

## Sunday-School Advocate.

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## THE BOY WITH MANY FRIENDS.

"I BELIEVE every boy in school is my friend," said Gilbert Leslie one day to his sister Alice. Gilbert had just returned from the capture of a snow-fort, at which the boys on both sides had declared he was the "bravest fellow in school," and was therefore in good humor with himself and everybody else.

"Then you are a remarkably fortunate boy, Gilbert," replied Alice, laughing, "or else your schoolmates are a set of very uncommon boys."

"Why so?" asked Gilbert, who felt puzzled by his sister's words.

"Because," rejoined Alice, "it is a rare thing for any one to have so many real friends as you have if what you say is true, and it is still more rare for so many boys to be true friends to one of their number. You remind me of the fable of the hare and her many friends. Do you remember it, Gilbert?"

"No. Tell me about it," said the boy.

"Once upon a time there was a hare so civil to all other beasts that they all professed great friendship for her. But one day the hunters and their hounds pursued the hare until she was nearly exhausted with her efforts to run from them. Panting, faint, half dead with fear, she met a horse which had been one of her friends. Speaking to him in the language of beasts she said:

"Let me mount your back. Your feet are swift. You can save me from those terrible hounds."

"Poor Puss," replied the horse, "it grieves me to see you in so sad a plight. But cheer up! your friends are at your heels."

"Cut to the quick by this cruel irony, the hare turned to a stately ox and besought his aid. But the ox replied:

"Everybody knows how sincere my wishes are for your welfare, and I would help you if your friend the goat were not so near. He will assist you."

"The goat, seeing the hare's distress, declined to take her on his back lest he should hurt her, and told her to ask a sheep, which was grazing quietly near by. The sheep declined, saying:

"I am very feeble, and have to carry a heavy load of wool. Besides," she added, "you know dogs eat sheep as well as hares."

"The poor hare now turned to a gay young calf for help. But he refused, saying:

"My heart pities you; but I fear those older friends who have refused to help you would take offense if I, who am so much younger than they, should do it. The dogs are coming. Good-by!"

"And so you see, Gilbert," said Alice as she finished

her version of the fable, "of her many friends not one helped her in the hour of need. I fear it would be so with you and your friends if you needed help, for, as Mr. Gay, the author of the fable, says:

"who depend  
On many, rarely find a friend."

"I don't believe any such nonsense," retorted Gilbert. "I believe every fellow in school would help me if I was in trouble."

"Well I don't," said Alice, "and maybe you will find out before you leave school that your ideas of friendship are not quite so correct as mine."

Gilbert Leslie was one of those good-natured, pleasant boys who are kind and civil to everybody. That made him popular with his schoolmates. He sowed smiles and good words among them, and therefore he reaped a plentiful crop of smiles and good words in return. How much real friendship the boys felt for him had never been proved up to the time of this talk with Alice. Not long after an event occurred which brought that question to a test. If you would know what that event was you must look for it in the next number of your Advocate. Meanwhile, I advise you to discuss with each other the point in dispute between him and Alice.

## MY LETTER BUDGET.

"Mr letter-bag is very, very full, Mr. Editor," says the Corporal as he turns a big heap of letters out upon the table of my editorial den. "There are enough of them to fill a ream of paper printed on both sides. What will you do with them, sir?"

The case is very clear, my Corporal. If it be true that there is enough to fill a ream of paper, then they would fill one thousand nine hundred and twenty Sunday-School Advocates. So that if we should print them all, the Advocate would contain nothing but letters for the next eighty years. You must be mistaken as to the number.

"Perhaps I am a little, but I feel quite sure that you can't print one in a hundred of these letters."

I'm sorry that ninety and nine out of every hundred of my dear little correspondents will be disappointed at not seeing their letters printed; but seeing there is no way to prevent, I bow to the fact, knowing that "what can't be cured must be endured." Draw out one and let us hear what it says.

"The first that comes to hand is this:

"PUZZLETOWN, STATE OF EYES-OPEN.

"MY PRECIOUS OLD CORPORAL,—I read not an hour ago the story of a Frenchman whose business it was to catch vipers for a noted chemist. One day he carried home a number of these reptiles, and putting them into a barrel in his chamber, lay down to sleep.

"The poor man forgot to cover the barrel, and during the night the vipers crept out and made their way into the bed. When the man awoke in the morning he found that vipers were coiled round his neck, round his arms, and round his legs. 'Ah!' thought he, 'I am a lost man, the vipers have escaped!'

"The man had the good sense to keep still. Calling for help, he told the person who replied to his call to make haste and set a kettle half full of lukewarm milk in the middle of the room. His wish was obeyed. The vipers smelling the milk, withdrew from the bed and crept into the milk-kettle. Then the man breathed freely, sprang from his bed, and, after killing the reptiles, thanked God for his deliverance, and gave up the business of catching vipers forever.

"Now, Mr. Corporal, you have a Try Company which is bound by its rules to extract truth from everything. Now, there are several grand truths suggested by this story, and I want to see if your company really do try to think. If they do, let them answer you these questions: 1. Is there any resemblance between the conduct of the viper-hunter and their own actions? 2. What may the vipers represent? 3. What lesson may the hunter sleeping while the vipers crawled into his bed teach? 4. What does his fright on awaking represent? 5. What may his device for escaping from the vipers teach us? 6. What should we learn from his acts of killing the vipers and quitting the business of catching them? Now, Mr. Corporal, if your Try Company is not a humbug let its members answer my questions. Yours, PETER PUZZLEHEAD."

Pretty good! Corporal, your army must answer Peter's questions or I shall dissolve my connection with you and your company. I can't sustain a corporal whose troops are allowed to flinch before such wooden guns as those fired at your boys and girls by this upstart, Peter Puzzlehead.

"Don't be alarmed, Mr. Editor. My army will give wise answers to all his questions. If not, then I'll cut the stripes from my sleeve, break my sword, give up soldiering, and remain nothing but a digger after heavenly gold in the mines of Bible truth. Attention! Try Com-

panies, do you hear what I say? Send me answers to Peter's questions."

I'm glad you have faith in your boys and girls, Corporal. You will never run away in the battle-hour and leave your troops to fight or fly as they can. You will face the music I see. I love you for that. Dip into the budget again.

"Here is a letter asking you to publish some verses about an 'old man good and brave,' who lost his life at Elmira, U. S., while in the act of rescuing others from a burning church. The church was crowded with people attending a fair of the Sanitary Commission. A jet of gas fired the decorations, and the building was soon in flames. This brave old man, though out of danger himself, could not listen to the cry of suffering women and children without an effort to save them. Rushing through the fire, he carried several persons to a place of safety. At last, scorched beyond endurance, he could do no more, but exclaiming, 'I am ready now to go,' he ascended from the scene of his heroic death to the home of all true heroes in heaven. Will you print the verses, sir?"

No, my Corporal, I have not space for them. Such a man needs no verses to celebrate his conduct. Your simple statement of his deeds is enough. He ranks with the martyred dead whose noble examples live to instruct the children of all coming generations. Tell me the old man's name.

"M. M. CONVERSE."

May the mantle of his heroism fall on all my readers and inspire them with a lofty purpose to live and, if need be, to die for others! What next, my Corporal?

"Here is a letter in rhyme from E. B. M. It tells how two little girls went out in a field to see their father plow. They sat down upon an old log which had long lain on a shady knoll, to rest from their play. Soon two cousins came up, and in their playfulness pushed aside a slender strip of wood which had kept the log in its place. The brace being removed, the log rolled down the knoll and over the little girls, killing one of them in a moment and badly bruising the other. The writer closes the verses in these words, which you can put into rhyme if you try: 'Remember life's uncertain length, give God your hearts to-day; for death may take you any hour from sleep, or work, or play.'"

A sad story with a good lesson, my Corporal. My children should also learn from it a lesson of thoughtfulness. If those cousins had *thought* they would not have pushed the strip of wood from before the log. When children are about to do a thing they should ask, What will follow if we do this? Read on, my Corporal.

"S. A. P., of —, writes:

"Our baby is as mischievous as he can be, but for all that he is as dear to me as he can be. We live in a very nice place right by the river-bank. It is so pleasant to go out and sit on the porch evenings and look at the river."

I'm glad Sarah has such a nice home, but she may have a nicer one in heaven by and by if she will love Jesus. The Corporal sends that kicking, crying baby a kiss.

"Here is a note from NELLY filled with good advice. Nelly may write again if she pleases:

"DEAR CHILDREN OF THE ADVOCATE FAMILY,—Will you not welcome Cousin Nelly if your wise and good editor will give you permission? I love little children dearly, and I love Jesus too. Dear children, will you not love Jesus? Love him, serve him, and obey him, and you will be happy—happy in this world and in the world to come. I hope if I ever get to heaven I shall meet all the children of the Advocate family there. How it would pain me to miss one dear face. Children live for Jesus; all earthly things will pass away, but his love and mercy 'endureth forever.'"

"Here is the answer to the Scripture comparisons in our last:

"The following emblems are used to illustrate the WORD OF GOD in some of its many characteristics: Dew, Dent. xxxii, 2. Rain, Isa. xlv, 10, 11. Hammer, Jer. xxiii, 2, 9. Lamp, Psa. cxix, 105. Gold, Psa. xix, 9, 10; cxix, 72, 127. Sacred Songs, Psa. cxix, 54. Sword of the Spirit, Eph. vi, 17. Fire, Jer. xxiii, 29. Seed, Luke viii, 11. Honey, Psa. xix, 9, 10; cxix, 103. Milk, 1 Pet. ii, 2. Light, Psa. cxix, 105; Prov. vi, 23.

The paper is nearly full, Corporal, and you must read and then consign the most of that heap of letters to the waste-basket. I'm sorry it must be so, but the children will be satisfied to know that you read their letters.

"All right," says the Corporal, "and now the cold weather is coming, I hope our Canadian boys and girls will make up their minds to spend the long winter evenings in useful reading. Most of them will grow an inch taller in body before next spring, and they may grow much wiser in mind and better in heart if they will make good use of their evenings."