

Sir Eldric.

BY A. MARY F. ROBINSON.

SIR ELDRIC rode by field and fen
To reach the haunts of heathen men.

About the dusk he came onto
A wood of birchen gray,
And on the other side he knew
The heathen country lay.

"'Tis but a night," he sang, "to ride,
And Christ shall reach the other side."

The moon came peering through the trees
And found him undismayed;
For still he sang his litanies
And as he rode he prayed.

He looked as young and pure and glad
As ever looked Sir Galahad.

About the middle of the night
He came upon the brink
Of running waters clear and white,
And lighted there to drink.

And as he knelt a hidden foe
Crept from behind and smote him so.

Then, as he felt his heart's blood run,
He sought his enemy:
"And shall I leave my deeds undone
And die for such as thee?"

And since a knight was either man,
They wrestled till the dawn began.

Then in the dim and rustling place,
Amid the thyme and dew,
Sir Eldric dealt the stroke of grace,
And sank a-dying too.

And thought upon that other's plight
Who was not sure of Heaven to-night.

He dipped his fingers in his breast;
He sought in vain to rise;
He leaned across his foe at rest,
And murmured: "I baptize!"

When lo! the sun broke overhead:
There, at his side, Himself lay dead.

James Ferguson.

JAMES FERGUSON, the famous astronomer, had a hard struggle to get along in life, having no worldly advantage save that he was the son of honest and religious parents.

He was born in the village of Keith, Scotland, in the year 1710, and his father was a common farm labourer. There was a large number of children, and, as the father could not afford to send them to school, he taught them himself after they had arrived at a proper age.

James was such a bright lad that he paid particular attention to the lessons given his brothers, and "picked up" a great deal of knowledge from hearing the elder children taught. He wanted to learn more, but he had not arrived at the age when his father usually commenced his duties of pedagogue, and he knew it was not right to over-burden him with inquiries, so he kept his ears open and his mouth shut, learned what he could at home, and, after a while—with the help of an old woman who lived near by—he had mastered the art of reading.

You may imagine how surprised and gratified his father felt when one day he saw James sitting in a corner poring over a big book which no one imagined he was able to read. His father at once gave him further assistance in his studies. Soon he was able to write a fair hand, when he was sent to the grammar school of the village, which he attended for a few months.

Like Newton, Ferguson, when a mere child, became very much interested in mechanics. When he was seven years of age, he saw his father lift up the corner of the roof of their cottage, which

needed repairs. To do this, his father used a prop and a lever. Ferguson studied this mechanical contrivance for a long while, and made many experiments, until he found the scientific reason why one man could, apparently by his own strength, lift so great a weight.

When Ferguson had made these investigations of his own accord, he thought they were entirely original, and to give the world the benefit of his discoveries he wrote a description of them on paper. This happened to be seen by a gentleman friend of the family. He did not poke fun at the boy's effort, as many men might have done, but told the enterprising boy that the knowledge, though correct, was not new, and gave him a book on the subject of mechanics, which the boy studied with the greatest interest.

Ferguson was not a strong boy, and about all he could do in the way of farm work was to tend sheep. During his spare time he would be found working with the few tools he could scrape together, making spinning-wheels, models of mills, or any other mechanical contrivance that happened to take his fancy. When he was working as sheep-boy for a neighbouring farmer, he took great interest in astronomy. Wrapping himself up in a blanket, he used to sit in the fields at night watching the stars.

"I used," he writes, "to stretch a thread with small beads on it at arm's-length between my eye and the stars, sliding the beads upon it till they hid such and such stars from my eye, in order to take their apparent distances from one another, and then, laying the thread down on the paper, I marked the stars thereon by the beads. My master at first laughed at me, but when I explained my meaning to him he encouraged me to go on, and that I might make fair copies in the daytime of what I had done in the night, he often worked for me himself. I shall always have a respect for the memory of that man."

And so, it may be added, will every thoughtful person who reads the above paragraph.

The clergyman of the parish happened to see one of his "star papers," praised the work highly, and loaned him—at Ferguson's earnest request—a map of the world, which the self-taught student wanted to copy. Ferguson again pays tribute to his kind master, saying, "He often took the threshing flail out of my hands and worked himself, while I sat by him in the barn, busy with my compasses, ruler, and pen."

The schoolmaster with whom he had studied, accidentally saw some of his maps, and asked him how he would like to learn to make sundials. Ferguson said he would like it very much. He was introduced to a man who could do such work—the butler of a neighbouring squire. Then the squire happened to see him, and, hearing what he had done in the way of drawing, proposed that he should come and live with him, so that he could be near the butler. He accepted the invitation, to take effect after he had finished his engagement with his kind master—refusing the offer of the squire to provide him with a substitute, so that he could begin study at once.

He learned a great deal of the butler. Then he was obliged, by stress of circumstances, to work for a miller, who proved to be a toper, and a hard task-master. Then he worked a year for a physician, who was as bad a boss as the miller.

Meanwhile he had made a wooden clock, and got some money by cleaning clocks. He earned considerable by drawing patterns for ladies' dresses. Finally he went to London, where he became a teacher and lecturer on mechanics and astronomy, and received various honours up to the time of his death.—*Our Youth.*

Woman's Rights.

BY S. F. ELDER.

THE right to be sweet and pure,
The right to be tender and true,
The right to labour for good
Whenever work is to do.

With ministry patient and brave,
To soothe the sorrows of life,
Pour oil on the troubled waters
Of passion and hate and strife.

To be a sister and friend,
In the strongest sense of the word,
Wherever a prayer for help
Or sympathy may be heard.

The right to a Christlike mind,
The right to a loving heart,
To ready feet and willing hands,
Eager to do their part.

The right to speak for truth,
The right to cast out wrong,
With a holy zeal and a patient faith,
With spirit brave and strong.

These are the rights of women:
And who dare say her "nay"?
Where the heart is strong to labour,
The Truth will show the way.

A Whole Day to Do Nothing.

"If I only could have a whole day to do nothing—no work and no lessons—only play all day, I should be happy," said little Bessie.

"To-day shall be yours," said her mother. "You may play as much as you please; and I will not give you any work, no matter how much you may want it."

Bessie laughed at the idea of wishing for work, and ran out to play. She was awing on the gate when the children passed to school, and they all envied her for having no lessons. When they were gone, she climbed up into the cherry-tree, and picked a lapful for pies; but, when she carried them in, her mother said: "That is work, Bessie. Don't you remember you cried yesterday because I wished you to pick cherries for the pudding? You may take them away. No work to-day, you know!"

The little girl went away, rather out of humour. She got her doll, and played with it a while, but was soon tired. She tried all her other toys, but they didn't seem to please her any better. She came back and watched her mother, who was shelling peas.

"Mayn't I help you, mother?" she asked.

"No, Bessie—this isn't play."

Bessie went out into the garden again, and leaned over the fence, watching the ducks and geese in the pond. Soon she heard her mother was setting the table for dinner. Bessie longed to help. Then her father came back from his work, and they all sat down to dinner. Bessie was quite cheerful during the meal; but when it was over, and her father away, she said, wearily:

"Mother, you don't know how tired I am of doing nothing! If you would only let me wind your cotton, or put your work-box in order, or even sew at that tiresome patchwork, I would be so glad!"

"I can't, little daughter, because I said I would not give you work to-day. But you may find some for yourself, if you can."

So Bessie hunted up a pile of old stockings, and began to mend them, for she could darn very neatly. Her face grew brighter, and presently she said:

"Mother, why do people get tired of play?"

"Because God did not mean us to be idle. His command is: 'Six days shalt thou labour.' He has given all of us work to do, and has made us so that unless we do just the very work that he gave us, we can't be happy.—*Selected.*