

## Our Young Folks.

### OVER THE FENCE.

BOY.

Over the fence is a garden fair—  
How I should like to be master there!  
All I lack is a mere pretense—  
I could leap over the low white fence.

CONSCIENCE.

This is the way that crimes commence;  
Sin and sorrow are over the fence.

BOY.

Over the fence I can toss my ball;  
Then I can go in for it—that is all.  
Picking an apple up near the tree  
Would not really be theft, you see.

CONSCIENCE.

This is a falsehood, a weak pretense;  
Sin and sorrow are over the fence.

BOY.

Whose is the voice that speaks so plain?  
Twice have I heard it, and not in vain.  
Ne'er will I venture to look that way,  
Lest I shall do as I planned to-day.

CONSCIENCE.

This is the way all crimes commence—  
Coveting that which is over the fence.

### ITALIAN SABBATH SCHOOL AT SAN REMO.

We have thought that the children attending our Sabbath schools in Canada might like to know something of the little Italian boys and girls who have been gathered into a Sabbath school at San Remo; and so we invite them to come along with us this bright morning and pay them a visit. The children are always pleased to see visitors. They stand up and salute them when they enter, and return them many a *Grazie tante*, "Thank you so much," when they go away. The school work begins at nine o'clock, so we must be all in time.

But no one lies long in bed there, neither on week-day nor Sunday. Of course, we have not the excuse you have in Canada, that the mornings are dark, and dull, and cold. Here they are bright, warm, and beautiful. The sun is up in mid-winter shortly after seven o'clock, and a glorious sight it is to see it rise out of the waters of the blue Mediterranean, and light up with its beams the snows of the lofty mountain-peaks of the island of Corsica, seventy miles to the south of us, and the snows on the Maritime Alps behind us, and bathe all the landscape around in brightest, warmest sunshine; and an exhilarating thing it is to get out of doors amongst the orange trees and flowers of the garden, or by the sea-side, to "snuff the caller air."

Our walk to the school lies through plantations of olive trees. As we look at their curiously-twisted stems and branches, their willow-like shoots and leaves, and their black glossy berries, we think of the "olive leaf plucked off" that the dove brought to Noah; and of the cherubim and doors and posts of the Temple, all made of olive wood; of the "beaten oil" that burned in the lamps of the sanctuary, and wherewith kings and priests were anointed; and of the Mount of Olives where our Saviour agonized in prayer. But now we have reached the old town of San Remo. We find its houses very high, and its streets very narrow and very steep.

The school is in a street called *Gaudio*, which means "Rejoicing,"—an appropriate name for a place where agencies are at work to deliver men's minds from the bondage of the superstitions of Rome. In this street there is an old palace which was once the residence of a princely Italian

family, but now accommodates a score or two of humble households—a change similar to that which has taken place in the case of many grand old houses at home. In an apartment on the third storey of this palace the school is held. The stairs by which we ascend are not very clean nor well lighted, but we see their steps and landing-places are all white marble. This is the case even in working-men's houses of recent erection. We are in the land of marble, and it is as cheap, or cheaper, than wood.

We find the children already assembled. They are all tidy and clean, though plainly and in some cases meanly dressed, for all of them are the children of poor people. We notice how different their faces are from those of home children. Their complexions are dark, "olive-coloured," and they have black hair, and very large sparkling dark eyes. The school is not large; but yet there is considerable variety of age and appearance and dress amongst the scholars. Little "Peppino" sitting there on his father's knee is twenty-two months old; and "Pietro Simonette" at the other end of the class is an aged "Simeon" of fourscore years.

Though we have thus three generations represented in the school, the bulk of the children are from five to twelve years of age. The girls wear pretty bright-coloured handkerchiefs on their heads, as do all the peasant women in this part of Italy. These kerchiefs are much admired by British visitors, who eagerly buy them to carry back to England and Scotland as a sample of Italian costume, little knowing that they are all made in the good city of Glasgow. The school is opened by prayer, the children repeating the words after their teacher, and even little "Peppino" reverently folds his hands and does his best to follow. Then a hymn is sung. The air is quite familiar to us. It is that of "The Happy Land," and the children are singing a translation of that well-known hymn. The Italian Protestants have as yet few original hymns, and so they have adopted a number from the Scotch collections.

The lesson for to-day is one from "The Peep of Day Series," which is called in Italian *L'Alba*, and it treats of the main facts of the gospel history. The children answer readily and tolerably well, although some, never having heard of these things till they come to the school, display much ignorance. The answers are sometimes odd and amusing. Little "Morina," the child of a laundress, is asked, "What does God do for you?" and she answers, "He gives me life and food and my kind mother." "And what does her mother do?" "*Mama stirra*" (Mother irons).

They have verses of Scripture to repeat which they have learned by heart. The first who is asked to say hers is "Caterina." She is the mother of little "Maria" and "Rosa," who have got above her in the class. Though somewhat abashed, she gets through it with credit, and is rewarded by a picture text for next Sabbath, and a *Brava Caterina* from the visitors.

"Giovannino" is the leading boy of his class. He is very bright, and is forever on his feet, answering the questions, whether put to him or no, "in season and out of season." As he is irrepressible, he is called on to recite a piece, which is a paraphrase of a long portion of Scripture. He does this in great style. His features, and hands, and arms, and even his legs are brought into requisition, to aid his voice in giving expression and effect to his delivery. It is easy to see we are in the country whose every subject is born an orator or poet. Some of the children are Roman Catholics, others belong to Protestant

families. Of this latter class, are these five very dark, odd-looking little creatures, who might pass for negroes from South Africa. Strange to say, like negro children of converted parents, they have all scripture names—Enoch, Elia, Sarah, Ruth, and last of all little Abraham, a patriarch of three years old.

Their father was some years ago converted from Romanism, and suffered much persecution in consequence. He is now the Bible peddler and reader on this coast. Another hymn is sung, and the Lord's Prayer is repeated, with which exercise the school is closed. As we leave, we feel that, though as regards Sabbath schools and kindred agencies this is the day of small things in Italy, still good is being accomplished, and these institutions will grow and spread; and we pray that by means of even this little San Remo school, Christ may take children to His arms and bless them, so that they may in turn be enabled to bless their fellow-countrymen with the truth and the joy and the hope which they have found for themselves in Him.

### A BROKEN HEARTED FATHER.

An affecting scene—one of the saddest—occurred lately at the visiting window of the gaol in an American city. A boy about eighteen years old was imprisoned, awaiting transportation to the penitentiary, where he is to serve a six years' sentence. The prisoner was a fine-looking young fellow. His father—an aged minister—had come to visit him. The son stood with shamed face on one side of the grating, and the grief-stricken father on the other. Drink had been the cause of the boy's troubles. The father pleaded earnestly with his child to reform while in prison, to read his Bible, and improve all spare time in study.

"Son," continued the father, "if you had the grace of God in your heart you wouldn't be here. If those cursed grog-shops were swept away, I'd have been spared all this. Let it be a lesson to you, boy. This is the last time you will probably ever see me. I am old, and probably won't live to see your six years out. O, my boy, promise me to give yourself to God, that I may see you over yonder."

The boy promised, and the old man went his way.

While this father returns to his home to go down to a premature grave in sorrow, the man who ruined his son is now engaged in ruining other sons. Which shall we have, "the home or the saloon?"

### "THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Going into her flower garden one bright, warm day, a lady remarked to the gardener how she admired the sun.

He did not reply but on her repeating the words, said:

"Oh, ma'am! how you would admire 'the Sun of Righteousness,' the Lord Jesus Christ, if you only knew him."

The lady made no answer; the Holy Spirit had touched her heart. Returning to her house, she opened the Bible, and continued to "Search the Scriptures" until "the Sun of Righteousness," the Lord Jesus Christ, arose on her soul, "with healings in His wings."

Whether young or old, think it neither too soon nor too late to turn over the leaves of your past life and consider what you would do if what you have done were to be done again.