

THE PLOUGHMAN.

LEARN the brown path to meet his coulter's gleam!
Lo! on he comes, behind his smoking team,
With toil's bright dew-drop on his sun-burnt brow,
The lord of the earth, the hero of the plough!

First in the field, before the reddening sun,
Last in the shadows when the day is done;
Lone after lone along the breaking sod
Marks the broad acres where his feet have trod.

Still where he treads the stubborn clods divide,
The smooth, fresh furrow opens deep and wide;
Matted and dense the tangled turf upheaves,
Mellow and dark the ridgy cornfield cleaves.

Up the steep hillside, where the labouring train
Slants the long track that scores the level plain;
Through the moist valley, clogged with oozing clay,
The patient convoy breaks its destined way.

At every turn the loosened chains resound,
The swinging ploughshare circles glistening round,
Till the wide field one billowy waste appears,
And the wearied hands unbind the panting steers.

These are the hands whose sturdy labour brings
The peasant's food, the golden pomp of kings;
This is the page whose letters shall be seen,
This is the scholar whose immortal pen
Spells the first lessons hunger taught to men;
These are the lives that Heaven-commanded toil
Shows on his deed—the character of the Soil.
—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

A NOBLE BOY.

SOME time after the beginning of the present century there was a living in a busy country town in the north a pious couple who had an only son. For this son they daily prayed to God; and what they asked in their prayers was that God would enable them to lay in his young heart among the first lessons he should learn, the love of all things honest and good. "It is our duty," the father said, "to ground our boy well in truth and uprightness." "Yes," the mother answered; "it is like laying down one of the precious stones under the walls of the New Jerusalem." The boy took kindly to their lessons. He opened his heart to their pious teaching, and learned to love the things they praised, and to desire to have them in his heart. So the foundations of an upright life were laid in the boy's heart, and among these, very especially, a regard for uprightness and truth. In the course of years the boy's school-days were ended, and also his apprenticeship to a business life in the country town; and as there was no prospect for him there, he came up to England, to one of the great seaports, and by-and-bye he got a good position in a merchant's office. He was greatly pleased with his new office, and wrote to his father and mother that providence had been very kind to him, and had opened up to him an excellent place. But he was not long in this excellent place before he was put to the test in a very painful way, with respect to the lessons he had received about truth. It was part of the business of that office to have ships coming and going. It was the rule when a ship came into the port that the captain sent word to the office that he had arrived and was now waiting instructions where to discharge

the cargo; and it was the duty of the manager in the office to send back instructions to the captain where and when this was to be done. A few months after this little lad from the north came to the office a ship laden with coal came in and the usual message from the captain came, but somehow or other no word was sent back to him. The captain waited a week, and still no word came back. Now that was very hard on the captain. Until his ship got free of its cargo it had to lie idle in the dock, and all who belonged to the ship were kept idle too. So, at the end of a week, or it may be some days more than a week, the captain sent word to the office that his ship had been kept so long waiting for instructions where to discharge its cargo that it had missed a good offer of a new cargo, and the office would have to pay him for his loss. This payment is called "demurrage."

When the manager of the office got this message from the captain, he was very angry. He thought he had sent instructions where to discharge the cargo, or he made himself believe he had sent them. At any rate he sent for the little lad from the north and said to him, "Didn't I send you down to Capt. Smith with instructions to discharge his coals?" The little lad said, "No, sir; I do not remember being sent down." "Oh, but I did," answered the manager; "you have forgotten." And there, for a time, so far as the office was concerned, the matter was allowed to rest. But the captain did not intend to let it rest there. He applied for his demurrage; and when that was refused, and his word that he had received no instructions was disbelieved, he took the master of the office to law; and by-and-bye his complaint came before the judges in the court of law. The day before the trial the manager came to the little lad from the north, and said to him, "Mind, I sent you to the dock with those instructions to discharge the coal." "But, I assure you, I cannot remember your doing so," said the lad. "Oh, yes, but I did; you have forgotten." It was a great trouble to the lad. He had never been sent to the dock. He could not say he had been sent, and he foresaw that he would have to say before the judge what would certainly offend the manager, and lead to the loss of his excellent place. On the morning of the trial he went to the court. The manager came up to him and said, "Now, our case depends on you. Remember, I sent you to the dock with the instructions to discharge the coal." The poor lad tried once more to assure the manager that he was mistaken, but he would not listen. "It is all right," he said hastily. "I sent you on such a day, and you have got to bear witness that I did—and see you say it clearly!" In a little while he was called into the witness-box, and almost the first question put to him was whether he remembered the day when Capt. Smith's ship came in. And then this: "You remember during that day being sent by the manager of the office to the dock with a letter for the captain?" "No, sir." "Don't you remember taking instructions to Capt. Smith to discharge his coals?" "No, sir." "Were you not sent by the manager of your office to the coal ship on that day?" "I was not, sir." "Nor next day?" "No." "Nor any other day?" "No."

The gentleman who put the question was a barrister. He had been engaged by the manager to win the case for them; but when he heard the little lad's replies he saw that the manager was in the wrong, and he turned to the judge and said: "My lord, I give up this case. My instructions were that this witness would prove that a message to discharge had been sent to Capt. Smith, and it is plain no such proof is to be got from him." So the case ended in the captain's favour, and against the office in which the little lad had found so excellent a place. He went to his lodgings with a sorrowful heart, and wrote to his father and mother that he was sure to be dismissed. Then he packed his trunk to be ready to go home next day, and in the morning, expecting nothing but his dismissal, he went early to the office. The first to come in after him was the master. He stopped for a moment at the little lad's desk, and said: "We lost our case yesterday." "Yes, sir," answered the lad, "and I am very sorry I had to say what I did."

By-and-bye the manager came in, and after a little time he was sent for to the master's room. It was a long time before he came out; then the little lad was sent for. "I am going to be dismissed," he thought to himself. But he was not dismissed. The master said to him, naming him, "I was sorry yesterday, but not with you. You did right to speak the truth, and, to mark my approval of what you did, I am going to put you in charge of all the workings and sales of our Glenfardle mine." Then he sent for the manager and told him what he had said, and added, "And the young man will make his reports direct to me." In six months after the manager left the office, and young though he was, the little lad was appointed to his place, and before as many years as had passed he was admitted as junior partner in the firm, and he is now at the head of the entire business—the managing partner.—*Sunday Magazine.*

MOTHER CAREY'S CHICKENS.

HERE is a family of little sea birds which fly far away from land and over the wide ocean, called "Stormy Petrels," or Mother Carey's Chickens. They love the sea best when it is in its roughest and stormiest moods, and no matter how high the billows may roll their heads or the waves be lashed into foam, these birds fly over the water and plunge between the hollows of the waves to seek their food. The reason of their delight is that the greater the disturbance of water the better chance of finding food, for it is by this very roughness that the small fish and whatever substances they may crave are brought to the surface, and then the birds easily satisfy their hunger. They look as if actually walking upon the water, for their feet are so constructed that, with the help of their long, pointed wings, they skim over its face; hence the name, "Sea Runners." "Petrel" is from the Italian word, *Petrello*, which signifies "little Peter," and they are thus called because when eagerly searching the water for food, they sometimes almost sink as they walk or run upon the waves, as did the disciple Peter when walking on the water to reach the Lord as he appeared to him.

By the sailors, "Mother Carey's Chickens" are looked upon with dread and superstition, as they consider their visits an omen of evil.

The plumage is dark, nearly a sooty black, with a slight mixture of white. It varies in the different species, of which there are four. These little birds are found on the seas of all parts of the world, and their strength of wing is wonderful, and far out upon the ocean the little creatures may be seen. Their flight is similar to that of the Swallows. They are scarcely larger than a Lark, and are the smallest of the web-footed birds.—*M. E. Whittemore.*

DON'T BE MEAN, BOYS.

SOMETIMES I wonder what a mean man thinks about when he goes to bed. When he turns out the light and lies down alone he is then compelled to be honest with himself. Not a bright thought, not a generous impulse, not a word of blessing, not a grateful look comes back to him; not a penny dropped into the hand of poverty, nor the balm of a loving word dropped into an aching heart; no sunbeam of encouragement cast upon a struggling life; no strong right hand of fellowship reached out to help some fallen man to his feet—when none of these things come to him as the "God bless you" of the departed day, how he must hate himself—how he must try to roll away from himself and sleep on the other side of the bed, when the only victory he can think of is some mean victory, in which he has wronged a neighbour. No wonder he always sneers when he tries to smile. How pure and good all the rest of the world must look to him, and how careless and dreary must his own path appear. Why, even one isolated act of meanness is enough to scatter cracker crumbs in the bed of an average man, and what must be the feelings of a man whose whole life is given up to mean acts? When there is so much suffering and heartache and misery in the world, anyhow, why should anyone add a pound of wickedness or sadness to the general public? Don't be mean, boys. Suffer injustice a thousand times rather than commit it once.—*Burdette.*

A SOLDIER'S DARING.

A WONDERFUL deed on horseback is related of an Austrian hussar. During a general review of the cavalry not far from 30,000 men were in a line. A little girl not more than four years old, standing in the front row of spectators, rushed out into the open field just as one squadron came sweeping around from the main body for the purpose of saluting the Empress whose carriage was near. Down came the flying horses, charging directly on the child. The mother was paralyzed with fear, and the Empress uttered a cry of horror. Suddenly a stalwart hussar, without slackening speed or loosening his hold, threw himself over by the side of the horse's neck, seized and lifted the child, and placed her in the saddle. Ten thousand voices applauded, and the Emperor took from his own breast the richly-enamelled cross of the Order of Maria Theresa and hung it upon the breast of the gallant soldier.