

## OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

### WHO ARE THEY?

A blustering fellow goes prowling about :  
He tosses the snow with a scuffle and shout,  
And pinches the toes,  
The ears, and the nose  
Of each little darling, wherever he goes.

The timid birds hear him and hide their wee heads,  
And mooly cows shiver in barns and in sheds,  
And sweet flowers say,  
"At home we will stay  
Until this noisy fellow gets out of the way."

A bright little maiden is soon on his track,  
And gently, though firmly, she orders him back.  
O, fair she appears,  
In smiles and in tears ;  
She calls to the flowers, "Come up, pretty dears."

The birds hear her voice and they twitter with glee,  
And pink little buds peep, the bright sky to see ;  
The grass twinkles out,  
And lambs skip about,  
And, O, the glad children so merrily about !

And who is this blustering chap? Can you tell?  
And who is this maiden who robes hill and dell,  
Whose whisper so arch  
Wakes oak-tree and larch?—  
Why, who is Miss April, and he Mister March.

### ZIP COON.

Did you ever see a racoon? I am going to tell you about one that was sent from the South as a present to a lady whose name was Isabella. He was called Zip Coon, and a very wise coon he was. Zip had a long, low body, covered with a yellowish hair. His nose was pointed, and his eyes were bright as buttons. His paws were regular little hands, and he used them just like hands. He was very tame; he would climb up on Isabella's chair, and scramble to her shoulder. Then he would comb her hair with his fingers, pick at her ear-rings, and feel her collar and pin and buttons. Isabella's mother was quite ill, but sometimes was able to sit in her chair and eat her dinner from a tray on her lap. She liked to have Zip in her room; but, if left alone with her, Zip would jump up on the chair behind her, and try to crowd her off. He would reach round, too, under her arms, and steal things from her tray. Once the cook in the kitchen heard a brisk rattling of tin pans in the pantry. She opened the door, and there on the shelf was Zip. There were two pans standing side by side. One had Indian meal in it, and the other nice sweet milk. In front of the pans stood Zippy. He had scooped the meal from one pan into the milk in the other pan, and was stirring up a pudding with all his might. He looked over his shoulder when he heard the cook coming up behind, and worked away all the faster, as if to get the pudding done before he was snatched up and put out of the pantry.

Zip was very neat and clean. He loved to have a bowl of water and piece of soap set down for his own use. He would take the soap in his hands, dip it into the water and rub it between his palms; then he would reach all round his body and wash himself. It was very funny to see him reach away round and wash his back. One day, Isabella, not feeling well, was lying on her bed. Zippy was playing around her in his usual way. Pretty soon he ran under the bed, and was busy a long time reaching up, and pulling and picking at the slats over his head. By

and bye he crawled out; and what do you think he had between his teeth? A pretty little red coral ear-ring that Isabella had lost several weeks before. Zip's bright eyes had spied it as he was playing round under the bed. So you see Zip Coon did some good that time. When Zip grew older, he became so cross and snappish that he had to be chained up in the woodshed in front of his little house. On the door of his house was printed in red letters, "Zip Coon; he bites."

### TRUST IN GOD.

Lord, all I am is known to Thee ;  
In vain my soul would try  
To shun Thy presence, or to flee  
The notice of Thine eye.

Then may I walk with careful step  
Where Thou dost point the way ;  
Look to Thee all the time for help,  
And Thy commands obey.

### MONEY WELL SPENT.

"The first piece of money I ever had," said a gentleman, showing us into his library, "I spent for a book. It was the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' I well remember how pleased I was. The pictures, the reading, the blank leaves, were mine, and my name was written on one of the blank leaves at the beginning. That book laid the foundation of my library. All the pennies my uncle gave me I saved for books. Every book I bought I longed to read, and that prevented my time as well as my money from being wasted, for the books which I bought I consulted old friends about, and they were worth reading. And I would say to every boy and girl, 'Do not foolishly spend all your pocket money in other things, but lay the foundation of a good library with it. Good books are wise and faithful companions.'"

### "STOP-A-WHILE."

There is in Africa a thorn called "Stop-a-while." If a person once gets caught in it, it is difficult that he escapes with his clothes on his back, for every attempt to loosen one part only hooks more firmly another part.

The man that gets caught by this thorn is in a pitiable plight ere he gets loose. You would not like—would you, boys?—to be caught in this thorn. And yet many, I fear, are being caught by a worse thorn than "Stop-a-while." Where do you spend your evenings? At home, I do hope, studying your lesson and attending to your mother's words, for if you have formed a habit of spending them on the streets with bad boys, you are caught in a thorn worse than "Stop-a-while." If you spend your evenings at home, do not allow any of your playmates to persuade you to go out and join them for one evening only, for if you do the desire to go again will be strong; you will have laid the foundation of a bad habit, and you will have a harder struggle to escape with life than if in the brambles of "Stop-a-while."

Boys and girls who disobey their parents, who loiter about on the Sabbath instead of going to the Sabbath-school, who take the name of the Lord in vain, are caught in the worst of snares, from which it will be more

difficult to extricate themselves than from the African thorn; for bad habits are strong, and constantly lure on their victims to pleasures which satisfy not.

The boy who roams the street at night has fallen into one of the worst of habits. It soon teaches him to neglect his studies, adopt evil practices, and to corrupt his heart; while he who spends his evenings at home escapes evil and grows wiser, better, and happier.—*S. S. Gem.*

### JAPAN.

A rule was adopted in the Japanese army, that every soldier should give a small amount to provide for the funeral expenses, and for the widows and children of those who might die in the service. A young Christian soldier refused to pay his quota, saying that he was willing to give toward the support of the families of deceased comrades, and the ordinary funeral expenses, but not for the heathen rites of a Japanese burial. He was put under arrest, and, what was more trying, was urged by some native Christians to yield. He, however, remained firm. The matter was referred to the Government. Much anxiety was felt in relation to the decision. The Government has released the prisoner, restored him to his position, and announced that he need not pay for the Buddhist rites if he were not disposed to do so. This recognition of the rights of conscience, and grant of religious liberty, are worthy of honour, and will be heard of with satisfaction by all Christians.

### THE FRIEND YOU NEED.

Children, do you want a Friend,  
Ever faithful, ever true?  
One whose kindness knows no end,  
One whose love can shelter you?  
Jesus is the Friend you need;  
Jesus is a Friend indeed.

None that sought His love's embrace  
Has He ever turned away:  
You may see His smiling face,  
Gaze upon His charms to-day;  
Ever faithful, ever true,  
Jesus is the Friend for you.

### THE GREAT PAPER.

Many pieces of old paper are worth their weight in gold. I will tell you of one that you could not buy for even so high a price as that. It is now in the British Museum in London. It is old and worn. It is more than six hundred and sixty-six years old.

A king wrote his name on this old paper, and though he had written his name on many other pieces of paper, and they are lost, this one was very carefully kept from harm, though once it fell into the hands of a tailor, who was about to cut it up for patterns, and at another time it was almost destroyed by fire.

Visitors go to look at it with great interest. They find it a shrivelled piece of paper, but they know that it stands for English liberty, and means that "Britons never shall be slaves." It is called the "Magna Charta," which means simply the "Great Paper." There have been other great papers, and other papers that have been called "charters," but this one is known the world over as the "Great Paper."