

Smiting the Rock.

The stern old judge, in relentless mood,
Glanced at the two who before him stood;
She was bowed and haggard and old,
He was young and defiant and bold,—
Mother and son; and to gaze on the pair,
Their different attitudes, look and air,
One would believe, ere the truth was known,
The mother convicted and not the son.

There was the mother; the boy stood high
With a shameless look, and his head held
high.
Age had come over her, and sorrow and
care;

These mattered but little so he was there,
A prop to her years, and a light to her eyes,
And prized as only a mother can prize;
But what for him could a mother say,
Waiting his doom on a sentence-day?

Her husband had died in his shame and
sin;
And she a widow, her living to win,
Had toiled and struggled from morn till
night,
Making with want a wearisome fight,
Bent over her work with resolute zeal
Till she felt her old frame totter and reel,
Her weak limbs tremble, her eyes grow dim,
But she had her boy, and she toiled for him.

And he—he stood in the criminal dock,
With a heart as hard as a flinty rock,
An impudent glance and a reckless air,
Braving the scorn of the gazers there;
Dipped in crime and encompassed round
With proof of his guilt by captors found,
Ready to stand, as he phrased it, "game,"
Holding not *crime*, but penitence, shame.

Poured in a flood o'er the mother's cheek
The moistening prayers when the tongue
was weak,
And she saw, through the mist of these
bitter tears,

Only the child in his innocent years;
She remembered him pure as a child
might be,
The guilt of the present she could not see;
And for mercy her wistful look made prayer
To the stern old judge in his cushioned
chair.

"Woman," the old judge crabbedly said—
"Your boy is the neighbourhood's plague
and dread;
Of a gang of reprobates chosen chief;
The jury did right for the facts were plain;
Denial is useless, excuses are vain.
The sentence the court imposes is one—"
"Your honour," she cried, "he's my only
son."

The tipstaves grinned at the words she
spoke,
And a ripple of fun through the court-room
broke;

But over the face of the culprit came
An angry look and a shadow of shame.
"Don't laugh at my mother!" loud cries he;
"You've got me fast, and can deal with me;
But she's too good for your coward jeers,
And I'll"—then his utterance choked with
tears.

The judge for a moment bent his head,
And looked at him keenly, then he said:
"We suspend the sentence,—the boy can
go,"

And the words were tremulous, forced and
low.

"But say!" and he raised his finger then,
"Don't let them bring you hither again.
There is something good in you yet, I
know;
I'll give you a chance—make the most of it
—Go!"

The twain went forth, and the old judge
said:

"I meant to have given him a year instead,
And perhaps 'tis a difficult thing to tell
If clemency here be ill or well.

But a rock was struck in that callous heart
From which a fountain of good may start;
For one on the ocean of crime long tossed,
Who loves his mother, is not quite lost.

—Selected.

TO ALL MY YOUNG FRIENDS.

I HAVE an invitation for you. You
are all fond of receiving pleasant invi-
tations. This is one full of joy. Will
you listen to it? It is this: Come to
Jesus.

There are many reasons why you
should yield to this invitation just now.
The first is: Jesus has shown especial
interest in the young, and given them
special tokens of his love. Some of
you who read this are children. You
do not forget how, when mothers
brought their little ones to Jesus, and
the disciples were about to send them
away, He said: "Suffer the little
children to come unto me, and forbid
them not; for of such is the kingdom
of heaven."

Some of you are young men and young
women. You remember how Mark
says, in regard to the young man who
came to Jesus, asking how he might
inherit eternal life, that "Jesus behold-
ing him, loved him." You remember
that away back in the Old Testament
times a special command was addressed
to the young: "Remember now thy
Creator in the days of thy youth."

Jesus has the same love for children
and youth that he had when he was
here upon earth. He wants you to
come to him now. Will you not do
it?

Another reason why you should
come to him now is that this is the
very best time. Youth is the time
when habits are formed which last
through life. A few evenings ago a
minister, preaching to a large con-
gregation, said that he believed that
nine-tenths of all the people who are
Christians now came to Christ before
they were thirty-five years old. The
pastor for whom he was preaching
afterward invited all present who be-
came Christians before they were
thirty-five to arise.

Nearly the whole large congregation
arose. He then asked those who
came to Christ after they were thirty-
five to arise, and only six or seven
rose.

I believe that if he had asked all
who came to Christ before they were
twenty to arise, a very large majority
would have arisen. The great proba-
bility is that if you do not give your
heart to Jesus before you are twenty,
you will never come to him. Now
your hearts are touched by his love,
and you often say to yourselves, "I
would like to be a Christian." If you
resist the influence of His Holy Spirit
your hearts will be hardened, and by
and by you will feel no desire to come
to him. Come now, I entreat you.

Another reason why you should
come now is, that you are uncertain of
any future opportunity. If death
came only to those over twenty, you
count on at least that period to live;

but very often, alas! the little girl of
eight or ten, the lad of twelve, the
young man and young lady, are called
away. It is never safe to delay any
duty that ought to be performed.
Most of all it is not safe to delay this
most important of all matters—that
of coming to Jesus for salvation. Will
you not come, and come now?

Another reason I present you is this:
Even supposing that you could count
on ten years more in which this duty
could be done, and could be sure that
in 1897 you would be willing to do it,
you will lose ten precious years of
service in the cause of Christ, and are
you really willing to treat your blessed
Saviour in such a way? Do you mean
to say to him, "I will go on and serve
Satan for ten years; I will seek gay
and ungodly companions; I will give
the world my bright days of youth;
and then I will come to Thee and seek
Thy forgiveness?" O, no; you do not
wish to do anything as mean as that.
And yet, do you not see that you are
practically doing it while you are with-
holding your heart from him? Go to
your quiet room, kneel down before
Jesus, and say with your whole heart,
"I come to Thee now, my dear Saviour,
to give my heart to Thee. I beseech
Thee to accept me, and make me all
Thine own." Take the very first
opportunity to acknowledge publicly
your desire to be a Christian. Perhaps
there are special services in your
church, or in the regular meetings
those who desire to give themselves to
Christ are asked to arise, or to go to
the altar. Do not hesitate. Rise at
once, or go forward. Don't wait for
any one else. Go alone, if no one else
starts. Be willing to acknowledge
your desire for Christ, and to seek him
everywhere, and may God bless you,
and lead you just now to himself.

AN INDIAN BOY.

BY RANGER.

ONE Sunday in the winter of 1885 as
I was leaving the Saskatchewan Mines
after holding service in the dining
hall, I was brought to a "standstill"
by a lusty shout from the direction of
the boarding house. Turning round
I saw an Indian boy of about seven
winters hastening with all speed to
catch me. He had a small dog hitched
to a light sled. I waited until he
caught up to me, for I had eight miles
to walk over a trackless, snow-clad
prairie, and was glad of his company.
When he came close enough I was
struck with the ingenious contrivance
he used for a sled. It was made out
of natural crook runners, and part of
an old packing box. The harness was
manufactured out of the unravelled
ply of what had been an inch rope,
the collar, backband and traces being
all of the same material. The harness
was light, yet heavy enough; and in
appearance was both substantial and
neat. On the sled was a neat bundle,
the outer covering of which was a
much worn blanket. Through a hole

in the blanket I saw that the cargo
was made up of pieces of meat or bone,
and scraps of bread—in fact, refuse
from the boarding-house, which had
doubtless been given him by the cooks
or waiters. I could not help thinking
what a pity some means could not be
devised to awaken the latent energy,
and harness into usefulness the growing
activities of Indian boys like this one.
He is clever and quick. He makes
his own sleigh, constructs his own
harness and trains his dog. In every-
thing that appertains to youth, he
exhibits an intelligence equal to the
average white boy. But having no
one to train him in thrift or industry
or economy, he early lapses into indo-
lence, and forces us to conclude that
idleness is the red man's curse.

BOYS AND MEN.

You are boys now, but you will
soon be men. Then you will have
your own way to make in the world.
Do you mean to be idle and fretful,
and deceive people, and give them a
bad opinion of you? Or do you intend
to go to work, and act bravely and
nobly, and do your duty, and leave a
name behind you when you die which
the world will love and respect? Take
care—now is the time! Did you ever
notice a large tree that grew crooked,
and was an ugly eyesore on that
account? Perhaps it stood on the lawn,
right in front of the porch, and your
father would have liked very much to
straighten it. It is impossible to do so.
A hundred horses could not have
dragged it erect. And yet think of the
time when the large tree was a small
sapling; a child might have straighten-
ed it then, and it would have grown
properly, and every one would have
admired it. By this I mean that boys
should grow straight, not crooked.

You are young now, as the tree was
once; begin in time, and you will be
as straight as an arrow when you are
a man. If you wait, it will be too
late. The way to make men erect and
noble, is to take them when they are
boys and show them that there is noth-
ing in this world so noble as doing
their duty. Once more I say, remem-
ber that though you are boys now, you
will be men soon.

You may do good or evil. If you
are false and worthless, you and every-
body else will have a hard time of it.
You may be soldiers, judges, states-
men, and presidents. What you say
or do may decide the fate of millions
of other people. These will look to
you; and, more than all, God will
watch you, and hold you to a strict
account. If you are brave, and true
and unselfish, Heaven will bless you,
and every one who knows you will love
and respect you. If you are mean and
cowardly, and think of nothing but
your own pleasure, God and man will
be displeased with you. Which will
you be? The best of all things is to be
pure and do your duty.