

Our Young Folks.

MY ROBIN.

When I was a child, beside our door,
In a green and spreading sycamore,
There sung each morning, with note as clear
As a crystal brook, and full of cheer,
A robin.

I watched his plumage in childish glee,
And fancied he sung his song for me;
And the melody lingers in heart and brain,
Making me often a child again—
My robin.

I look for his coming in early Spring,
When the crocus opens, and maples bring
Their crimson tassels to kiss the breeze,
And the sunshine dallies with new leaved
trees,—
My robin.

I hear him sing as the sun goes down,
And the stars come out over the silent town;
But there's never a harsh or mournful note,
That wells afresh from the warbler's throat,—
My robin.

And I learn a lesson of hope and cheer
That carries me on from year to year;
To sing in the shadow as in the sun,
Doing my part till the work is done —
My robin.

—Sarah A. Bolton.

A TOUCHING INCIDENT.

An incident of a peculiarly touching character occurred recently in one of the elevated railroad trains that brought tears to the eyes of the passengers. The train had just left One Hundred and Twenty-fifth street when the passengers saw entering the car a little boy about six years old, halt carried by an older boy, evidently his brother. Both were well dressed, but at the first glance it was seen that the little fellow was blind. He had a pale, wan face, but was smiling. A quick look of sympathy passed over the faces of the passengers, and an old grey-haired gentleman got up and gave his seat to the two. The "big brother," who was about eleven years old, tenderly lifted up the little blind boy and placed him on his knee.

"How's that?" he asked.

"Nice," said the little chap. "Where's my 'monica'?"

This puzzled some of the passengers, and several turned to see what the child meant. But the "big brother" knew, and immediately drew out a small mouth harmonica, and placed it in the little fellow's hands. The little fellow took the instrument into his hands, ran it across his lips and began to play softly, "Nearer, My God, to Thee." Tears came into the eyes of the old gentleman who had given up his seat; and as the little fellow played on, running into the "Rock of Ages" and "Abide With Me" there were many moist eyes in the car.

The train rushed along; the passengers listened, and the little fellow played on tirelessly, never missing a note of "Annie Laurie" or "Home, Sweet Home." Finally the "big brother" leaned down and told the little one to get ready to leave, as the train was nearing their station. Then, as if he knew he had won a whole carload of friends, the blind boy quickly changed the "Suwanee River" into "Auld Lang Syne"; and with one accord the passengers burst into a round of applause, while the "big brother" carried the little one out of the car.—*New York Times.*

THE BEE IN NATURE.

In these days of popular science it is hardly necessary to make more than passing reference to the part which the bee plays in nature. In the vegetable world it is a vital necessity that the fertilizing pollen from the stamens of certain flowers should be carried to the pistils of other flowers, and the mission of the bee is to unconsciously carry the precious dust from blossom to blossom in her search after the tempting drop of nectar with which the shy flowerets reward the winged bearer of their love messages.

A wonderful and fascinating chapter in natural history is that which treats of the relations existing between flowers and in-

sects. Flowers may be divided into two classes, those fertilized through the action of the wind, and those in which fertilization is effected through the intervention of insects or a like agency. Darwin and others have shown what interesting stratagems flowers of the latter class resort to in order to secure the services of insects in this respect. Every little foible and weakness of the winged visitor is pandered to. What is commonly called a flower is indeed nothing more than a skillfully devised trap to attract the attention of insects, and then insure their services toward fertilization.

Our little friend the bee is aesthetic in her tastes, and behold the varieties of flowers vie with each other to beguile her attention in the display of the most artistic blending of colors and beauty of design. She likes sweet scents, and the laboratory of nature is called upon to distill the choicest perfumes to humor her. But these are but an advertisement for the nectar which it is the principal object of the bee to obtain, and when she has alighted in search of it, it is only to find that the flowers have in many cases devised the most exquisite little mechanical arrangement, whereby she is unconsciously compelled to effect the object toward the fulfillment of which they have indulged in such a lavish expenditure of beauty and sweetness. It is all effected in the simplest manner through the great law of natural selection, here seen in operation in its severe simplicity; for the flowers of those plants which present the greatest facilities for fertilization get their seed set, and so insure the continuance of their species, while the unsuitable and unaccommodating kind remain barren and are gradually weeded out. In the babel of tongues, and since first he found a voice, the poet has sung of the loves and sorrows of mankind, but nature still waits for him to interpret her heart; if he ever learns to do so, there will be a new song in his mouth, for he will have a wonderful theme.—*Longman's Magazine.*

A MOUNTAIN PREACHER'S ILLUSTRATION.

Like any other unlearned people, these mountaineers like illustrations drawn from things with which they are familiar.

A group of young men were assembled near where there had been preaching one Sabbath, when the following dialogue occurred:

"See here, John, why didn't ye bring up my rifle when ye come to preaching?"

"Well, Sam, I lowed 'twan't right to bring it up on Sabbath. I mought see a varmint on the road and git a-shootin' and forgit it was Sabbath."

"Hub! there's no use being so awfully particular as all that. I thinks it's all right to do little turas of a Sabbath; even a little shootin' won't hurt, if ye happen to see game."

The discussion was joined in on either side by those around, and it was finally decided to leave it to the preacher. He was called, and the case stated.

"Look yer, boys," said he, "'s'posin' a man comes along here with seven handsome gray horses, a-riden' one and the other a-follerin'. You all like a pretty beast and you look 'em all over. You can't see that one is better than another. They are all as pretty critters as ever were seen among these mountains, though there will be differences in horses, boys. When you come to know 'em no two is alike. Well, that man says, 'Here, boys, I'll just give ye six of these beasts for your own,' and he gets on the other and rides off. I s'pose, now, you'd mount yer horses and ride after him, and make him give ye the other horse, or at least make him let ye keep it till yer craps was all in."

"No; we ain't so ornary mean as all that, preacher."

"Well, thar, can't ye let the Lord's day alone?"

A blank look at the preacher and at each other; then Sam spoke out:

"You've treed us, preacher. John I'm right glad you didn't bring that gun."—*The American Missionary.*

PRESBYTERY MEETINGS.

TORONTO: This Presbytery met on Tuesday, 5th inst., the Rev. J. W. Bell, Moderator, presiding. Commissioners appointed to the next General Assembly were: Ministers—Revs. Prin Caven, D. J. Macdonnel, Dr. MacLaren, Dr. Gregg, and Dr. Reid; by election, and Revds. Joseph Watt, S. S. Craig, R. C. Tibb, J. A. Turnbull, W. G. Wallace, J. Mutch, Walter Reid J. Neil, D. B. Macdonald, and Dr. McTavish by rotation. Elders—Messrs. Hamilton Cassels, John A. Paterson, J. K. Macdonald, Hon. G. W. Ross, Jos. Gibson, Hon. Justice MacLennan, Dr. C. Y. Moore, Robert Stewart, Nath. Steen, and J. R. Miller by election, and Messrs. Chas. Morris, Andrew Scott, Donald Hendry, A. H. Gordon, and W. Mortimer Clark by nomination of Sessions. A number of Presbyterians resident in the vicinity of Kew Beach and Balmy Beach presented a petition asking to be organized as a congregation. The petition was received and neighboring Sessions will be heard in respect to the new organization at the April meeting of Presbytery. The remit from the General Assembly relating to the appointment of a special committee to take the oversight of Jewish Missions was considered. It was agreed to recommend that the work among the Jews be continued under the supervision of the Foreign Mission Committee. Rev. Alex. McMillan intimated his declination of the call addressed to him by the congregation of the Church of the Redeemer, Deseronto, and on motion the call was set aside. After hearing reports from those appointed to visit the aid, receiving congregations in the Presbytery it was agreed to ask for the following assistance from the Augmentation Fund for the ensuing year, viz., for St. Paul's, Toronto \$250, for Southside, \$200; for the Church of the Covenant, Toronto, \$200; for Mimico \$200; for Sutton \$100; for Laskey and East King \$140. Fairbank and Fisherville was reduced to the status of a Mission Station, and the question of supply was left in the hands of the Home Mission Committee. Reports were heard from neighboring Session and the organization of a new congregation in Parkdale, two reported no objection to the organization, two their conviction that there is not room for a third congregation in Parkdale, one opposed the organization. The Session of Duna Avenue presented a history of the case together with their answers in respect to granting organization and the petitioners tabled their statement of the origin and development of the movement. After a prolonged discussion the following motion was passed by a vote of 17 to 14: "That the Fern Ave. congregation and the petitioners be amalgamated into one congregation, which shall have its place of worship to the north of Queen St. and not farther east than Macdonnell Avenue; that a site shall be selected within these limits not later than six months after the date of organization and that a Church edifice or school room shall be erected within twelve months from the date of organization; that in the meantime the congregation shall have leave to meet in the Cowan Ave. Church for a period not exceeding twelve months, and that during the said period a Sunday School and an evening service shall be carried on in the Fern Ave. Church." Against this decision several members entered their dissent. The meeting adjourned to meet in St. Andrew's Church, Toronto, on Tuesday the 5th day of March next, at the close of the special meeting to be held on that day.—R. C. TIBB, Clerk.

WINNIPEG: A meeting of this Presbytery and held on Tuesday, 8th ult., in Manitoba College. Rev. A. Matheson was elected Moderator pro tem. Dr. Bryce, convener of the Home Mission Committee, reported in regard to arrangements made for exchanges of pulpits throughout the Presbytery in connection with missionary services as suggested at the last meeting of Presbytery. The report was received and adopted. A report from the deputation appointed at the last meeting of the Presbytery to visit Selkirk was made by Dr. Bryce, to the effect that a meeting was held in Selkirk on December 7th, and that during the meeting the resignation of Rev. Mr. Sutherland was handed in to the meeting. Mr. Sutherland addressed the Presbytery on the subject, asking that his resignation be accepted. After several members, among them Dr. DuVal, Dr. King, Dr. Bryce, Rev. Joseph Hogg and others had expressed their warm appreciation of all that Mr. Sutherland had done within the bounds of the Presbytery, and their high esteem for him as a Christian brother, it was moved and agreed that the resignation be accepted; that Mr. R. G. MacBeth be appointed to declare the pulpit vacant next Saturday, and it was further agreed on motion that he should be Moderator of the Session during the vacancy. The question of compulsory connection with the Aged and Infirm Minister's Fund was brought up by Mr. John Hogg in answer to the remit of the General Assembly on the subject; but after discussion the matter was laid upon the table until the next meeting of the Presbytery. Mr. R. S. Scott, B.A., lecturer in Manitoba College, was duly licensed to preach the gospel within the bounds of the Presbytery, or wherever his lot may be ordered; and, after receiving the right hand of fellowship from the members present, was suitably addressed by Dr. DuVal at the request of the Moderator. On motion of Dr. King, seconded by Prof. Hart, Dr. Robertson was nominated by the Presbytery for Moderator of the next General Assembly.

How long he knelt he did not know. He only knew that a voice like that of an angel rose and fell with the ecstasy of his prayer, that it throbbed about him in a flood of melody—

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

And then it burst out triumphantly—
"Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him, all creatures here below."

Surely, surely, these last words were a command, and rising up in the strength and beauty of his new manhood, his rich baritone swelled the chorus and the very rafters in the old tenement seemed to vibrate

"Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost."

And then the window opposite suddenly closed, a little black-robed figure slipped away in the darkness and Caroline Hunter knelt by her bedside sobbing and trembling, she knew not why.

It was the usual prayer-meeting evening. The little chapel was more than ordinarily crowded. The waving of many fans and low whispers betrayed unusual excitement. Vague rumours had been circulated again. Edward Rutherford had returned.

By the minister's side sat a young man, pale, grave, and stern. Many recognised him. Where had he been all these years? What a change from the laughing, careless lad!

But Dr. Rutherford! How radiant his face, how vibrating his tone as he led in prayer. What a depth of passionate meaning in the words, "The lost has been found."

Caroline Hunter, in her obscure corner, bowed her head with the rest and rejoiced in her simple, earnest fashion, and when the opening hymn was called her voice rang out sweet, clear, and thrilling. No longer dumb, she was singing for God now. She did not notice the young man's startled gaze, his eager whisper, the glance of gratitude cast upon her, but in the silence that followed she saw that the minister's son had stepped forward and was speaking, telling of his sad, sinful life, his wretchedness, his poverty, his gloom, his utter despair, and then he told of a certain evening, when cast in the depths of a misery beyond hope, he resolved to add crime to his other sins, and join a lawless gang respecting neither God nor man, and then his lips began to quiver as he told how the melody of an old familiar hymn pierced the darkness as a ray of sunlight, a hymn that had been sung by the bedside of his dying mother. He spoke of the tender memories that flooded his heart as the sweet singing voice seemed to plead with him, of his cry for forgiveness, of his return to his father's house and the rejoicing over the prodigal.

Caroline Hunter's upturned face was beautiful with more than an earthly radiance as she listened, and her low "thank God" had scarcely left her lips when the usually quiet meeting broke into sobs and happy hallelujahs. Before she realised what it all meant, the minister, the great, learned, eloquent Dr. Rutherford, was holding both her hands in his grasp, and his voice was saying brokenly, "My child, through God's mysterious providence, you have brought my son to his father." The two girls were clinging about her, and the grave, serious son was smiling on her with grateful recognition.

And the bewildered girl could only murmur, "No, no, not through me, but the little gift—God's gift to me."

"To be used hereafter for His greater glory," added Dr. Rutherford solemnly.

Caroline, now Mrs. Edward Rutherford, as leading soprano in her father's church, still uses her gift for the glory of God, and her husband still tell the story of the great light that came to him through the earnest resolution and sweet music of "only a music teacher."—*New York Observer.*

Mr. Chamberlain, writing to a correspondent, declares that there is nothing necessarily inconsistent between the principles of local vote and the Gothenburg system, and that both actually exist side by side in Sweden.