

What the Wind Says.

BY ZITKILA COCKE.

When Willie goes upstairs to sleep,
A wakful ear he's sure to keep
Upon the wind, who always knows
What Willie does and where he goes;
If he's been good the whole day long,
The wind sings ever the same song
In sweetest, softest lullabies,
As Willie gently shuts his eyes—
"Good and true, good and true"
Willie, you—Willie, y-o-u!"

But sometimes ah, the truth is sad—
Poor Willie's wilful, cross, and bad!
He breaks the mother's strictest rule,
And even slips away from school;
Then when he creeps into his bed
And pulls the pillow o'er his head
And listens—hark! the mad wind knows;
Hear how it whistles, storms, and blows:
"So untrue! so untrue!"
Willie, you—I mean y-o-u!"

Oh, then his heart begins to quake,
And one long hour he lies awake
And wonders how the wise wind knew—
The wisest wind that ever blew—
Till something inside speaks out bold:
"I am the monitor who told!"
Oh, yes, 'twas I who told the wind,
And both of us know you have sinned,
Willie, you—Willie, y-o-u!"
Wind and conscience both say, "You!"

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, OCTOBER 9, 1897.

JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

OCTOBER 17, 1897.

"Just as I am, without one plea"—
Hymnal 113; Isa. 1. 10-20.

A FAMOUS HYMN.

It is expressive of the condition of the sinner when coming to the Saviour. The idea felt by awakened sinners generally is that they must make themselves better before they come, but the author of this hymn did not entertain any such notion. It is true that the sinner who is seeking pardon must repent, but that is not making himself better, he is only feeling a consciousness of his lost condition, which prompts him to accept the gracious invitation of Scripture.

ANALYZE THE HYMN.

"Without one plea." What else can you plead? Perhaps you say, "We have done no harm," or, "No worse than others," or, "Better than some who make a profession of religion." These and similar pleas we have often heard, but what are they worth? What merit is there in them? None whatever.

ONLY ONE PLEA.

Jesus died for me. Yes, "he loved me and gave himself for me." And when the sinner uses this plea, he may feel assured that he is not far from the kingdom. Jesus saith, "I am the way," etc. John 14. 6. This is the only way. Jesus is the only name. His blood makes the atonement, and yet, notwithstanding all these precious thoughts, how fearful many are about accepting Christ as their Saviour. Doubts arise, con-

licts are felt, and temptations present themselves, but all have to be pressed through, and the venture upon Christ has to be made.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Read verse 18 in the 1st chapter of Isaiah. How condescending God is! He here speaks after the manner of men. The sins are described in the darkest colours. As much as to say, if you are as bad as sin can make you, nay, if you are the worst sinner the world ever saw, you need not despair. His blood can make the foulest clean. He will not cast any out who come to him. Look at Saul of Tarsus. What a bloody persecutor he was! See the thief on the cross, paying the penalty of life for the crime he has committed. Think of Manasseh. None ever came and were rejected.

COLD HOMES AND CHILDREN.

"My boys never seem to want to go out of evenings. I sometimes wish they were not such stay-at-homes," said the happy mother of half a dozen of them. "I'll tell you why they don't," said a bright-eyed lad of fourteen who was, at the moment, a guest in the house. "There is always plenty of room, plenty of light, plenty to eat, and a good fire." A boy is like a cat, happiest when near a good fire. In many places where the boys go there is only a single lamp in the room, and that, maybe, is partly taken up by the father, who is reading and must not be disturbed. The fire isn't very good, the rooms are cold, and sometimes the boys play games to get warm. Rooms should be 'toasty' warm, and there should be a light in every corner and the lamps fastened to the wall, which is a great thing for boys; no accidents, you know. I sometimes think boys cannot help being boisterous and romping a little, and it is such a comfort to know that they aren't going to set the house on fire or risk somebody's life. If a few families in every neighbourhood could only understand what it means to the boys to have a nice, warm, light place, where they must be gentlemen in order to be admitted, I am sure they would banish cold and darkness, and never would fill their houses with gloom and shadow.

There is nothing in this whole wide creation half so well worth saving as the boys and girls. And it is a sad truth that there are few valuable commodities that are so very badly cared for.

The time is coming, however, when they will be looked after and duly appreciated, and when good and intelligent men and women of all creeds, classes, and climes will understand that it is a great deal easier to train a twig than to bend a tree. They will learn that it is altogether more practical and practicable to give boys a chance to grow up in the right way than it is to furnish houses to reform them after they have grown wicked and depraved.

Every schoolhouse in the land ought to be always open, and be a general meeting-place for young people, where light, warmth, good cheer, and a hearty welcome would await them.

Imagine a community of young people brought up with a pleasant meeting-place where they could pass their spare time in chatter, music, games, and the society of bright and intelligent people. A lecture this evening, a reading to-morrow afternoon a stereopticon talk and views next week and all along through the year incidents and events interesting and instructive, something to look forward to, something to make the time pass agreeably and to brighten the daily life of young people, to whom a dull workaday world is monotonous and dispiriting.—New York Ledger.

ORIGIN OF THE SHOE.

Necessity has been the moving cause in the invention of most of the things we wear and use. The shoe, says the Chicago News, is a very good example of this. The hot sands of the desert became so painful to the bare foot that the Egyptians had to devise some method of relief. They braided palm leaves and similar materials into squares or cut squares of wood or rough leather, fastening them to the soles of their feet as the Arabians fastened protectors to the feet of their camels. These were the first shoes.

A sacred song says: "How graceful are thy steps in sandals, O princess!" an allusion to the fact that the Hebrews enriched the hitherto plain footgear with strings of red, yellow and purple ribbons, which they crossed in charming style over the gleaming white skin of the arch of the foot.

The Syrians wore yellow shoes. The Greeks and Romans improved the sandal

and invented different forms and shapes to be worn by the different classes. Plebeians wore black shoes with one ribbon, senators and patricians wore red and white shoes fastened with four ribbons. Only slaves and philosophers walked barefoot. The first Christians also walked barefoot.

After a while luxury in the matter of foot-gear spread and there was a time when shoes were ornamented with precious jewels, gold and silver embroidery studded with pearls and, wonderful to relate, had golden soles. Each sex and class wore different shoes, and if a man changed his station in life, the fact was expressed by the phrase "he has changed his shoes."

In the eleventh century various materials were used to make shoes, fine kid leather being then invented and sold for good round soles.

In the twelfth century boots and sandals were worn, the clergy using the latter exclusively. The next hundred years saw many improvements as well as the introduction of the pointed-toe shoe, which was afterward so strongly attacked by the clergy. Fashion prevailed and the whole civilized world wore the shoes "whose points bend." This point was like a bird's beak—plain people wore the beak half a foot long; more important personages extended the beak to two feet, while princes of the blood added a half-foot to that. Finally the beak grew so long it was fastened to the knee by a narrow gold chain so that the wearer of these monstrosities could walk.

This long and uncomfortable toe was discarded in a hundred years and the broad shoe, sometimes a foot wide, came in. Then the stiff shoe became the style and heels were worn so high that we cannot understand how the fashionables of that time could walk at all. The most perfect and graceful shoes were worn in the seventeenth century. They were of velvet and brocades. Red heels were the rage in the time of Louis XIV., and during the revolution the shoe with the buckle disappeared. Napoleon I. introduced the patent-leather shoe ornamented with a gold buckle.

HOME FAIRIES.

BY MARY F. BUTTS.

"Instead of telling fairy-stories, let us be fairies ourselves," said Aunt Della, when the children begged her for a fairy-tale.

"How can we be fairies, auntie?"

"What are fairies?" asked the lady.

"Why, little, wee folks that go about doing wonderful things. Sometimes they make the butter after the dairymaid has gone to bed. Sometimes they put a gold piece under the plate of the poor man who can't pay his rent, and, when he sits down at the breakfast-table, he finds it."

"Well," said Aunt Della, "here are Tom, Ned, Mary, and Sue. Let us organize a fairy band. Bridget has gone to the dentist's with a bad tooth. The baby is cross, there are blackberries to pick for tea, mamma has a headache, the sitting-room is in disorder, and papa will be at home by-and-bye, all tired out with the work and the heat. A fairy band is badly need, I think."

"I will be Mustard Seed," said Tom, mindful of his last Shakespeare reading. "I'll take baby to the croquet ground, and roll the balls for her; that always amuses her."

"I will be Apple Blossom," said Sue, naming herself from her favourite flower. "I will set the tea-table so very quietly that mamma will not hear me. When she finds it all ready, it will seem like fairies' work to her."

"I'll be Blackberry," said Ned. "Here goes for the berry-patch."

"I will be Aschenputtel, and do the dusting," said Mary, beginning, with great zeal, to put the sitting-room in order.

The next moment the click of the balls and the music of baby's ringing laugh came from the lawn. Mary, duster in hand, looked out of the window and smiled to see them so nappy.

"It is a great deal better to help," she said, polishing a table with all her might, "than to sit down and make auntie amuse us."

Sue sang softly to herself as she put the cups and plates in order:

"Little child, the long day through,
Find some helpful thing to do,
Then you'll know, in work or play,
Why good fairies are so gay."

"Blackberry," in the berry-patch, whistled, as he picked, up the plump, shining fruit. The largest, ripest berries he put into a separate dish for mamma. "She will smile when she sees them,"

he thought. "Perhaps they will cure her headache. She always tells us that kindness is a cure-all."

After a short and rather restless sleep, mamma awoke, feeling a little discouraged.

"I believe I must go away somewhere for a change," she thought. "House-keeping is very wearing, especially when baby is cross; and poor Bridget is always having a toothache in these days."

But the baby's shouts of delight were the first thing she heard when she went downstairs. Then the clean, orderly sitting-room, with a bowl of sweet peas on the polished table, made her glow all over with pleasure. Next she caught sight of the tea-table, all ready for tea. That, too, was sweet with flowers. As she went into the kitchen, she met Ned. His face was bright with the real good fairy smile, as he offered her the delicious fruit.

Aschenputtel ran to get some cream for mamma's berries.

"Fairies can do without cream," she said. "They are supposed to sip honey from the flowers all day long."

"Why, what is the matter with everybody?" said papa, coming in. "Is there good news? Has the family inherited a fortune?"

"We have had a visit from the fairies," said mamma, as they all sat down at the table.

"THE MOST HOLY BAMBINO."

BY EVALENA I. FRYER.

In the church of Ara Coeli, in Rome, there is a wretchedly carved wooden doll—the oldest doll in the world, so far as any one knows—called "The Most Holy Bambino." Bambino is Italian for baby or doll, and if all that is claimed for this doll be true it is almost two thousand years old.

This is the story told by the priests who are in charge of the little image: Away in Jerusalem, at the time of the apostles, some one who could carve figures cut wood from the branch of a tree that grew on the Mount of Olives, and from it made this doll. The carver, after he had finished his task, lamented that he had no colouring matter with which to ornament his effigy. While grieving over his lack he fell asleep, and during his slumber—so the story goes—St. Luke appeared and painted the figure.

Finally the man awoke, and turning to view his image found, to his amazement that it had really been painted by some miraculous means. At once the figure became in his eyes an object of reverence. Leaving Jerusalem, he set sail for Rome, but the vessel in which he embarked was overtaken by storms, and finally wrecked off the coast of Italy. All on board perished, but among the things washed ashore was the carved image of olive wood. It was carried to Rome, and ever since it has been most sacredly kept.

The priests dress it, ornament its neck and wrists with strings of precious jewels, and work hard to keep up the public faith in it. The ignorant people are persuaded to believe that the sight or touch of the image will cure sick children. So at certain seasons mothers with sick babies and toddling little ones may be seen climbing the steps leading to the church to be benefited by the healing power of the bambino.

Usually the doll lies in a manger wrapped in swaddling clothes, and every one who visits it pays a fee. It is a ridiculous, as well as a painful, sight to see grown men and women falling down on their faces before this carved wooden image.

THE COMPANION OF THE DOG-STAR.

Sirius, the dog-star, which is the brightest to our eyes of all the fixed stars, has a very remarkable companion, never visible except with powerful telescopes. It was first seen in 1862, and in 1890 it disappeared, the reason of its disappearance being that it had moved so close to Sirius as to be lost to view in the overpowering light of that great star. During the time of its visibility the fact had been ascertained that it was revolving about Sirius at a rate which would carry it completely around in some fifty years. The shape of its orbit, which is an ellipse with Sirius situated in one of the foci, being calculated, astronomers felt certain that in a few years the vanished star would reappear as it moved into a part of its orbit more distant from Sirius. This expectation has now been fulfilled, for recently the missing star was seen again at the Flagstaff Observatory in Arizona. Although it is probably half as large as Sirius, it is but one ten-thousandth part as luminous as that star.