

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

A TRIUMPH.

LITTLE ROGER up the long slope rushing
Through the rustling corn,
Showers of dew-drop, from the broad leaves brushing
In the early morn.

At his sturdy little shoulder bearing
For a banner gay,
Stem of fir with one long shaving flaring
In the wind away!

Up he goes, the summer sunshine flushing
O'er him in his race,
Sweeter dawn of rosy childhood blushing
On his radiant face.

If he can but set his standard glorious
On the hill-top low,
Ere the sun climbs the clear sky victorious,
All the world aglow!

So he presses on with childish ardor,
Almost at the top!
Hasten, Roger! Does the way grow harder?
Wherefore do you stop?

From below the corn-stalks tall and slender
Comes a plaintive cry—
Turns he for an instant from the splendor
Of the crimson sky,

Wavers, then goes flying toward the hollow,
Calling loud and clear:
"Coming, Jenny! Oh, why did you follow?
Don't you cry, my dear!"

Small Janet sits weeping 'mid the daisies;
"Little sister sweet,
Must you follow Roger?" Then he raises
Baby on her feet,

Guides her tiny steps with kindness tender,
Cheerfully and gay,
All his courage and his strength would lend her
Up the uneven way,

Till they front the blazing East together;
But the sun has rolled
Up the sky in the still Summer weather,
Flooding them with gold.

All forgotten is the boy's ambition,
Low the standard lies,
Still they stand, and gaze—a sweeter vision
Ne'er met mortal eyes.

That was splendid, Roger, that was glorious,
Thus to help the weak;
Better than to plant your flag victorious
On earth's highest peak!

—St. Nicholas for June.

A SUGAR-BOILING SCRAPE.

WHEN I was a boy we lived in the country, where I think all boys ought to live for a few years, and we didn't get coddled as you youngsters do, nor have so many things to play, nor such school and books, and other helps to learning and fun, as you have. But we had plenty of good times in coasting, skating, riding, fishing, hunting and trapping. And in the spring we always had a special "lark" when they made maple sugar.

Father used to let us go to the woods with the men when we were quite little shavers, and we would bring dry brush for the fire, and watch the big kettle when the sap was boiling, so as to call the men or throw in a piece of pork, or some cold sap, to keep it from boiling over. I can almost smell the sweet steam now, and see the little pieces of pork bobbling around in the kettle, and remember how my eyes watered when the smoke blew in them, and how good the first taste of the sugar was when they began to cool it on snow to see if it was done.

But the "sugaring off" was the greatest fun. When the sap was boiled down into clear, sweet syrup, they would put four or five pailfuls in the kettle and cook it slowly and carefully till it was done enough to "cake" into sugar. And then we would wax some on snow, and stir some in saucers until it cooled,

and eat it warm and cold until we couldn't hold any more,—and a long while after father wondered how we could hold so much.

Well, one time, when we were about twelve or fourteen years old, we thought the sugar would taste a good deal sweeter if we could get it in some sly and mischievous way. That's the way with foolish boys and men in other things. Stolen sweets make half the trouble of the world. And so we went around to half-a-dozen of the neighbors' boys, asking them to a sugar bee in our woods the next night, but telling them not to let anybody know it. We knew there was a churn full and two big jugs of syrup waiting to be "sugared off" down in our bush, and we thought we'd steal a march on the men, and show 'em a trick or two. So after the chores were done, we asked mother if we could go and see the boys, and she said yes, if we would be back by nine o'clock.

We "saw" the boys, but it was in the lane leading to the woods, where they were waiting, whist as mice. It was growing dark fast, and we cut for the woods as fast as we could go. There was a big bed of coals, snugly covered with ashes, and we soon had it raked out, put new wood on, and made a blazing fire. Then we all took hold of the long pole and swung the big kettle over it. How to get the syrup in was the next question, as we couldn't lift the big jugs up. But I found the dipper, and we dipped it out of the churn used to store it in, until there was a pailful or more in the kettle, and it began to boil up, as yellow and sweet as could be.

By this time it was dark as a pocket. The fire lighted up the woods for a little ways, but it seemed all the blacker in the shadows beyond. We had never been out alone before, and the strange stillness began to make us feel very queerly. Our shadows, thrown by the firelight across the little clearing, looked like big, black giants, and there wasn't much fun in our laughs as we watched them. One of the littlest boys vowed he saw somebody hiding behind a tree, and another thought he heard some animal stepping in the brush a little ways off. You see we knew we weren't doing right, and that makes boys—and men, too—very uneasy.

But we kept close to the fire, and talked as bravely as we could, until the boy who was stirring the sugar said: "It hairs!—it must be done! Who'll try it first?"

"Who! Who!" said a loud voice out in the darkness of the woods.

Every boy started up as if a panther had come upon us. Jim dropped his stirring stick into the fire. Harry tipped over the pans of snow on the bench. Charlie stumbled over a root and fell head first into a sap-bucket; and then we all held our breaths and hearkened.

"Who! Who!" said the voice again, loud and solemn.

"Who are you, your own self?" shouted Frank, the boldest boy in the party—"and what-r-ye doing in this sugar-bush, this time of night?"

No answer came.

"Let's smoke him out!" said Frank, grabbing a blazing stick from the fire and starting for the brush, using it as a torch. He hadn't gone many yards before a great white owl

flew from its perch in a tree calling, "Who-who-o-o! To-whit-to-who-o!"

And then we all laughed at our scare, and turned to the sugar just as a dreadful smoke and smell began to come out of the kettle. While we had been "owling it" the sugar had burned!

We had just got the kettle swung off from the fire when another voice sounded close behind us, and this time it wasn't an owl, but father himself, who had seen the light of the fire, and come down to find out what it all meant.

"So, so," he said, "very industrious boys, I see!—like to work nights! Well, we can't have anything wasted. You can just go at that beautiful sugar you have made and eat it up." And he was a man that meant business, and no fooling, when he spoke.

Well, we tried it on snow, and tried it warm, but couldn't tell which way it tasted the worst. Burnt sugar is about the bitterest stuff I ever got hold of, and a few mouthfuls of it were enough to set us all to begging. Father let up on the eating, but made us scrape and wash the kettle and dishes, and bank up the fire again. And then he put me ahead, and made Will take hold of my coat-tail and the next boy hold of Will's, and so on to the end, and marched us all single file through the woods up to the house, a giggling, but rather sheepish procession.

Mother said she didn't think we were a very happy-looking set for boys who had been off for such a sweet time; and—well, we didn't do any more sly sugaring off after that. There didn't seem to be much fun in it, you know.—*Golden Rule.*

THE LITTLE SWEEP.

SEVERAL years ago an effort was made to collect all the chimney-sweeps in the city of Dublin for the purpose of education. Among others came a little fellow, who was asked if he knew his letters.

"Oh, yes, sir," was the reply.

"Do you spell?"

"Oh, yes, sir," was again the answer.

"Do you read?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"And what book did you learn from?"

"Oh, I never had a book in my life, sir."

"And who was your schoolmaster?"

"Oh, I never was at school."

Here was a singular case: a boy could read and spell without a book or master. But what was the fact? Why, another little sweep, a little older than himself, had taught him to read by showing him the letters over the shop doors which they passed as they went through the city. His teacher, then, was another little sweep like himself, and his book the sign-boards on the houses. What may not be done by trying?

PIETY is not a thing of place, but of character. God is not confined to the city, and religion, wherever it is genuine, will make its presence felt. Influence is as inseparable from character as its odor is from the flower; but to have the influence good the character must be genuinely noble; and they who are sincere in their Christian profession at home, will be thorough in its manifestation abroad.—*Christian at Work.*