

## Farmer John.

"If I'd nothing to do," said Farmer John,  
"To fret and bother me—  
Were I but rid of this mountain of work,  
What a good man I could be!

"The pigs got out, and the cows got in  
Where they have no right to be;  
And the weeds in the garden and the corn—  
Why, they fairly frighten me.

"It worries me out of my temper quite,  
And well-nigh out of my head;  
What a curse it is that a man must toil  
Like this for his daily bread!"

But Farmer John he broke his leg,  
And was kept for many a week  
A helpless and an idle man.  
Was he therefore mild and meek?

Nay, what with the pain and what with the  
fret  
Of sitting with nothing to do,  
And the farm-work botched by a shiftless  
hand—  
He got very cross and blue.

He scolded the children and cuffed the dog  
That fawned about his knee;  
And snarled at his wife, though she was kind  
And patient as wife could be.

He grumbled, and whined, and fretted, and  
fumed,  
The whole of the long day through.  
"Twill ruin me quite," cried Farmer John,  
"To sit here with nothing to do!"

His hurt got well, and he went to work,  
And busier man than he,  
A happier man or a pleasanter man,  
You never would wish to see.

The pigs got out, and he drove them back,  
Whistling right merrily;  
He mended the fence and kept the cows  
Just where they ought to be.

Weeding the garden was first-rate fun,  
And ditto hoeing the corn.  
"I'm happier far," said Farmer John,  
"Than I've been since I was born."

He learned a lesson that lasts him well—  
"Twill last him his whole life through."  
He frets but seldom, and never because  
He has plenty of work to do.

"I tell you what," said Farmer John,  
"They are either knaves or fools  
Who long to be idle, for idle hands  
Are the devils chosen tools."

## "Wide Awake" for 1886.

MANY of our readers have taken advantage of our liberal offer to club this charming Young Folk's Magazine, at a greatly reduced rate, with the *Canadian Methodist Magazine*. The full price of *Wide Awake* is \$3.00; but to those who take our own *Methodist Magazine* we will send it for \$2.25. We regret that we have not space for its very attractive announcement for 1886. A mother, whose five children have read *Wide Awake* from its first number to its latest, writes: "I like the magazine because it is full of impulses. Another thing—when I lay it down, I feel as if I had been walking on breezy hill-tops." It will be sumptuously illustrated, and among many other features we note the following: "Royal Girls and Royal Courts," by Mrs. John Sherwood. This series, especially brilliant and instructive, will begin in the Christmas number and run through the year. "Youth in Twelve Centuries." A beautiful art feature. Twenty-four superb studies of race-types and national costumes, by F. Childe Hassam, with text by M. E. B. "Fire-Place Stories," the rich illustrations include glimpses of Holland, Assyria, Persia, Moorish Spain and New England. "The Princess Pocahontas in England," by Mrs. Raymond Blathwayte. "A Sixteenth Century School Boy," by Appleton Morgan. The life of a lad in Shakespeare's time. "Through the Heart of Paris," by Frank T. Merrill. A

pen and pencil record of a trip down the Seine. Twelve Ballads by twelve of the foremost women poets of America. Each ballad will fill five to seven pictorial pages. The Chautauqua Young Folk's Readings meet the growing demand for the helpful in literature, history, science, and practical doing. D. Lothrop & Co. also publish *The Pansy*, equally charming and suitable for week-day and Sunday reading, \$1.00 a year. *Our Little Men and Women*, most admirable for the youngest readers, \$1.00 a year. *Babyland* never fails to carry delight to the babies and rest to the mammas, 50 cents a year.

## A Good Book for Boys.

*Wonders and Curiosities of the Railway; or, Stories of the Locomotive in Every Land.* By William Sloane Kennedy. Pp. 254. Chicago: S. O. Griggs; Toronto: Wm. Briggs. Illustrated. Price \$1.25.

This is one of the best books we have read for many a day. It tells a story stranger than romance. It describes one of the greatest movements of the age. Next to the printing press, we regard the railway as the greatest material agent of civilization. We would like to see a copy of this book in every village library. Few greater treats could be given an intelligent boy than a copy of this book. The following gives a hint of some of the interesting information this book contains:

The story of the railway is one of the most curious and interesting in the history of civilization. Under the magic spell of this agency men now living have seen almost the whole face of nature changed, almost the whole economy of life revolutionized. It is only fifty years ago that Peter Cooper built the first locomotive constructed in America. Now the 20,000 locomotives of the United States do the work of 40,000,000 horses. In England 30,000 horses were killed yearly in the attempt to convey the mails at the rate of ten miles an hour. Mr. Kennedy tells the marvellous story of the railways with full mastery of the facts and full appreciation of their significance.

The prejudice against railways at the outset; the scorn, contempt and ridicule they met with are among the most amusing things in their history. At first the cars were literal coaches set on trucks. The locomotive was a nondescript engine fed with pine knots, and with water from a barrel. The evolution of the Pullman-sleeper and the sixty-ton locomotive, sixty feet long, is one of the marvels of science. Our author traces this remarkable evolution with copious illustration of the strange intermediate, experimental stages. He describes the romance of the first railway, the achievements of banding the continents, piercing the mountains, bridging the abysses, penetrating deserts—achievements ten-fold greater than the building of the pyramids. The railway is revolutionizing the West. In India, Japan, Egypt, everywhere in the East, the snort of the iron horse is waking immemorial echoes, banishing caste, and linking the nations with bonds of brotherhood. Railway curiosities, mountain railways, electric railways, vertical railways, tramways, all receive full treatment. Electricity, it is shown, is destined to be the great motor of the future. The most luxurious cars in the world are in

Russia; the fastest running has been done on the Michigan Central in Canada. The luxuries of travel, the locomotive and its master, railway management, train despatching, postal and press system, etc., are in turn described. No mode of travel is so safe as by rail. Statistics prove that the average man is more likely to be struck with lightning or to be hanged than to be killed on the railway.

## Holding the Light.

A DEAR little boy of five years, who had an old-fashioned Spartan mother, was brave enough ordinarily, but was afraid to be left alone in the dark. To cure him of this fear, his mother decided to send him to bed alone, and to have the light taken away, which had usually been left until the little fellow was asleep.

This was a sore trial to the boy and possibly to the mother, but, most of all to the boy's sister, a girl of ten years of age. She could not forget her own times of trembling and of terror; of looking under the bed and hiding her head under the blanket. Her heart ached for the little fellow undergoing such heroic treatment, and she used to steal softly up stairs with her bedroom candle, and stand just outside his door.

"Are you there, sister?"

"Yes, Willie."

"Can I have the light?"

"No, Willie; mother says no."

"Do bring it?"

"No; but I'll let it stay right here."

"Will it shine right in?"

"Yes, all across the floor; don't you see? You must go to sleep, or mother will take it away."

Then a pause, and soon the sleepy voice asked:

"Are you there?"

"Yes, Willie."

"Will you surely stay?"

"Surely."

"Till I'm all—every bit asleep? You won't let the light go out till I am gone?"

"No, Willie."

"Nor leave me alone?"

"No, never."

And all this is in the briefest whisper possible, and if the mother heard she did not heed, for the children were not forbidden to comfort each other in their fashion, and by-and-by the boy outgrew his fear.

Years passed, and the lovely boyhood and brilliant youth were left behind. Willie had outgrown his sister in size, strength, and knowledge, but not in goodness or faith. Life parted them early, and their lives went separate ways. Her love and her letters and her prayers followed him, but evil temptations crept closer to him than these, and little by little he became the victim of drink. It did not conquer all the good in him at once, but at intervals he yielded, and slowly and surely went down. Then it was that she failed him. She had been so proud of his talents, of his power to win all the world could offer, and now he had made her so pitifully ashamed. When he repented, she found it hard to relent. She hated the sin so bitterly that she almost included the sinner. She hardened under the shame of it, and lost faith in his efforts and promises; and while she did not give him up, she made him feel ashamed to come with his bemoanings to her, when she knew that before the next temptation his

resolves would go down like dead leaves in the wind. And so the distance widened, and she suffered much, and he went down and down. At last his health broke, and life drew near its close. Then she found him, and drew near to him, nearer and nearer, till the day that he died. Lying with his hands in hers, he looked up at her as a child might to his mother, and said faintly:

"Do you remember, sister?"

"Remember what, Willie?"

"The light, the light; how I was afraid, and you used to stand by the door and hold the light?"

"Yes, yes, I remember; it was so long ago;" and she turned her face away to hide the tears.

"Never mind, sister; it's all right now. I feel like a little child again, and I'm not afraid."

"Not afraid of the dark. No, you know who goes with us, Willie, when we come to the dark—" she could not go on.

"The dark valley," he finished for her. "Yes, I know. I see Him, sister, and you hold the light, but—"

"But what, brother?"

"But you didn't keep on holding it always; you left me so many times in the dark. I would have been good, sister, if you had—hold it—every time—but—" suddenly seeming to realize that he was troubling her, he drew her face down as she bent over him, and whispered: "But now I'll be still. I'm tired—you will stay till I go to sleep?"

"Yes, Willie, yes; I will never leave you again."

"And—and—you will hold the light—for—"

"As long as you need it, dear."

"No, no, not for me, not for me—for all the other—" and the old smile lit up his face, "the other little boys in the dark—"

There was no answer to the words. He would not have heard it if there had been, for with his pleading for the boys in the dark his life went out, and he was asleep.

Such lessons need not be repeated to any heart on which such bitter scourging has fallen once. But the boys in the dark are many, and many are the sisters and mothers and wives who ought to be holding the light.—*American Reformer*.

LADY DUFFERIN is becoming as eminent in philanthropic and Christian effort as is her husband in diplomatic circles. British India affords a grand field for both, and the wife of the Viceroy is throwing herself heartily into missionary effort to elevate the women of India. One who is thrown with her almost daily, in a personal note says: "Lady Dufferin is diligently and with success studying the Hindustani language, so as to be able to converse with the people of India in their leading vernacular, and thus gain a closer access to them than would be possible through the medium of a foreign tongue. This is a thing, I suppose, no Viceroy's wife has ever done before. She intends to make medical work a specialty, and to raise a fund for training nurses and opening dispensaries and hospitals."—*Wesleyan*.

WHEN you fret and fume at the petty ills of life, remember that the wheels which go round without creaking last longest.