

a few more of the boys, were sitting comfortably on the floor, resting their backs against the wall, and watching Jim's little hammer go up and down. But even Jim's sharp eyes failed him in the gloom, and he dropped his work, and, spreading his knees far apart, he rested an elbow on each, and clasped his hands lazily.

"Tis short days we're having," he remarked amiably, 'not more than five o'clock, and dark enough to be lookin' cross-eyed. And not light enough to work until after breakfast.'

"Say, Jim," Mickey's voice sounded as if he were propounding a most serious question, 'if a feller don't get any breakfast, what time would he go to work?'

The Saint turned and answered the question promptly, 'If a feller didn't go to work until he got his breakfast, and he didn't get any breakfast, he wouldn't be gettin' to work at all! Any fool would know that! What I want to know is, what makes the days short?'

'And don't you know that now! and you with a saint's name!' Jim's voice was full of surprised reproach. 'The boys here'll tell you.'

Mickey, not relishing the Saint's sarcastic answer to his own question made a grimace in the dark as he said, 'Any fool would know that! It's because it's winter.'

Jim put his hands on his knees, and straightened out. 'And I suppose there ain't none of you that knows what makes it snow?'

"Tis a queer thing how little you all know! When a very good man dies, or for that matter, a woman either, but they must be mighty good! the angels get together and march around with their harps, and sing fine songs, to make them welcome. Now, wouldn't it be a fine procession, if their wings were all ruffled up! Indeed it would not! so, each time, they comb them out smooth, and it's the little feathers that come out that come floating down here to us.'

'I was wondering,' Cecilia spoke with a mingling of loyalty and unbelief, 'if all the good people die in the winter? We don't have snow in summer.' But before Jim had a chance to reply, she peered suddenly through the glass and said, 'There's my mother—she's sick.'

Mickey had gotten up to look too, and seeing Mrs. Sweeney staggering across the yard, he laughed derisively. 'Is that what you call sick! she's—' but before he had a chance to finish it, the Saint's right hand had doubled up, and taking Mickey unawares, she tipped him backwards across the bench, where he sprawled amid the jeers of the boys. Before Jim had recovered from his surprise, she had seized Puddin' by the hand, and hurried out.

Mickey rubbed his head, where it had come in unpleasant contact with the floor, and the boys who had jeered saw written on his face the threat that once out of Jim's province, he'd pay them well. 'If her mother is sick, there's a pile of sickness around,' he sneered. 'Say, Jim, did ye ever hear of any saint whose mother got drunk?'

'Well, I won't say I did and I won't say I didn't,' Jim responded with fine diplomacy. 'How else could a body get to be a saint, if it ain't by having such trouble?'

Evidently, Jim wasn't in the pleasantest frame of mind, and the boys got up to go; even the old man beside the stove managed to wake up enough to ask the time, and then decided he, too, would have to be looking around for something to eat.

It was an hour after, when Puddin' came in, and sat down on the bench with the remark, 'Cecile sent me here—said she was comin' by and by.'

### Sample Copies.

Any subscriber who would like to have specimen copies of the 'Northern Messenger' sent to friends can send the names with addresses and we will be pleased to supply them, free of cost. Sample copies of the 'Witness' and 'World Wide' will also be sent free on application.

## As a Flower.

(By Lucy Larcom.)

Open your heart as a flower to the light!  
Darkness is passing; the Sun is in sight;  
Morning with splendor is piercing life  
through,  
Arrows of radiance, and spear-tips of dew.

Glad is the world in the Holy One's birth.  
Lo, the new heavens! and lo, the new earth!  
Scattered and fled are the phantoms of night:  
Christ is the victor, and Christ is the Light!

Open your heart, and His love will shine in,  
Cleansing and healing the hurt of your sin.  
Who can resist Him, the Savior, the Son?  
Hell flies before Him, and Heaven is won.

Open your heart as a flower to the light!  
Bloom and bear fruit in the glory of right!  
Be of His Presence a perfume, a ray,  
Child of the morning, and heir of the day!

## Doing Small Things Greatly.

Character is great and worthy in itself, and not because of the greater or less fame of a deed through which it manifests itself. Lincoln's patience watching through the agony of a nation is the same quality as the patience of a mother watching the night through beside her sick child. The sad sacrifice of Gordon at Khartoum for the sake of England and of Egypt is of the same heroic quality as the sacrifice of the missionary among the Arabs or the Chinese, of whose name and fame the world hears but little. It is not the kind of thing through which we show ourselves, but the kind of self we have to show, that counts with God.—'Sunday School Times'

## John Mahaffey's Schooling.

(By Grace Boteler Sanders, in the 'Standard'.)

One early morning, when near the end of my tiresome journey, I was much annoyed by a laughing crowd, which clattered into the train, thus ending my quiet slumber. It was composed of college boys, hearty, happy youngsters who were just returning from their winter vacation. I listened listlessly to their jest and song, which grew tiresome even to them after a while, but I knew their destination was near, so determined to 'grin and bear' it.

'A story,' called their spokesman. One answered by a lively tale, which was followed in quick succession by half-a-dozen more.

'Let's hear from you, Rob,' they cried suddenly.

A handsome boy, much older than the others, smiled thoughtfully.

'Did you ever hear about John Mahaffey's schooling?'

'No, indeed. There can't be anything wonderful in that fellow's career. He's just like all the other mountain boys as far as I can see.'

'That's all you know about it.'

Robert Haines seated himself in the centre of the admiring group and began his story:

'During my first term at Jackson College I watched with much interest for the approach of the winter term. I had heard many accounts from the boys.

"When the mountain students come in you'll see a sight," drawled in my roommate, but when I asked him to explain he only laughed. "Just wait and see for yourself!"

'So I did. And such a crowd. It was different in those days. They came on horseback, on foot and every other way. Great rawboned men in homespun; blushing girls in linsy gowns.

'I was only a youngster and I laughed aloud when this funny procession filed into the chapel on Wednesday morning. The awkward figure nearest me turned. I felt the red blood rushing up to the roots of my hair as those honest blue eyes looked me through and through. It was then I made my acquaintance with John Mahaffey.

'I saw him many times during the year.

Through the primary classes, he a boy of sixteen, stumbled; he didn't care for our jeers, or if he did we never knew it, for he plodded on, chopping wood by day, studying hard at night.

'At the beginning of the next year John was in the same old place. Things went merrily for a while, but one cloudy spring day, as I hurried across the campus, I spied him sitting behind the woodpile, the very picture of hard luck. He was idly "shying" chips at the farthest tree and apparently had not seen me until I stood beside him.

"What's up, John? Prex given you your walkin' papers?"

'He shook his head.

"I'll have to leave, I guess. I've done the best I could lately, but seems like it taint no use. My money's all gone an' no more comin'."

"Apply for the student aid fund."

"It's all gone."

"Get more work."

"All promised for the term. President's wife said he'd sent so many down thar fur work that thar ain't a nail or a board out o' kilter on the place."

"Write the old man for more money."

"No use." John shook his head dolefully and tears trickled down his cheeks.

"You don't know my folks, Haines. Daddy lives on top the highest hill in the settlement grounds, so poor it won't hardly raise beans. Hilly? Why they have to prop the pumpkins an' all that to keep 'em from rollin' down hill. They're pore folks, but las' fall Daddy give me \$50. Take it, son, an' be a Lincoln," he said. 'Twas a fortune to him, Haines, an' I've wasted it 'stead of improvin' myself. I'm goin' home to-morrow and tell him what a no 'count son he has."

"Will you come back again this year?"

"Huh, maybe, never. I'm goin'. Good bye!" Pickin' up his ax he hurried away. The next day I heard he was gone.

'I guess old John had a pretty blue week after he got home. The weather was still cold and the mud knee deep. Visitors at the cabin were many, but he paid little heed to them. One evening his book lost its charms and he listened involuntarily to their drawling tones.

"Wil' cats air gittin' so bold they're wusen lions. A she cat come right up t' my back door las' night. The snows staid on s' long they're well nigh starved."

A sudden inspiration seized him. He heard again the white-haired professor's words: "Perfect specimens of wild cats are very rare. Hagenbecks are advertising for several pair at a large price, but it is almost impossible to capture them."

"I'd like to know why," said John to himself as he hurried from the room. "I'll give 'em a trial anyhow."

'He climbed to the loft and found two strong steel traps; they were rusty, but he cleaned them carefully. Then baiting each with a plump chicken—feathers and all—he took a torch and ran down the hill. He saw where the cats had been scratching, so he hid the traps near, confident that he would succeed. Sometimes our most carefully laid plans fail, and so next morning the empty trap dangled baitless. The second day came with the same result. The trap seemed to mock at him on the third, but on the fourth day before he reached the turn of the road he heard a snarling, screeching cat. Immediately a hundred glorious plans flitted through his brain. Breaking into a run, he made for the place and found two cats were prisoners instead of one. He hurried home for help, I can tell you; then with the assistance of his father and brother built a strong cage. He never stopped until they were loaded on the waggon and on the way to Jackson College.

'Old Prof. looked over his glasses in wild-eyed astonishment when he saw them.

"They are really—ah—very fine specimens. Certainly I will write to my friend at once."

'The letter was written and in a few hours the cats were on their way to the city. Meantime John waited breathless for his reply.

'But for the trainmen there was excite-