in petty worries, frettings, hatreds, and vexations. Let us banish all these, and think on whatsoever things are pure, and lovely, and gentle, and of good report.—Christian Treasury.

Worldly Pleasures.

Devotion to worldly pleasure is a rejection of the promises of Christianity. The enjoyment which springs from indulgence, superficial and unsatisfying as it is, is all that can be realized by the devotee at this glittering but deceitful shrine. It is morally impossible that with this, he can have those enjoyments also, which come from higher and better sources. To them he may lay claim, and by performing certain duties and refraining from certain vices, and even occasionally from wonted indulgences, he may fancy that the promises of Christianity are added to his stores of happiness. But it is a fancy only, and without a shadow of reality. Such a course would only bring upon the devotee of worldly pleasure the burden and yoke of the gospel, improperly adjusted and fitting awkwardly, so the one would not be light nor the other easy, and there would be no rest to the soul. He would just have religion enough to make it a cause of pain—to give life to conscience and to sharpen the arrow of conviction lodged in the sensibilities.—Western Methodist.

How sweet a savour must that sacrifice have had, which eat back its fragrance before the world was!