

Our Young Folks.

A TRUE INCIDENT.

"There is one thing about it," said George Logan, as he went out into the world to earn his own living, "I am not going to church or to Sunday school wherever I may be."

The lad's home had for years been in a large city, where he had lived with an uncle, his parents being dead, and this relative evidently felt that in keeping the boy in the Sunday school his whole duty to him was being fulfilled.

George had spent his early childhood in the country, and during the long years spent in a crowded quarter of the city his heart had constantly gone back with a great longing to the green fields and rippling brooks of the dear old farm.

Now, through the kindness of the milkman who came every morning to their door, he had a place on a great dairy farm, where his waking hours were busily occupied in doing chores and working in the garden; but on Sunday he could roam at will.

His employer's wife had reasoned with him at first, but, finding him stubborn, had wisely decided to let the matter rest for the time, when the lad had said, on his own accord:

"I will ask no one to go with me, Mrs. Manners. I promise that; so you see, I shall harm no one."

"No one but yourself just now, I admit," said the good woman; "you cannot tell what harm may work out of your disregard of sacred time in the future. I hold that no one can break one of the ten commandments with impunity."

George laughed, stuffed his lunch of doughnuts and cheese into his pocket, and walked away.

Sunday after Sunday he did the same thing, seeming to find delight in the wildness of the fields and forests, and in his own perfect freedom. At last, one sweet June Sunday morning, as he was climbing a steep hill from the summit of which a fine view was obtained, he seemed to hear a voice speaking to him. It came upon him suddenly, and said:

"You had better be in church!"

The boy looked around; he was entirely alone on the great pasture side. He used to say afterwards that it was like a voice in the air speaking aloud to him. He was startled at first, and then said aloud:

"My time is my own, I suppose. I may do with it as I please."

"Sunday is God's time," said the voice. "He reserved it to Himself from the beginning. You had better be in church."

The lad was frightened now, and turning, he ran down the hill and into the shade of a thick wood. He cowered under the great, dark hemlock to a thicket from which the light of day was almost shut out. Here it seemed that all the religious teachings of his boyhood rushed in upon him with bewildering force. Half forgotten chapters of committed Scripture lessons, the words of precious hymns, and at last a prayer that his mother used to repeat over him when he was almost a baby. It was packed away in his brain. Other matters had kept it hidden. He never had recalled it before; he had no idea it was there. He remembered that his mother used to kneel with him; now he heard the prayer as if anew, "Oh, Lord, let my little boy grow up to love Thee, to love Thy house, and Thy way, and Thy work, and thus to make an earnest Christian man."

"Yes, that was the prayer," he said aloud, "and she prayed so long, and so earnestly, and so faithfully her prayers must be answered. Oh, Father in heaven who heard my mother's prayers, help me now as I pray for myself," and there, in the deep

lonely wood, he prayed until the assurance came that his sins were forgiven.

He then went back to the farmhouse, and making himself ready, went to the church, arriving in time for Sunday school, and astonished Mrs. Manners by taking his place decorously with her class of boys.

He related his experience in the prayer meeting that evening, and when some one arose to explain away the marvel of "a voice in the air," the pastor interposed.

"It was the way the tender Shepherd took to call back His own," he said. "The mother's prayer had to be answered. God had passed His word. We each have a different experience. The more spiritual-minded we become the less ready we are to explain the non-explainable."

George Logan united with the church; he grew to love the Lord and His house, His way and His day, and His work, and now, as a faithful, earnest Christian man, if he has any special department of work it is in setting forth to all classes the beauty and sublimity of our obligation as children of the Heavenly King to obey His beneficent decree: "Thou shalt remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

CALL THE CHILDREN HOME.

The good man steps upon the porch:
"The little ones have not yet come,"
He says. "See, it is getting late;
So, mother, call the children home."

The mother's voice rings sweet and clear:
"Come, Mary, John and little Ted!
Come, dearest, come; the sun has set.
'Tis time you all were safe in bed."

"Yes, mother, see how fast we come?"
They cry in answer to her call;
And so she has them all at home
Before the evening shadows fall.

But as the fleeting years go by,
And on life's pathway far and wide
The children go their separate ways,
And wander from the mother's side—

Will each one keep his child-like trust,
Will each reach heaven, no more to roam?
Before sin's blighting shadows fall,
Oh, mother, call the children home!

A mother's voice can reach so far!
Who can resist its tender "come?"
And still its tones will echo on
When God has called the mother home.

ACKNOWLEDGE THE DEBT.

A venerable clergyman said recently: "Men of my profession see much of the tragic side of life. Beside a death-bed the secret passions, the hidden evil as well as the good in human nature, are very often dragged to light. I have seen men die in battle, children, and young wives in their husband's arms, but no death ever seemed so pathetic to me as that of an old woman, a member of my church."

"I knew her first as a young girl, beautiful, gay, full of spirit and vigour. She married and had four children; her husband died and left her penniless. She taught school, she painted, she sewed; she gave herself scarcely time to eat or sleep. Every thought was for her children, to educate them, to give them the same chance which their father would have done."

"She succeeded; sent the boys to college, and the girls to school. When they came home, pretty, refined girls and strong young men, abreast with all the new ideas and tastes of their time, she was a worn-out, commonplace old woman. They had their own pursuits and companions. She lingered among them for two or three years, and then died of some sudden failure in the brain. The shock woke them to a consciousness of the truth. They hung over her as she lay unconscious, in an agony of grief. The oldest son, as he held her in his arms, cried:

"You have been a good mother to us!"

"Her face coloured again, her eyes kindled into a smile, and she whispered, 'You never said so before, John.' Then the light died out and she was gone."

How many men and women sacrifice their own hopes and ambitions, their strength, their life itself, to their children, who receive it as a matter of course, and begrudge a caress, a word of gratitude, in payment for all that has been given to them!

Boys, when you come back from college, don't consider that your only relation to your father is to "get as much money as the governor will stand." Look at his gray hair, his uncertain step, his dim eyes, and remember in whose service he has grown old. You can never pay him the debt you owe; but at least acknowledge it before it is too late.

HE ATTENDED THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

A little boy was hurt at a spinning-mill in Dundee, and after being taken home, he lingered for some time, and then died. I was in the mill when his mother came to tell that her little boy was gone. I asked her how he died.

"He was singing all the time," she said.

"Tell me what he was singing," I said.

"He was singing—

Oh, the Lamb, the bleeding Lamb,
The Lamb upon Calvary!
The Lamb that was slain has risen again,
And intercedes for me.

"You might have heard him from the street, singing with all his might," she said, with tears in her eyes.

"Had you a minister to see him?" I asked.

"No."

"Had you no one to pray for him?"

"No."

"Why was that?" I inquired.

"Oh, we have not gone to church for several years," she replied, holding down her head. "But, you know, he attended the Sunday school, and learned hymns there, and he sang them to the last."

Poor little fellow! he could believe in Jesus and love him through those precious hymns, and die resting "safe on His gentle breast" forever.

A HOLY LIFE.

A holy life is made up of a number of small things; little words, not eloquent of speeches or sermons; little deeds, not miracles or battles, nor one great heroic act of mighty martyrdom, make up the true Christian life. The little sunbeam, not the lightning; the waters of Siloam "that go softly" in the meek mission of refreshment, not the "waters of the rivers great and many," rushing down in noisy torrents, are the true symbols of holy life. The avoidance of little sins, little inconsistencies, little weaknesses, little follies, indiscretions and imprudences, little foibles, little indulgences of the flesh—the avoidance of such little things as these goes far to make up, at least, the negative beauty of a holy life.

WHO DID BEST.

A story is told of a great captain, who, after a battle, was talking over the events of the day with his officers. He asked them who had done the best that day. Some spoke of one man who had fought very bravely, and some of another. "No," said he, "you are all mistaken. The best man in the field to-day was a soldier who was just lifting his arm to strike an enemy, but when he heard the trumpet sound a retreat, checked himself, and dropped his arm without striking a blow. That perfect and ready obedience to the will of his general is the noblest thing that has been done to-day." And nothing pleases God so much as absolute and unhesitating obedience.