

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

JESUS AT THE WELL.

An eastern sky above
Burning with lurid heat,
Beneath, far down, the waters of the well,
Forever cool and sweet.

And Jesus resting there,
Thirsty beside the brink,
With nought to draw sweet comfort from the tide,
No one to give Him drink.

At length a woman comes,
A sinner vile and weak,
And gazes at the stranger steadfastly,
Surprised to hear him speak.

"A Jew?—yes, he's a Jew,
And yet he speaks to me—
Sir, I'm a woman of Samaria,
Unfit to give to Thee."

Again the Master spake,
His voice was wondrous sweet—
"Ye drink this water but to thirst again,
I living waters keep."

"The thirst which I once quench
Shall never rise again
To burn anew with parching agony,
Or give the drinker pain."

"Master, then give to me,
That I may bide at home,
No need for me then every morn and eve
Unto this well to come."

Only a man He seems,
Speaking to one so low;
Yet all her sins and all her wanderings
E'en to her heart He'll show.

The woman knew Him not,
His glory could not see;
She said—"I know Messiah soon will come"—
Christ answered—"I am He."

Back to her home she hastes,
Glad with His gracious word,
And from her lips exultant breaks the news—
"Lo, this is Christ the Lord!"

And many come and hear
About the living flood
Which from that blessed side so soon must flow—
The water and the blood.

That fount is flowing still,
And still His voice says—"come,
And in the shelter of my wounded side
Ye weary rest at home."

Alfred Mansie.

—MINNIE F.

SHETLAND WOMEN.

NOT far outside the town of Lerwick, on the Shetland Islands, there is a great, black, muddy tract of land called a peat bog. All about is utter desolation. There are no huts even to be seen. The town is concealed by a rounded hill; and when, through some opening between the bare upheavals, one catches a sight of the North Sea, it too, seems deserted by mankind.

The peat or mixture of roots and peculiar black soil, is dug here in large quantities; and all about the place are great piles of it, dried and ready to be burned in the fire-places of the Lerwick people. Peat takes the place of wood; and in every poor man's hut in Shetland will be found burning brightly, and giving out a thin blue smoke.

To prepare peat for market a great deal of labour is performed. First come the diggers—men, women, and children. Entering upon the deep, miry bog, they cut the soil up into cakes about a foot long and a few inches thick; and these they place in high piles to dry. After a few weeks they come again, and carry the cured fuel away to the town.

It is while carrying these loads that the Shetlanders present a peculiar spectacle. The men are often very old, infirm and poorly clothed; and the women are dressed in short-

skirted, home-spun gowns, below which may be seen very red and very broad feet. On their heads they usually have white caps, nicely ironed, with a fluted ruffle around the edge. Passing across the breast and over either shoulder are two strong straps, and these support an immense basket hanging against the back.

Thus equipped, the brave, stout women, their baskets piled with peat, tramp off to Lerwick, two miles away, to sell their loads for a few pennies each. They make many trips a day, always smiling, chatting, and apparently contented. Often a long line may be seen carefully stepping along over the rough roads, stopping now and then to rest.

The homes of these poor peat women are, many of them, simply hovels. When they wish to build a home, they go out into some field, usually far away from other huts, and there they dig a trench about a square piece of ground. Upon this they build walls to a height of about eight feet, and fill the crevices with mud and bog. For a roof, they gather refuse sea-wood, and, with this for a support, lay on layer after layer of straw, mud and stones.

But what homes they seem to us! There is no fire-place, only a hole in the ground, with a hole in the roof for the smoke to escape through! No windows, the door serving for both light and entrance! No beds, only heaps of straw! Sometimes in one small room, often the only one the house contains, will be seen man, wife, children, dog and hens, equal occupants, sharing the same rude comforts. Outside the house, if the owner be moderately well off, may be seen a herd of sheep or ponies, and a patch of garden surrounded by a wall.

But there is something a peat woman of Shetland is continually doing that we have not yet noticed. All have no doubt heard of Shetland hosiery; of the fine warm shawls and hoods, and delicate veils that come from these far northern islands. Now all the while the poor, bare-legged woman is carrying her heavy burden of peat, her hands are never idle. She is knitting away as fast as her nimble fingers will allow. In her pocket is the ball of yarn, and as her needles fly back and forth, she weaves fabrics of such fineness that the royal ladies of England wear them, and no traveller visits the island without loading his trunk with shawls, mittens, stockings, and other feminine fancies.

Not to know how to knit in Shetland is like not knowing how to read at home. A little girl is taught the art before she can read; and, as a result, at every cottage will be found the spinning-wheel and the needles, while the feminine hands are never idle. It is one great means of support; and on Regent Street in London will be seen windows full of goods marked "Shetland Hosiery."

Who first instructed these far northern people in this delicate art is not surely known. On Fair Isle, one of the Shetland group, the art is first said to have been discovered, very many years ago. On that lonely isle even now, every woman, girl and child knits while working at any of her various duties.

The yarn with which the Shetland goods

are made is spun from the wool of the sheep we see roaming about the fields. In almost every cottage may be seen the veritable old-fashioned wheel; and the busy girl at the treadle sends the great wheel flying, and spins out the long skeins, which serve to make baby a pretty hood or grandma a long shawl.—*Edward Robert's, in March "Wide Awake."*

"CAN'T" AND "TRY."

CAN'T-DO-IT sticks in the mud; but Try soon drags the wagon out of the rut. The fox, said "Try," and he got away from the hounds when they almost snapped at him. The bees said, "Try," and turned flowers into honey. The squirrel said, "Try," and he went to the top of the beech tree. The snow-drop said, "Try," and bloomed in the cold snows of winter. The sun say "Try," and spring soon threw Jack Frost out of the saddle. The young lark said, "Try," and he found that his new wings took him over hedges and ditches and up where his father was singing. The ox said "Try," and ploughed the field from end to end. No hill too steep for Try to climb, no clay too stiff for Try to plough, no field too wet for Try to drain, no hole too big for Try to mend.

THINK of God oftener than you breathe.—*Epictetus.*

GOD hears the heart without the words, but He never hears the words without the heart.

WE can easily manage if we will only take each day the burden appointed for it. But the load will be too heavy for us if we add to its weight the burden of to-morrow before we are called to bear it.

READING when walking or riding is injurious to the eyes, because the motion of the body causing the focus of sight to be continually shifted, the delicate muscles of the eye become strained and fatigued.

NEVER attempt to do anything that is not right. Just so surely as you do, you will get into trouble. If you even suspect anything is wrong, do it not until you are assured that your suspicions are groundless.

WHEN you do attempt anything that is right, go through with it. Form habits of perseverance. Yield not to sloth, and sleep, and fickleness. To resist all these will not be easy; but you will feel that you have done right when you get through.

JAMES BROWN was a poor, lame boy, who lived with his aunt, in a small house by the sea shore. James could not run, and shout, so he used to sit all day and make nets to catch fish; yet no one saw him with a sad look on his face. All the girls and boys loved him, he was so kind and sweet in his ways. If he could think of a nice tale to tell them when work was done for the day, he would call them around him, and make them full of glee. If he saw a man break his net, he would mend it for him with a smile. Then he was so good to his aunt, and she knew why James felt so glad and happy. The reason was, dear children, he was a follower of the meek and lowly Lord Jesus.