

Our Young Folks.

OVER THE FENCE.

BOY.

Over the fence is a garden fair.
How I would love to be over there!
All that I lack is mere pretence;
I could leap over the low, white fence.

CONSCIENCE.

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

BOY.

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

CONSCIENCE.

This is a falsehood, a mere pretence.
Sin and sorrow are over the fence.

BOY.

What is the voice that speaks so plain?
Twice have I heard it, and not in vain.
So I will not venture to look that way
Lest I should do as I planned to-day.

CONSCIENCE.

This is the way to keep from sin;
To list to the voice that speaks within.
The way that so many crimes commence
Is coveting that which is over the fence.
—Children's Paper.

HUMAN KINDNESS.

Alphonsus, the king of Naples and Sicily, justly celebrated in history for his leniency and mercy, was once asked why he was so lenient to all, even the most wicked men.

"Because," said he, "good men are won by justice, the bad by mercy."

On another occasion some complained that he was too kind, even for a prince.

"What then," cried the king, "would you have lions and tigers to reign over you? Do you not know that cruelty is the property of wild beasts, mercy that of man?"

TO BOYS.

When a boy is patient and persevering, and conquers difficulties, it is a sign he will make his mark in the world. If he worries, and frets, and stewes, it is a sign he is likely to die prematurely, or live to little purpose. If he is in a hurry to spend each coin as he gets it, he will never be rich, but a spendthrift. If he hoards up his pennies, and will not part with one for any good cause, he is likely to be a miser. If he is careful, and economical, and generous, he may or may not be rich, but he will have the blessing of God, and if he is a Christian who attends to his religious duties, he will never want. If he is obedient to his parents, he has the promise that his "days shall be long in the land." If he is lazy, and indifferent, and neglects his duties, he will grow up a dunce, and men cannot respect him. If he reads dime novels, or low, trashy, vile five-cent paper, instead of bright, helpful literature, he will likely end his days in prison or upon the gallows. If he loves his religion, and his church, and his Sabbath-school, he will be good and useful, and occupy an honourable position among men. Are you patient, persevering, prayerful, contented, careful, generous, and good? Are you trying to be?—Exchange.

A GIRL'S UNSELFISHNESS.

It was through the influence of a girl's unselfishness that Vassar College was founded.

It has been said—and if true, it is a beautiful story—that a niece of Mr. Vassar was slowly dying, and that he loved her, and spent much time in her sick-room. As he paced up and down before her fading eyes, she did not talk to him about herself, but the substance of her conversation was, "Uncle Matthew, when I am gone, do something for women!"

Over and over again the same sweet refrain sounded in his ears, "Uncle Matthew, Uncle Matthew! do something for women!"

If she had wailed: "Why don't you do something to save me?" Vassar College, that has done so much for the women of the country, might never have existed.

In our greatest suffering, even in mortal sickness, it is still possible to remember other sufferers and other needs. No one can tell what may be the value of a last impression made by one who is about to leave loving friends forever.

As the conservatory is the sunny, fragrant bower of the rich home, so the sick-room can be the beloved retreat of the household. Even terrible pain may be divinely unselfish.

Christ's last thought upon the cross was for other people.

HUMMING TELEGRAPH WIRES.

A writer in one of the daily papers says to young readers: You have all heard the humming and singing of the telegraph and telephone wires as you pass the poles along the streets. No doubt you have concluded that it is caused by the action of the wind on the wires, and given it no further thought. But it is not true that the singing is caused by the wind, and if you are at all observing you will notice that often the humming sound is to be heard these cold winter mornings when the smoke from the chimney goes straight up until it is lost in the clouds, and when the frost on the wires is as fuzzy and thick as a roll of chenille fringe.

The wind has nothing to do with the sound, and, according to an Australian scientist, the vibrations are due to the changes of the atmospheric temperature, and especially through the action of cold, as a lowering temperature induces a shortening of the wires extending over the whole of the conductor. A considerable amount of friction is produced on the supporting bell, thus inducing sounds both in the wires and in the poles. When this humming has been going on birds have mistaken the sounds for insects inside the poles, and have been seen to peck with their bills on the outside as they do upon apple and other trees. The story is told of a bear that mistook the humming noise as coming from a nest of bees, and clawed at the pole and tore away the stones at its base in the hope of finding the much coveted honey.

SELF-SACRIFICE.

According to our Lord's teaching, we can make the most of our life by losing it. He says that losing the life for His sake is finding it. There is a lower self that must be trampled down by the higher self. The alabaster vase must be broken, that the ointment may flow out to fill the house. The grapes must be crushed, that there may be wine to drink. The wheat must be bruised before it can become bread to feed hunger.

It is so in life. Whole, unbruised, unbroken men are of but little use. True living is really a succession of battles, in which the better triumphs over the worse, the spirit over the flesh. Until we cease to live for self, we have not begun to live at all.

We can never become truly useful and helpful to others until we have learned this lesson. One may live for self and yet do many pleasant things for others; but one's life can never become the great blessing to the world it was meant to be, until the law of self-sacrifice has become its heart principle.

People said that Harriet Newell's beautiful life was wasted when she gave it to missions, and then died and was buried far from home—bride, missionary, mother, saint, all in one short year—without even telling to one heathen mother or child the story of the Saviour. But was that lovely young life indeed wasted? No; all this century her name has been one of the strongest inspirations to missionary work, and her influence has brooded everywhere, touching thousands of hearts of gentle women and strong men, as the story of her consecration has been told. Had Harriet Newell lived a thousand years of quiet, sweet life at home, she could not have done the work she did in one short year by giving her life, as it seemed, an unavailing sacrifice. She lost her life that she might save it.

In heart and spirit we must do all the same if we would ever be a real blessing in the world. We must be willing to lose our life—to sacrifice ourselves, to give up our own way, our own ease, our own comfort, possibly even our own life.

We must not fear that in such sacrifice, such renunciation and annihilation of self, we shall lose anything. God will remember every deed of love, every forgetting of self, every emptying out of life. Though we work in obscurest places, where no human tongue shall ever voice our praise, still, there is a record kept, and some day rich and glorious reward will be given. Is not God's praise better than man's?

Mary's ointment was wasted when she broke the vase and poured it upon her Lord. Yes; but suppose she had left the ointment in the unbroken vase? What remembrance would it then have had? Would there have been any mention of it on the Gospel pages? Would her deed of careful keeping have been told over all the world? She broke the vase and poured it out, lost it, sacrificed it, and now the perfume fills all the earth. We may keep our life if we will, carefully preserving it from waste; but we shall have no reward, no honour from it, at the last. But if we empty it out in loving service, we shall make it a lasting blessing to the world, and we shall be remembered forever.—From Making the Most of Life.

LIFE-MEMBERSHIP.

Among the notices read on Sunday morning, in the little church in D—, was one appointing the annual meeting of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society on the following afternoon.

Poor Aunt Dolly! What a state of agitation she manifested. She slowly put on her glasses, and then took them off, put them on again, and peered over their silver bows, and seemed to be seeking some one in the congregation.

Usually a model of attention during all the services of the sanctuary, all who were near her felt that something was out of joint. That she did not join in the singing was matter of notice rather than of regret to the young girls who occupied the seat in front of her; for they could not know that the voice, now so thin and cracked, had, in her girlhood days, rung out clear and sweet, leading many hearts upward on its volume of praise.

Scarcely had the benediction been pronounced, when one of these young girls felt a gentle touch on her shoulder.

She turned, and said with a pleasant smile, "Yes, Aunt Dolly, what can I do for you?" for all loved and respected Aunt Dolly, and were happy to serve her.

"It is not you, I want, Rose, but your sister Mary. She is treasurer of the Woman's Society, isn't she?"

"Yes," said Rose, "but she is sitting with Uncle James this morning, and will not come till Sunday School time. Will not I do as well?"

"No thank you, dear, I will go out and meet Mary."

In a few minutes the two were walking back together, in earnest conversation.

"Why, I did not ask for your money, dear auntie," Mary was saying, "because I knew you had made yourself a life-member, and paid your twenty-five dollars once for all."

"Do tell, my dear child, if that is your idea of life-membership! Did you think I had been saving up that money for three years to purchase exemption from further payment and service?"

"But that is certainly what it means for some persons," said Mary. "The first year I was treasurer, I reminded one life-member of the auxiliary fee, and although she had been made a life-member, not by her own payment, but as a gift from a friend, I received a rebuff which I have never forgotten; so now I am almost afraid to remind life-members. Not that I am afraid to remind you, Aunt Dolly, but then I thought—I thought—"

Here Mary hesitated, for she felt that the sentence she had begun would have rather an awkward close. She knew that Aunt Dolly's means were limited, and thought that having just given twenty-five dollars, she ought not, at least this year, be expected to give more.

Perhaps Aunt Dolly noticed the embarrassment; at any rate she relieved her from it, by saying quickly, "Now, my dear, you must remember that although I am a life-member, I wish to be a member of the auxiliary too. If for nothing else, I would give my fee each year as a thank-offering that I have been able to give twenty-five dollars extra. Life-membership means, I think, life interest, and love, and service, and does not deprive one of the privilege of yearly payment with the rest. And, Mary dear, you had better remind the life-members of the auxiliary fee, unless positively forbidden to do so. I am sure the most of them will receive you graciously, and gladly give it to you."

Then Aunt Dolly handed out the necessary amount, and went home; and Mary went to her Sunday School class with a smiling face, and happy heart, wishing the world were full of Aunt Dollies.—Helping Hand.

The truly great man is he who does not lose his child heart. He does not think beforehand that his words shall be sincere, nor that his actions shall be resolute; he simply always abides in the right.—Mencius: Chinese.

Teacher and Scholar.

July 16th } PAUL AT ATHENS. { Acts xvii.
1893. } 22-31.

GOLDEN TEXT.—God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth.—John iv. 24.

Paul and Silas insisted on deliverance from the Philippian prison in such mode as would vindicate their innocence. The frightened magistrates gladly acceded, and entreated them to leave the city. After revisiting their hostess and exhorting the brethren, the missionary band, Luke seemingly excepted, set forth for Thessalonica, one hundred miles south-west. Here and later in Berea, sixty miles farther on, they preached the Gospel to the Jews with much success, those at Berea showing special candour and diligence in testing the apostolic teaching by Scripture. But disturbances stirred up at each place by Jews of Thessalonica, led to Paul being conducted away alone to Athens. Here his spirit was so stirred up at sight of the idol-filled city, that departing from his usual custom, he preached from the first to Greeks as well as Jews. The news-loving philosophers and other Athenians, confronted by him, aroused to some measure of curiosity, set him upon the rocky eminence of Mars' Hill, and so gave him the opportunity of addressing to them the words which follow.

1. Conciliatory Introduction.—Paul commences with a courteous reference to the religious disposition of the Athenians, evidenced by their objects of worship. It is unlikely Paul employed the word with the reproachful meaning, superstitious, which our English version gives. No doubt their idols shewed that they were superstitious; but Paul could truthfully recognize them also as evidences of a prevalent religious propensity, on which he wishes to engrave the true knowledge of God. In proof of this feeling, he had found among their objects of religious veneration an altar inscribed to an unknown God. Writers speak of several such at Athens. They possibly originated in the feeling that there might be a divine existence beyond those recognized in their worship, and in the desire to render it propitious. Paul will now set forth in His nature and attributes Him, whom not knowing they worship.

2. The Creator's independence and all-sufficiency.—By stating what is implied in the fact that God is Maker of all things, Paul leaves his hearers to infer the sharp contrast between Him and their false Gods. The Sovereign over heaven and earth is infinitely above the image (in which the heathen saw his God), restricted to the little space it occupied in the temple recess. Unlike their gods, He is independent of the ministrations of human hands, which would imply that something outside of Himself was necessary to His perfection. On the contrary, all are dependent on Him, the absolute giver.

3. The Creator's relation to mankind.—Closely connected with the thought that the Creator is one, is this that all nations are of one descent, none therefore entitled to look with contempt on others. God has assigned to them their respective abodes, fixing both the seasons of their prosperity and the limits of their territory, having designed in their creation that they should enjoy the manifold blessings allotted to them in their various dwelling places. The fact that all this was in the divine plan should heighten the idea of the infinite Creator and Ruler. In making this provision God had in view the moral object that men should be led to seek a more perfect knowledge of Him, and of their obligation to Him. With the light of nature alone, this search, indeed, is like the groping motions of a blind man. Yet the knowledge of God cannot but be within their reach, if they will, since existence in its beginning and continuance is solely from Him. Several Greek poets had acknowledged this, one of whom Paul quotes.

4. The Creator's call to recognize His nature and government.—That God is the source of human life should shew the absurdity of supposing that He can be a lifeless material idol. God had hitherto suffered heathen idolatry to pass, as if unnoticed, though not regarding it as guiltless, (Rom. i. 20), as is shewn even by this call to repent. Now that a new revelation has been made in Christ, all are commanded to turn. This is enforced by the consideration of a future righteous judgment, in which they cannot otherwise be safe, and which is guaranteed by the resurrection of Him who is to judge. Christ's resurrection shewed the possibility for all men of resurrection, which is necessarily involved in general judgment. It may also be regarded as certifying to a general resurrection by the confirmation it gives to the truth of all Christ's claims, among which was that of judge, (John v. 26-30).