

Our Young Folks.

THE LITTLE WORKERS.

Little builders all are we ;
Builders for eternity ;
Children of the Mission Bands ;
Working with our hearts and hands,
Building temples for our King
By the offerings we bring.
Living temples He doth raise
Filled with life, and light and praise.

One by one the stones we lay,
Building slowly every day ;
Building by our love, are we,
In the lands beyond the sea,
Building by each thought and prayer
For the souls that suffer there ;
Building in the Hindu land,
Where the idols are as sand

Building in vast China, too ;
Living temples rise to view ;
Building in Japan as well,
Oh, what stories we could tell !
Building on dark Africa's shore,
That there may be slaves no more.
Building in the Turk's doomed land
For Armenia's scattered band.

On Mount Lebanon's fair heights
By our many-gathered mites,
Where the Nile's sweet waters pour,
Building all the wide world o'er ;
And one day our eyes shall see,
In a glad eternity,
"Living stones," we helped to bring
For the palace of our King.

BERTHA'S CHRISTMAS.

"O, how I wish that I might be able to have a merry Christmas like some children have," thought Bertha Williams as she looked into the window of a toy shop. Bertha's father was dead, and her mother was poor, and she was a cash girl in a great dry goods store, where she had to be on her feet almost all day. She often got very tired, but she was a good girl, and was cheerful most of the time. But as she saw the people buying toys and hurrying in and out of the stores, she began to feel discontented, and wished that her life was easier. She did not loiter long at the window, but bent her way homeward. "What kept you so long, Bertha?" asked her mother, as she was taking off her wraps. "I was just looking in at the shop windows," replied Bertha. "I am afraid we won't have much of a Christmas this year," said her mother. Bertha said nothing, but washed the supper dishes and went to bed. The following day was the day before Christmas, but there were no preparations going on in the Williams family as there are in most families, for they were too poor. About five o'clock there was a knock at the door, and a grocery man came in and laid down several packages containing eatables of all kinds. After awhile another man came and deposited a bundle containing toys, clothing and confections. "I can't think who sent them," exclaimed Mrs. Williams. Just then one of Bertha's little brothers espied a card pinned to a shawl. "O, it's from Mr. Ligget, manager of the house that I work in," said Bertha reading the card. "I don't see how he happened to think of us." Mr. Ligget had noticed how cheerfully Bertha had performed her duties and how neat her shabby dress was. After inquiring into the case he found her family very poor but worthy. And thus was Bertha's industry and merit rewarded by a Merry Christmas.

GETTING ON IN THE WORLD.

To begin with, I regard punctuality as of prime importance. O how I do appreciate a boy who is always on time ! How quickly you learn to depend on him, and how soon you find yourself entrusting him with weightier matters ! The boy who has acquired a reputation for punctuality, has made the first contribution to the capital that in after years makes his success a certainty.

The next thing that interests me most is a boy's habit of doing his work in a way that betokens an intelligent appreciation of the situation. Nothing disgusts me more than to see work done in such a fashion that no sane man can understand how it came to be done in that way. Undoubtedly errors will occur, and instructions be misunderstood. But even then there is an intelligent way of blundering. It is easy in these cases to see how the error occurred ; but a mistake that is unaccountable on any common-sense basis whatever, is very discouraging, and destroys confidence. Carefulness is the only way to avoid complications of this kind, and every boy should bear in mind that "Want of care does more harm than want of knowledge."

The next thing that has a great deal to do with the mar-
ring or making of a boy's career is deportment—and with
deportment I would also include dress. A boy is, to a great
extent, a man on trial, and first impressions are lasting. If he
goes to the store in an untidy condition, he simply handicaps
himself so much. If he chews, smokes cigarettes and reads
trashy papers, he must be an extraordinarily smart boy who
can counteract the depressing influence of these unbusiness-
like attributes. Misfortunes never come singly, and a boy of
this stamp is also profane and slangy. If, on the other hand,
he always appears neat, if his clothes and shoes are always
well brushed, and his collar clean, it is not only a sign that

he respects his employer, but, what is even more important,
he respects himself. Such a boy is usually polite and court-
eous in his intercourse with those about him, and you can
judge for yourself the effect of this on business men. It can-
not be over-estimated.

A habit that is well to form at this juncture is that of sav-
ing. It isn't likely that the amount a boy can save at first
will be very great ; but the principle of saving once inculcated
will last forever.

In conclusion, let me say a word about that most over-
rated of all bugaboos—influence. Don't you worry about that
influence. In every department of human life there is an
urgent demand for boys of ability ; for boys who grasp the
situation for themselves, and become at once part of the
motive power that drives the business. It isn't policy for a
firm to keep down a boy of that sort ; it isn't good business
and they don't do it ! All this talk about influence is sheer
nonsense. What a business man wants is the best possible
service he can get ; all other considerations are secondary.
If you are troubled just now because some big customer of
the house has a son right above you, don't worry, but work.
Nothing counts like downright good, honest, hard work.
Everything gives way before it. . . . Business is busi-
ness, boys, and there is no sentiment in it. Just go right
ahead where you are. Be honest and industrious and the
rest will come.

SOME GIRLS' WAYS.

It was Saturday morning in a big farmhouse kitchen ; Nell
was bending over the sink picking a chicken, with a decided
scowl on her face ; Hattie was kneading bread with an expres-
sion of grim determination suitable for a soldier scaling his
enemies' breastworks ; and Susan was shelling peas, her pretty
face spoiled by the settled discontent about the mouth. The
girls were not talking—they never talked while they worked
—but they often spoke sharply and unkindly. Work was to
them a separate state of existence, in which the Christian
graces played no part.

"Did I leave my whip in here?" asked a hesitating voice
at the open door, and a boy in a big straw hat appeared
behind the voice.

"No," snapped Nell, "but's a wonder you didn't, for
you are always leaving something around for us to tread on."

"It has fallen under your chair, Susan," he said, coming
in to pick it up.

"Ned, you are always bothering somebody," fretted
Susan, while she arose with ungraciousness in every move-
ment.

"Father called me to come quick and catch the chicken,
and I stood it in the corner," replied Ned, roughly, and
gladly made his escape.

That same morning, in a neighbouring farm-house kitchen,
Lucy was kneading the bread as deftly as Hattie, but at the
same time planning with Helen and Grace how to earn money
for their mission-boxes ; Grace had a funny story to tell while
she washed the dishes ; and Helen told them of a meadow-
lark she saw while picking the strawberries that she was now
hulling for the strawberry short-cake for dessert.

Sam came in with an armful of wood, threw it noisily on
the wood-box, twitched Grace's curls, made believe to dive
his hands into Lucy's pan of flour, snatched the largest straw-
berry from Helen's dish, and pranced out whistling a Sunday
school hymn.

The girls smoothed out the little smile that Sam's antics
always brought to their faces, and began to sing his hymn,
being echoed by Fanny, who was sweeping the front stairs.

Which family do you belong to, girls ?

A CORAL ISLAND.

People used to think the coral islands were built from the
bottom of the sea, but the tiny architects which construct
them—the polyps—cannot live at any great depth in the water,
therefore they support their workmanship upon some rock
beneath. Neither can these little builders live out of the
water, but they gradually bring the framework of the island
to the surface of the water, and the work of completion is
brought about in another way, which Captain Chemin, of the
royal navy, describes as follows :—

"First, the foundation is built up until it makes a break
or ripple on the surface. Something is then drifted and
entangled on it—maybe a log of wood, a dead tree, a mass
of weed. Then birds bring their food of fishes and leave the
bones there. Sand, gravel and broken shells accumulate
around it, and it begins to appear above water. Seeds drift-
ing on the ocean are next arrested in their progress. Dead
wood, decayed leaves and fish-bones form a sod. The seed
—generally the mangrove—germinates, and rapidly, too, with
the heat and rain of the tropics. This becomes a bush, then
a tree. Its roots grasp the surrounding soil, and it becomes
the nucleus of a mangrove island, waiting for some passing
discoverer to name it. I have watched with real interest the
progress of these islets from year to year—first the ripple,
then the collection of leaves, sand and shells, then the first
shoot of the mangrove, then the sea shells, the hermit-crab
and the surface ocean-shell, all soon to become a coral
island."

JULES VERNE,

whose stories of adventure are dear to the hearts of boys the
world over, has now written the True Story of his Own Boy-
hood for *The Youth's Companion*. In it he tells how he
became an author.

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

Jan. 11,
1891

IDOLATRY IN ISRAEL.

1 Kings 12
25-31

GOLDEN TEXT.—Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven
image.—Ex. xx. 3

INTRODUCTION.

The kingdom of Israel was divided in the beginning of Jeho-
shaphat's reign, because he declined to lighten the burdens of the peo-
ple. The two tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained under the
rule of Rehoboam, constituting the kingdom of Judah, and the other
ten tribes, having selected Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, as their king
formed the kingdom of Israel.

I. The New King of Israel.—The division of the kingdom of
Israel gave to Jeroboam the largest and most fertile part of Pal-
estine, and the largest populations. At the outset of his reign his
prospects were bright : He was the people's choice, a man of great
ability and experience, and he had God's promise for the stability of his
throne and the prosperity of his kingdom on condition that he would
obey the divine commands and walk uprightly. The first thing he
did was to secure the kingdom against invasion especially on the
frontier that divided it from the kingdom of Judah. He made She-
chem the capital of the new kingdom. He ornamented and fortified
the city. The position of the city was favourable for his purpose, it
was central, pleasantly situated in the valley between Mounts Ebal
and Gerizim, about thirty-four miles north of Jerusalem and seven
miles south-east of Samaria. He also built Penuel, the place made
memorable by the impressive incident in the life of the patriarch
Jacob, when he wrestled with the angel till the breaking of the day.
This place Jeroboam fortified, as it was upon the principal line of
travel between the north-east and south-west. By this means he
sought to protect his frontier against hostile incursions. The first
effort he made to establish his kingdom was to provide for its defence
in case of attack. Within the kingdom itself, however, he feared
there was a danger possibly as great as might be feared from enemies
without. He feared that the religious observances of the people
might weaken their attachment to his throne, and so he set about to
counteract this tendency by establishing a form of idolatrous worship
within his own kingdom. Being a shrewd man, Jeroboam saw that
the unity and permanence of his kingdom would be endangered if
Jerusalem were still to remain the religious centre for the whole of
Palestine. Like other monarchs, even in later times, the reasons that
influenced himself were different from those he gave out to the peo-
ple in favour of the change he was about to make in their religious
observances. He placed his policy before his religion, himself before
God. It was the kingdom he wanted, not a sphere in which he
could best serve God and promote the true welfare of his people.
He thought that if the people continued to go up three times a year
to Jerusalem they might desire a union of the divided kingdom, and
might possibly put him to death, if it were necessary for them in
order to gain their end.

II. Jeroboam Establishes Idolatrous Worship in Israel.—
The king consulted with his counsellors and they agreed upon the
plan to be pursued. It was a case in which worldly wisdom and
God's law came into conflict, and the former was allowed to prevail.
The same course of action is still followed and by many others beside
kings. It was agreed to make two calves of gold. It is likely that
they were designed after the pattern in the temple at Jerusalem.
Their construction as symbols of religious worship is clearly forbidden
in the second commandment. The principal part in Jeroboam's new
religious scheme was a wrong beginning and could by no possibility
lead to good results. It is said that they were to be made of gold,
the meaning is doubtless that the figures were overlaid with thin plates
of gold. Almost in the same language used by Aaron when he made
the golden calf in the wilderness, Jeroboam said to the people : "Be-
hold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of
Egypt." They were intended as symbols of Jehovah, but in the
introduction of means and methods forbidden in the law of God, the
symbolic character is speedily forgotten and full-fledged idol wor-
ship follows. He told the people that it was too much for them to
go up to Jerusalem three times a year and he led them to think that
in these new arrangements he had consulted their convenience.
Instead of having one religious centre for the people of the new king-
dom, Jeroboam appointed two. One of the images as set up in
Bethel for the convenience of the people in the southern part of the
kingdom. Bethel, which means the house of God, has a prominent
place in the religious history of the Jewish people. When Abraham,
journeying from his own land, reached Bethel, he built there an altar
to God ; there Jacob saw his angelic vision ; and at Bethel Samuel
judged the people. The other golden calf was set up at Dan, in the
northern extremity of the kingdom. The place, near the source of
the Jordan, had in early times been the scene of idolatrous worship,
and here under the guise of the symbolic worship of Jehovah an idol
was again placed. "And this thing became a sin." In itself it was
sinful. It was a direct violation of the divine command. It was an
attempt on man's part to worship God in a way expressly forbidden in
His Word. It leads to other evils. By it the people were corrupted.
They soon lost the spirit of true worship, and they became idolaters.
The practices that followed were in themselves sinful and degrading.
Jeroboam's action in this matter became a significant warning against
the sin of idolatry, by which "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, made
Israel to sin." The whole arrangements of Jeroboam's plan were
idolatrous. "He made a house of high places." In some things he
copied the forms of worship in Jerusalem, but the chief features were
more in harmony with heathen practices. A house on high places
was a principal thing in idolatrous worship. According to the Mosaic
law only the tribe of Levi were selected for the priestly office. The
members of that tribe evidently refused to accept Jeroboam's system
of worship, and it is said that he cast them out. He selected others
to perform the duties of the new priesthood. The great religious
feast of the Jewish year was the Feast of Tabernacles, the annual
thanksgiving for blessings received, the principal being God's bounty
in the fruits of the earth. To keep his people at home Jeroboam
instituted a feast in the eighth month, corresponding to November.
This was more suitable to the convenience of the people in the north,
as the ingathering was nearly a month later than in Southern Pales-
tine. To inaugurate the new forms of worship Jeroboam took part
in the services himself. He went to Bethel and offered sacrifices to
the images he had made, and burned incense before them. He also
installed the priests in their offices. Thus he sought to invest his
new mode of worship with the highest sanction in his power. In all
this, however, he had never asked for God's direction and guidance.
It was opposed to God's revealed will, for we are here told that it
was a scheme "which he had devised of his own heart."

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

The condition of success is obedience to the Will and Word of
God.

However shrewd and apparently wise policy without principle
may seem, in the end it appears in its true colours as folly.

To seek to gain our ends in opposition to God's revealed Will is
sure to end in disaster

To make religion a means to gain a selfish and worldly end is the
basest hypocrisy.