

BOB'S VALENTINE.

It had such fun on Valentine's Day
With the little girls who live over
the way!

Teddy and I, and Jed and Joe,
Picked out the prettiest girls, you know,
And wrote 'em things about "Violots blue,
And sugar is sweet, and so are you."
And only that Bobby said it was mean,
I wanted to write, "The grass is green,
And so are you," and send it out
To a girl we fellows don't care about.

But Bobby he's queer, and doesn't go
For fun like the rest of us chaps, you know.
Why who do you think he chose to be
His Valentinus? Now, if I'd been he,
I'd rather have chosen—Never mind;
I'll tell you about it, and you will find
That if ever you want a fellow that's queer,
You'll get him in Bobby, never you fear.

You see, we boys we had all picked out,
As I told you, the prettiest girls about.
But Bob he said there wasn't a girl
As pretty as his, and there wasn't a curl
On any girl's head that could half compare
With his chosen Valentine's soft, fine hair,
And he said her eyes were a whole lot bluer
Than any skies, and double the truer,
And that he was going to be her knight,
And take care of her always with main and
might.

He wouldn't tell us his Valentine's name
Till the regular day for Valentines came,
And mamma had hers, and vistor, you know
(Of course from papa and sister's beau.)
Then Bob he told us to come ahead,
And he'd prove the truth of all he had said.
And where do you think he took us boys?
Hushing us up at the leastest noise,
And making us promise not to laugh,
Nor quiz him, nor give him any chuff?
Why, he opened grandmamma's door. "See
there!"
He said.

It was grandmamma, I declare!
Grandmamma sitting and knitting away,
Sweet grandmamma with her hair so gray,
Lying all soft on her forehead in curls
Just as pretty as any girl's.
And I never had noticed before how blue
Were grandmamma's eyes. It was really
true,
As Bobby had said, that there never were
skies
One bit bluer than grandmamma's eyes.

So she was his Valentine, he was her knight,
And somehow we all thought Bobby was
right
When he kissed her hand, and cried, in glee,
"Dear grandma's the 'prettiest girl,' you see;
Of course I chose her instead of mamma,
For she, you know, belongs to papa.
But grandpa's in heaven, and so I knew
That grandma must be my Valentine true."
—Mary D. Brine.

KEEP THE SOUL ON TOP.

LITTLE Bertie Blinn had just finished
his dinner. He was in the cosy
library, keeping still for a few minutes
after eating, according to his mother's
rule. She got it from the family
doctor, and a good rule it is. Bertie
was sitting in his own rocking-chair,
before the pleasant grate fire. He had
in his hand two fine apples—a rich red
and a green. His father sat at a win-
dow reading a newspaper. Presently
he heard the child say, "Thank you,
little master." Dropping his paper,
he said: "I thought we were alone,
Bertie. Who was here just now?"
"Nobody, papa, only you and I."
"Didn't you say just now, 'Thank
you, little master?'"
The child did not answer at first,
but laughed a shy laugh. Soon he
said, "I'm afraid you will laugh at me
if I tell you, papa."
"Well, you have just laughed; and
why mayn't I?"
"But I mean you'll make fun of
me."
"No, I won't make fun of you; but
perhaps I'll have fun with you. That
will help us digest our roast beef."

"I'll tell you about it, papa. I had
eaten my red apple, and wanted to eat
the green one too. Just then I re-
membered something I'd learned at
school about eating, and I thought that
one big apple was enough. My
stomach will be glad if I don't give it
the green one to grind. It seemed to
me for a minute just as if it said to
me, 'Thank you, little master;' but I
know I said it myself."

"Bertie, what is it that Miss Mc-
Laren has been teaching you about
eating?"

"She told us to be careful not to
give our stomach too much food to
grind. If we do, she says, it will make
bad blood, that will run up into our
brains, and make them dull and stupid,
so that we can't get our lessons well,
and perhaps give us headaches too. If
we give our stomachs just enough
work to do, they will give us pure,
lively blood, that will make us feel
bright and cheerful in school. Miss
McLaren says that sometimes, when
she eats too much of something that
she likes very much, it seems almost as
if her stomach moaned and complained;
but when she denies herself, and doesn't
eat too much, it seems as if it was
thankful and glad."

"That's as good preaching as the
minister's, Bertie. What more did
Miss McLaren tell you about this
matter?"

"She taught us a verse one day
about keeping the soul on top. That
wasn't just the word, but it's what it
meant."

At this, papa's paper went suddenly
right up before his face. When, in a
minute, it dropped down, there wasn't
any laugh on his face as he said:
"Weren't these the words, 'I keep my
body under'"

"O yes! that was it; but it means
just the same. If I keep my body
under, of course my soul is on top."

"Of course it is, my boy. Keep
your soul on top, and you'll belong to
the grandest style of man that walks
on the earth."

Bertie put on his coat and cap, and
went away to school. His father took
up the apple he had left behind on the
table, and put it in his pocket. On
his way home late in the afternoon, he
called at Miss McLaren's boarding-
house. He gave her the apple, and
told her all that Bertie had said.

She could not eat the apple. She
wrapped it in rose-coloured tissue-
paper, and laid it in the drawer where
she kept her dainty laces and nicest
things. She had worked hard in
school that day, and was very tired.
At night, when her head was resting
on its pillow, the moon looked in
through the window and saw tears of
joy dropping on it from a sweet face.
—Well Spring.

"PAYING OFF MOTHER."

"Mother," said a little black-eyed
boy of six years, "when you get old,
and want some one to read to you, I
will pay you off."

Little Alexander's mother had been
in the habit of reading to him a good
deal, and on this Sabbath day she read
to him a long time out of the Bible
and a Sabbath-school book. The child
was just able to read, himself, and the
progress he was making doubtless sug-
gested to him how he might at some
future time return all his mother's
care.

"I will pay you off, mother," said

he, looking up into her face with
childish satisfaction, as if a new
thought from heaven had been sent
down to light up the little world of
soul. His mother pressed him to her
heart with a delight that seemed to
say, "My son, I am more than paid
off already."

But, children, you can never pay off
your mother. Her thoughts of love
and acts of affection are more in num-
ber than the days of life. How often
has she nourished you, dressed you,
kissed you, rocked you on her knee
and in the cradle, carried you in her
tender arms, watched over you in
sleep, guided your infant steps, cor-
rected at times your misdemeanors,
thought of you in absence, and guarded
your life in the unvarying remem-
brance of a mother's solicitude, and the
free-will offerings of a mother's devo-
tion! Ah, dear children, you can
never "pay off your mothers."

Mother has taught you to read and
pray. She has patiently sat by you
and taught you the letters of the
alphabet, and then she helped you to
put them together and spell words of
thought. She taught you to know
God. Before you could read, she
taught you to say, "Our Father which
art in heaven." Mother has trained
you with lessons and hymns and
prayers to come to Christ. She has
prayed for you when none but God
knew it, and has prayed with you
when your wandering eyes understood
not the meaning of her grave and im-
ploring looks. She pointed you to
heaven, and "led the way." Dear
children, you can never "pay off your
mothers."—Selected.

HOW TO READ.

BY REV. JOHN ALONZO FISHER.

READ with attention. Were you
never roused from a reverie to find that
while your eyes had been following the
lines of the printed page, your wits had
been wool-gathering, and that if your
life had depended upon it, you could
not have told what you had been reading
about? Such reading is worse than
profitless; for it lessens the power of
attention, the one power that, more
than any other, distinguishes the suc-
cessful from the unsuccessful student.

Take notes. This will compel atten-
tion; for one cannot make a synopsis
of what is but vaguely apprehended.
The practice of taking notes develops
the analytical powers, trains the mind to
discriminate between the vital and the
unessential points of an article or a
book, fastens the new facts or thoughts
upon the memory, facilitates review and
makes available the results of one's
reading. Cuttings or "scraps" of
book paper may be bought for a song
at any printing office and mounted up in
paste-board tablets of convenient size.
Such paper is used by economical
authors in the preparation of their manu-
scripts.

If the book that you are reading is
your own, underline choice passages,
add pencil notes in the margin, and
opposite paragraphs whose statements
you question, put impertinent interro-
gation points. Such marks will invite
you to a review of the book, and will
greatly enhance its interest to others
who may read it. To such readers, the
glimpses into your mind afforded by
critical pencil notes in the margin, will
make the perusal of the book seem
almost like reading in the compani-
ship of a thoughtful friend. It sumo-

times happens that an author's
statements may be corrected or made
more intelligible. The reader should
not hesitate to perform that friendly
service for subsequent readers. The
Rev. Joseph Cook marks with one,
two and three lines in the outer margin,
passages that he approves, and in a like
manner he marks, on the inner margin,
passages he disapproves. Mr. Cook
advises readers to follow his example,
marking the sentences marked
with three lines in the outer margin.
Review again and again all that you
wish to make your own.

ONLY NOW AND THEN.

THINK it no excuse, boys,
Merging into men,
That you do a wrong act
Only now and then.
Better to be careful
As you go along,
If you would be manly,
Capable and strong!

Many a wrotted sot, boys,
That one daily meets,
Drinking from the beer kegs,
Living in the streets,
Or at best in quarters
Worse than any pen,
Once was dressed in broadcloth,
Drinking now and then.

When you have a habit
That is wrong you know,
Knock it off at once, lads,
With a sudden blow.
Think it no excuse, boys,
Merging into men,
That you do a wrong act
Only now and then.
—Youth's Temperance Banner.

WHAT A VERSE CAN DO.

A LITTLE boy came to one of our city
missionaries, and holding out a dirty
and well-worn bit of printed paper,
said, "Please, sir, father sent me to
get a clean paper like that."

Taking it from his hand, the mission-
ary unfolded it, and found it was a
page containing that beautiful hymn,
of which the first stanza is as follows:

"Just as I am without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou didst not come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come."

The missionary looked down with
interest into the face earnestly up-
turned to him, and asked the little
boy where he got it, and why he
wanted a clean one.

"We found it, sir," said he, "in
sister's pocket after she died; and she
used to sing it all the time when she
was sick, and loved it so much that
father wanted to get a clean one to put
in a frame to hang it up. Won't you
give us a clean one, sir?"

This little page, with a single hymn
on it, had been cast upon the air like
a fallen leaf, by Christian hands,
humbly hoping to do some possible
good. In some little mission Sunday-
school, probably this poor girl had
thoughtlessly received it, afterward to
find it, we hope, the gospel of her
salvation. Could she, in any proba-
bility, have gone down into death
sweetly singing that hymn of peni-
tence and faith in Jesus to her latest
breath, without the saving knowledge
of him, which the Holy Spirit alone
imparts

LAST December little George saw
a snow-storm for the first time.
"Mamma! mamma!" he called out
from the window, "bring a big pan!
It's raining popcorn!"