

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

A BIRTHDAY.

Every year is a pearl, dear,
Perfect and pure and fair,
That God lets grow within your life,
Trusting it to your care.

And death is the golden clasp, dear,
That fastens the pearly chain,
And it shines with a clearer lustre,
If the pearls are white through pain.

Some of the chains are short, dear,
And some are of many strands;
But every one returns at last
To the Master Workman's hands.

So watch your precious pearls, dear,
And keep them ever bright,
That with the crown jewels they may glow,
At last, in the infinite light.

SPEAKING PLAIN.

THE arithmetic class stood in line in the school-room, slates and pencils in hand, and Squire Curtis was on the platform listening to the recitation. Squire Curtis was one of the trustees, and the most faithful one among them, for he never suffered two weeks to pass without making a call at the school to see how the youngsters were getting on with their lessons. Sometimes he happened in at spelling-time, and sometimes at the reading-hour; and then again he would be on hand to hear the recitations in geography or history, or to give them a little practice in the rules of arithmetic.

This morning he had given Harry's class a very long column of figures to add.

"You may go to your seats," said Mr. Ropes, "and do the adding while I call another class."

"Mine ain't a bit like yours," said Walter Burns, Harry's seat-mate: speaking without permission, of course.

Harry said nothing, but worked away at his figures.

Walter turned over the pages of his Green-leaf. "Here's the very sum," he said in a whisper, as he compared the lines on his slate with the book. "Squire Curtis didn't give it to us out of his head; he copied it right out of the book, and here's the answer. I'll make mine right in a jiffy," and the answer given in the arithmetic was soon copied on his slate.

"Look here! yours isn't right, old fellow," he said, again looking over Harry's shoulder. "You've got a six there and it ought to be a four, and an eight where it ought to be a three. What a little goose you are to fuss away adding up all that great row, when here it is as plain as day before you."

But Harry was an honest boy. He knew it was expected of him to do the calculation himself, and it would be like telling a lie to copy the answer out of the book. So he worked away, going over the columns three times very carefully. But he couldn't help remembering about the figures Walter had said were wrong, and when, after the third trial, they came just as Walter had said they ought to, he could not help being glad. And yet there was a little feeling in his heart that he had not been exactly honest. What should he do about it?

Just at that minute Mr. Ropes called the

class forward for their answers. Each boy read his figures from his slate, and all were wrong except Walter and Harry. Walter was chuckling to himself over his good luck and little trouble; Harry was holding quite a discussion with his conscience.

"I know, boys," said Squire Curtis, "'twas a pretty hard practice for you, for the lines were longer than you are used to, and I don't much wonder that you didn't get the figures all right. Once adding so long a row is never enough to make sure of a correct answer. You ought to go over it two or three times, beginning first at the bottom and adding up, then at the top and adding down, and then in the middle and adding both ways. If the answers agree you may be pretty sure you are right. I'm glad we have two boys to get us the right answer. You didn't look in your books for it, boys, did you?" asked the squire.

Walter shook his head for no, but Harry blushed and hesitated. All at once it flashed through his mind about the man whose tongue was loosed by Jesus so that he could "speak plain."

"I'll 'speak plain; I don't want any 'impediment' about me;" thought he; and out it came.

"I didn't look in the book," said he, "but I knew what the right figures were, and I worked and worked till I got 'em. But if I hadn't known, I don't believe I should have got them all right," Harry spoke very distinctly.

"How did you know the answer if you didn't look in the book?" asked the teacher.

"I don't like to tell, if you'll please excuse me," said Harry; but Mr. Ropes understood the truth from Walter's confused and trembling looks.

"I did work it all out myself," said Harry; "I added the lines up three times, but if I hadn't known the answer I shouldn't have done that. I didn't try to find out the answer, and I couldn't help knowing, but it seemed like a lie, after all, so I felt I must tell."

"You are right, my boy; you have made an honest confession. It is good to clear your conscience. If at any time you have the least shadow of a feeling in your heart that you haven't told the whole truth, never rest till you have turned your heart inside out."

"But he hasn't told the whole truth, squire, for he hasn't explained how he found out the answer," said Mr. Ropes.

"Well, but you see, Mr. Ropes, how it is; I do. He couldn't tell without exposing somebody else, and he doesn't want to tell tales. I hate a tell-tale; so do you. This little chap has told the whole truth about himself, he's set himself right, and now if there's any boy in the class that knows the other part of the story, and don't tell it, why, he'll have a load on his conscience that won't be pleasant to carry. This little boy has spoken 'the truth in his heart' this morning, and God bless him!"

Poor Walter hung his head and held up his hand to speak.

"What is it Walter?" asked his teacher.

"'Twas I told Harry the right figures. I

wasn't looking for the answer, and just happened to see that the sum in the book was just like the one on our slates. But I know Harry worked it all out himself."

"Did you?"

It was with a great effort, but the words came out "No, sir."

"I'd rather be Harry Ford than Walter Burns," said Mr. Ropes. "Who thinks as I do?" And every hand went up.

A CHILD'S DEFINITION OF FAITH.

THE other day a poor woman came into my shop to speak to me on matters concerning a daughter of hers, who is doomed to be a cripple for life. I found she was a sorrowful Christian, one of those who gave many a furtive glance at Goliath without seeing David close by—looking at her trouble always—not looking to the Lord at all. When I spoke of Jesus as the all-sufficient One she began to tell me of a little boy she had lost recently, and of what he delighted in speaking of. The love of God in Jesus was his theme. When life was drawing to a close he spoke of mercy and of grace; of faith in God as his only foundation for the hope of going, when he died, to be with Jesus who died for him. Being visited a day or two before he died by an unconverted relative of mature years, the relative asked him how he was. When he answered that he was very happy, though sick in body; that his faith had kept him so; his relative said:

"I can't make you out. How do you get the faith you speak about?"

"O," said Charley, "God gives it to me."

"Well," said his friend, "I don't understand! What is it like?"

"O," replied Charley, "it's just like this: 'pose you were up-stairs, and you made a hole in the ceiling and spoke to me through the hole, and told me up there was better than being down here, and that you had got some beautiful things up there for me, if I was to come. I should want to come, shouldn't I?"

"Well, yes; I think you would; but how would you know that I had the things I spoke of?" asked the interrogator.

"Well," replied the dying child, "I should be sure to know you were there when I heard you speak. That's what faith is—believing God's Word when He speaks, and what He says without seeing what He promises. And God makes a good many holes, and speaks to 'most everybody, only they don't pay attention; and if they do hear they want to see the things afore the time, and that ain't faith."

Thus did a child in years and grace silence, with the words of faith, a gain-sayer, and so passed away. Reader, hast thou faith as this little child; faith to trust God for the fulfilment of His promise? "Have faith in God."

"A GRACIOUS woman retaineth honour, and strong men retain riches."—*Prov. ix. 16.*

"ENVY thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways."—*Prov. iii. 31.*

O MAKE your heaven sure, and try how ye came by conversion; that it be not stolen goods, in a white and showy profession! a white skin over old wounds.