

## OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

### JACK'S LESSON.

IT is a true story. Jack H. told it to me of his own boyhood. He was born and reared in the North of Ireland. The winters there are not usually severe, he says, but occasionally they have very deep snows.

Father came through the shed where I was fixing straps to my new shoes one day, and said, "Jack, do you get the sheep together before night into the lower fold. It looks as if this storm would last all night; and if it should, it may be easier done to-day than to-morrow.

I looked up through the open door at the snow which was falling gently and steadily. It did not seem to me likely to be much of a storm. But I had been taught unquestioning obedience, and only replied, "Yes, sir I will," and went on with my work. Before it was finished Tom Haggins came, and he had a new plan for making a rabbit trap, and we spent half the afternoon trying to carry it into execution, and the short winter day passed and the sheep were not folded. In short, it quite slipped from my memory, only to be recalled by my father's question as he drew the Bible toward him for evening worship—

"Jack, have you folded those sheep?"

The blood leaped to my forehead as I was forced to reply—"No, sir; I got to playing with Tom and forgot it."

The silence that followed my reply was dreadful to me. If my father had upbraided me with violent anger, I think I could have borne it better.

"I am very sorry, sir!" I stammered out at last.

"I fear you will have reason to be," said my father. "If those sheep are lost to night, remember there will be no more play for you till they are found. People who will not take trouble, will be overtaken by trouble."

Nothing more was said. The reading and the psalm and the prayer over, I slipped quietly away to my bed, taking a peep, as I went, through the shed door, to see how the storm was progressing; I saw it had increased, and the wind was rising.

Nothing had power to keep me long awake in those days, however, so I slept soundly. In the morning the storm was still raging. The snow lay deep on the ground and the wind was drifting it into the hollows, and packing it away into solid masses. Father came in from taking a survey of the weather, bringing a rod full fifteen feet long.

"The snow is deep," said he. "I am troubled about those sheep. They always seek shelter in the hollows and along the hedges just where the drifts will be deepest. How we shall find them, I do not know. I hope you are ready for a week's hard work, my son Jack."

"Yes, sir; I am very sorry, and will do my best," I replied.

"Your best would have gone much farther yesterday than it will to-day. But we won't spend our strength groaning over a bad job. After breakfast we will go out and see what we can do."

"In this storm father?" said my mother, deprecatingly. "It is the worst storm of the

year. The snow blows so you can scarce find your way."

"There are two hundred of those sheep," said my father. "I can't afford to lose them."

Breakfast over, we bound on our snowshoes, and with the long pole and a snow shovel went out to seek for the lost sheep. It cleared a little before noon, though the wind still sent the snow whirling about our faces, so it was not easy or agreeable working. Father found one here and another there, and I was set to dig them out. Fifteen sheep were found and brought home that day.

The next the neighbours came and helped, for the weather had moderated, and there was always danger that a sudden thaw would follow such deep snows, and the sheep be drowned before they could be rescued. One by one, or in twos and threes, the poor creatures were found and taken from the snow. But at the end of a week of hard work there were still seventy-five missing.

"How long will any live under the snow father?" I asked, when a second week of work had only reduced the number of missing to forty.

I heard of their living three weeks. We will keep on as long as we can find any alive," said my father.

At the end of three weeks all but twenty-four were rescued. Still we searched, and now and then found a poor creature famished and emaciated, but alive, which we carried to the farm house, consigned to my mother and the girls, who chafed and fed and tended, till it was won back to a degree of strength, while we spared no time from the search.

"It's no use to hunt longer. The rest are all dead," said father one night when we were coming home dispirited and weary, having found five of the poor things lying together drowned in one of the hollows. "You look thin and pale, Jack. You have worked well. I think I must release you now."

But I would not be released. The word had been, "No play till every sheep is found," and, alive or dead, they should all be found. I toiled alone next day, but I found three, and one was alive. The thaw carried away the snow so fast that I had less and less area to search over now. But it was poor encouragement to work, for all I found were dead. A dozen times I was tempted to yield to my mother's persuasions not to throw away any more labour. But my father said not a word, and I kept on.

"The sheep are all found now, father; I took off the pelt of the last of the dead to-day," I said one evening when he came in late from work.

"Well, Jack, this lesson has cost me almost a score of sheep, and both of us a good deal of hard work; but, if it teaches you to be faithful to all your duties in the future, I shall not be sorry."

"Thank you, father!" said I. And I vowed inwardly that it should, and I believe that it did.

### AUNT ABBIE'S MICROSCOPE.

"COME, Emma and Willie, here is something worth seeing. Come quickly, or it may be gone!" said Aunt Abbie.

They both ran to her, and first Willie and then Emma looked into the little microscope. As Willie stepped back to give

Emma a chance to look, his aunt shook her head and put her fingers over her lips, which made him stand still and hold his breath, while his eyes stared as if he had seen some frightful object.

For a moment Emma looked into the glass, and then, stamping her foot, she cried out; "Oh, what is this? I don't believe you saw it, Willie. Why, it is an elephant, just as true as you live? It has a trunk which it throws up to the tops of the trees and pulls them down and eats them. Just come and see him, Willie."

Willie looked into the glass again, and saw the little animal walking along from one clump of trees to another.

"Why, auntie, do tell us what this creature is?" said Willie.

"It is called a water bear. You see that though it looks large, it must be small, for it has room enough to walk in what appears to be a large meadow, or swamp, where trees and bushes grow; and besides, you see ponds of water, with eels and snakes in them. All this is contained in a small drop of water, so the water bear must be a very tiny affair indeed," said Aunt Abbie.

"Are these creatures truly alive, auntie?" asked Emma, "or are they make-believes?"

"They are really alive, just as you see them in the microscope, only they are so very small that we cannot see them without a glass made on purpose. Even grandpa, with his gold spectacles, cannot see them. This wonderful glass we call a microscope."

Willie and Emma saw many very interesting things in their vacation, for nearly every day their aunt would place a drop of water, or a flower, under the microscope that they might see what beautiful things God has made which are so small that we cannot see them with our eyes.

One day Willie saw a number of eels squirming around, and a snake came out from the side of the glass and chased them out of sight. Another little round creature threw out a ball, or balloon. This was a net to catch eels for his supper. If it saw a big snake coming, it would draw its net in so quickly that you could hardly see when it went away, and when the snake was out of sight, it would throw it out again.

Emma and Willie were sorry when vacation was over, and they had to go home again and study dry books at school. They much preferred studying the water and flowers in the microscope, than in books. But their aunt told them that both books and microscope were very desirable and interesting, and promised to show them many other things when they visited her again.

### STUDY THE BIBLE.

JOHN v: 39. Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

John viii: 32. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Ps. cxix: 129. Thy testimonies are wonderful; therefore doth my soul keep them.

Ps. i: 2, 3. His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

Ps. cxix: 140. Thy word is very pure; therefore thy servant loveth it.