

## Our Young Folks.

### ONLY A SONG.

It was only a song that the maiden sang,  
With a thoughtless tone, yet the echo rang  
In the heart of the lad. Like a pure white hand,  
It guided him over sea and land.

Only an old, old fashioned hymn,  
Sung in the twilight, gray and dim,  
By mother's side or on father's knee;  
Yet time cannot blot it from memory.

Only a song from the lips of one  
Whose mission is past, whose brief life is done—  
A simple song; and yet, after all,  
I never can sing it but tears will fall.

Only a song from a feeble pen,  
And a faltering hand and heart—but then,  
Who knows? Perhaps some life once sad  
In sin, was made to rejoice and be glad.

Brief as a song is this life of ours,  
Fleeting as sunshine, and frail as the flowers;  
Then sing, my heart! oh, sing and be strong!  
Thou shalt one day join in the "New, New Song."

### THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BOYS IN TEMPERANCE WORK.

Miss Elizabeth Cleveland, the sister of the United States President, writes: Boys have a responsibility in temperance work which girls do not and cannot have—a responsibility which is theirs, and theirs only because they are boys.

John, in one of his epistles, says, "I write unto you, young men, because ye are strong." Because ye are strong! Strength is, always has been, always will be, the peculiar, ideal virtue of manhood.

I say peculiar virtue, because men are set apart as it were, to be strong. Women are not so characterized. I say ideal virtue, because while it may exist and ought to exist in every boy and every man, I know it does not exist in every man; that is not the actual attainment, the real possession, but an ideal one, realized in its perfection only in those few foremost men who are the patterns for all others.

Now, just what did John, and just what do we mean by making your strength your responsibility, and the reason for writing to you especially? What kind of strength is your peculiar and ideal virtue?

Is it physical strength? If so, then the Cornell or Harvard student who can run the longest and farthest, though he fail in all his examinations and stands at the foot in his classes, is stronger than the man who takes the valedictory, and not so strong as the wild Indian who can row farther and run faster, and fast longer. You know men and boys, as I do, who have cordy muscles and can lift enormous weights; great big fellows it does one good to see, yet who are not strong enough to be laughed at; who in the company of liquor-men are not strong enough to utter one word in defence of temperance. Fancy John writing to such men because they are strong! No, the strength he meant and we mean is not only physical strength.

Is it intellectual strength? You and I know men who are "smart"—smart enough to raise a great, coarse laugh at the man or woman who attacks their terrible traffic. Lord Bacon had, perhaps, the finest intellect ever let into the world, yet he was not saved by his supreme intellectual strength from taking bribes in his law cases, and is immortalized in the lines of a great poet as "the greatest and meanest of mankind." All over the country we can find men, not quite so great intellectually, but quite as mean, who win case after case for liquor men for the bribes that are paid them. Fancy John writing to such men "because they are strong!"

Very clearly the strength which he attributes to young men as their special, ideal virtue is not one of muscle or of brains. We all know what it is. It is moral strength. It is that pluck and principle which will defy the threats of the bullies and the wit of the smarties in defence of the right. It is because you, boys, can be thus strong, and ought to be thus strong, that so many eyes, some of them dim with age, some dim with tears, are turned to you and are watching your young manhood as the hope of the nation and the world against this awful enemy, alcohol. It is because its overthrow demands and must have your manly strength that your responsibility is great, and something for which God will surely call you to account.

### A BOY NEEDS A TRADE.

What about the boy who does not take up with a trade or profession? Look around you, and the question is speedily answered. He must cast his hook into any sort of pond, and take such fish out as may easily be caught. He is a sort of tramp. He may work in the brick-yard to-day, and in the harvest-field to-morrow. He does the drudgery, and gets the pay of the drudge. His wages are so small that he finds it impossible to lay up a dollar, and a fortnight of idleness will see him dead-broke.

The other night I saw a man dragging himself wearily along, carrying a pick on his shoulder. "Tired, John?" "More so than any horse in Detroit." "What do you work at?" "I'm a digger. Sometimes I work for gas companies, but oftener for plumbers." "Good wages?" "So good that my family never has enough to eat, let alone buying decent clothes. If it wasn't for the wife and children, I'd wish for that street car to run over me." "Why didn't you learn a trade?" "Because nobody had interest enough to argue and reason with me. I might have had a good trade and earned good wages, but here I am, working harder for \$8 or \$9 a week than many a man does to earn \$18."

And now, my boy, if men tell you that the trades are crowded, and that so many carpenters, and blacksmiths, and painters, and shoemakers, and other trades, keep wages down, pay no attention to such talk. Compare the wages of common and skilled workmen. Take the trade which you seem fitted for. Begin with the determination to learn it thoroughly, and to become the best workman in the shop. Don't be satisfied to skin along from one week to another without being discharged but make your services so valuable by being such a thorough workman that your employer cannot afford to let you go.

### HONEST DOGS.

It is related by Prof. Bell that when a friend of his was travelling abroad, he one morning took out his purse to see if it contained sufficient change for a day's jaunt he proposed making. He departed from his lodgings leaving a trusted dog behind. When he dined, he took out his purse to pay, and found that he had lost a gold coin from it. On returning home in the evening, his servant informed him that the dog seemed to be very ill, as they could not induce it to eat anything. He went at once to look at his favourite; and as soon as he entered the room, the faithful creature ran to him, deposited the missing gold coin at his feet, and then devoured the food placed for him with great eagerness. The truth was that the gentleman had dropped the coin in the morning. The dog had picked it up, and kept it in its mouth,

fearing even to eat, lest it should lose its master's property before an opportunity offered to restore it.

Anecdotes of this character are innumerable, as are also those of dogs reclaiming property belonging, or which has belonged, to their owners. Sir Patrick Walker furnishes a most valuable instance of this propensity in our canine cousins. A farmer, having sold a flock of sheep to a dealer, lent him his dog to drive them home, a distance of thirty miles, desiring him to give the dog a meal at the journey's end, and tell it to go home. The drover found the dog so useful that he resolved to steal it, and, instead of sending it back, locked it up. The collie grew sulky, and at last effected its escape. Evidently deeming the drover had no more right to detain the sheep than he had to detain itself, the honest creature went into the field collected all the sheep that had belonged to his master, and, to that person's intense astonishment drove the whole flock home again!

Dogs are not only honest in themselves, but will not permit others to be dishonest. The late Grantley Berkeley was wont to tell of his two deerhounds, "Smoker" and Smoker's son, "Shark," a curiously suggestive instance of parental discipline. The two dogs were left alone in a room where luncheon was laid out. Smoker's integrity was invincible, but his son had not yet learned to resist temptation. Through the window, Mr. Berkeley noticed Shark, anxiously watched by his father, steal a cold tongue, and drag it to the door. "No sooner had he done so," says his master, "than the offended sire rushed upon him, rolled over him, beat him, and took away the tongue," after which Smoker retired gravely to the fireside.

### MAGGIE'S SIXPENCE.

A missionary told us the other day a very affecting little incident. He had been preaching a mission sermon in Scotland, and telling of the condition of the poor women of India, and he observed that many of the audience seemed quite affected by his account. A few days afterwards, the pastor of the church where he had preached, met on the street one of his parishioners, a poor old woman, half blind, who earned a precarious livelihood by going on errands, or any other little work of that kind that came in her way. She went up to him, and with a bright smile put a sixpence into his hand, telling him that it was to go for the mission work in India. Her minister, knowing how very poor she was, said: "No, no, Maggie; this is too much for you to give; you cannot afford this." She told him that she had just been on an errand for a very kind gentleman, and instead of the few coppers she generally received, he had given her three pennies and a silver sixpence; and said she: "The silver and the gold is the Lord's, and the copper will do for poor Maggie." How many lessons do God's poor teach us! "Poor in this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom!"

### GENERAL GORDON'S PRAYER-BOOK.

It is related of the late General Gordon that at a dinner in a London club, one of the members jokingly accused him of secreting a bottle of wine in his pocket. Others observing that his pocket bulged out, made bets that they could guess the brand, and challenged him to produce the bottle. In indignation he drew from his pocket a Prayer-book and said: "This little book has been my companion for years, and I sincerely trust that you may find a comforter and supporter in the trials of life that will prove as true to you as this has been to me." Then he withdrew from the company, and the next day received many apologies.