

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

THE BIRD IN THE SHUTTER.

The rain upon the old church roof
Came beating from the west,
And, just outside, the leafless elms
Tossed in their wild unrest.

Within, the house was dim and cold,
And sad the pastor's theme;
Not one sweet ray of Christian hope
Let fall a cheering gleam.

He spoke of trouble and of death,
Of doubt, and woes, and fears,
While overhead the autumn rain
Fell like a flood of tears.

Our heads were bowed in sullen grief,
Our hearts were chilled with pain.
The light of love seemed quenched forever,
By bitterness of rain.

Then suddenly a cheerful sound—
A bird note sweet and clear—
Rang through the hushed and gloomy house,
And startled every ear.

There in the shutter, cold and wet,
And ruffled by the storm,
A lonely little bird had crept,
And nestled to get warm.

The storm beat close above its head,
And shook its slender perch,
But there it clung, and chirped, and sung,
Against the old grey church.

The pastor's voice grew soft and sweet,
His kind eyes filled with tears,
And, looking up, he spoke of Christ,
And the eternal years.

He spoke of heaven, our happy home,
And loved ones gone before;
Of all the joys that wait the blest,
On yonder shining shore.

And still the little bird sang on,
A soft, unconscious strain;
It only knew that it was warm,
And sheltered from the rain.

HAVING SOME FUN.

"Now, boys, I will tell you how we can have some fun," said Charlie to his companions, who had assembled one bright moonlight evening for sledding, snow-balling and fun generally.

"What is it?" asked several at once.

"You shall see," replied Charlie. "Who's got a saw?"

"I have, so have I," replied three of the boys.

"Get them: and you and Fred and Nathan each get an axe, and I will get a shovel. Let us be back in fifteen minutes."

The boys separated to go on their several errands, each wondering of what use saws, axes and shovels could be in the play.

But Charlie was a favourite with all and they fully believed in his promises, and were soon back again for the fun.

"Now," said he, "Widow Bradley has gone to sit up with a sick child. A Man hauled her some wood to-day, and I heard her tell him that unless she could get some one to saw it to-night she would have nothing to make a fire with in the morning. Now, boys, it will be just as easy for us to saw, split and pile up her wood as to make a snow-man on her door-step, and the surprise of the first will be better than that of the last. What say you, boys?"

One or two of the boys objected, and could not see the fun, but the majority went in for it with the inward satisfaction and joy that always results from well-doing.

It did not take long for seven smart, and

healthy boys to split and pile up that load of wood, and shovel a good path from the door-step to woodpile. They felt great pleasure and satisfaction over their fun, and then all went to a neighbouring carpenter's shop, where shavings could be had for carrying away, and each brought an armful; then they went home with light and joyful hearts.

The next morning, when the poor weary widow returned from watching at the sick-bed, and saw what had been done, she was astonished, and tears of gratitude ran down her cheeks. She wondered who had done the kindly deed; and, when afterward told, her fervent invocation, "God bless the boys!" would have richly repaid them could they have heard it.

DID I GUIDE YOU STRAIGHT?

When General Wolseley was about to undertake his march over the plains of the Nile for his last engagement with Arabi he secured the services of an educated young Scotchman, who was familiar with the course, to guide the movements of his army. Before they took up their march the General said to him:

"Now, I want you to guide me straight; guide me by the star."

During the battle that followed, the young man was mortally wounded. Hearing of this, General Wolseley visited him in his tent. As he entered, the dying soldier raised his eyes and said:

"Didn't I guide you straight, General? Didn't I guide you straight?"

And the General could only acknowledge that he did.

Is this not a most appropriate question for parents, pastors, and teachers to ask as we look upon the souls committed to our trust? By our example have we led our followers only in the paths of safety? In our instructions have we declared the truth, warmly, earnestly, plainly, affectionately? Have our warnings been faithful and tender and loving?

In our exhortations have we plead with them "as dying men with dying men?" In our supplications for them at the throne of grace, have we wrestled for them as did He whose heart's desire and prayer for Israel was that they might be saved? Can it be said of us—

"He watched and wept, He prayed and felt for all,
As a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies.
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds and led the way?"

Can we say, as we will want to say when we look up from our dying beds, "Didn't I guide you straight?"

A MOTHER SEAL'S LOVE.

During the visit of an excursion party to Anacapa Island, a young seal pup only a few months old was brought away from the island. The little animal was secured by a rope around one of its fins, and tied within a small yawl belonging to the sloop. Shortly before sailing, a large seal was noticed swimming around the sloop, anchored off the cove where the capture was made, uttering loud barks and at times howling piteously. No particular attention was paid to the animal at the time or

to the little captive, which at times barked in response to the old dam's plaint.

The boat sailed away, making for Ventura shore. When off San Buenaventura, a calm in the wind decreased the speed of the boat, when a large seal was noticed near by. On reaching the wharf at Santa Barbara at two o'clock the next morning, a seal was again discovered swimming about the boat. It was not supposed that this was the mother of the captive, or out of pity for its misery the pup would have been thrown overboard. To better secure the pup until daylight, the rope was taken from its fin; and it was tied up in a jute-sack, and let loose upon the deck. Soon after coming to anchor, the seal responded to its mother's invitation by casting itself overboard, all tied up as it was within a sack. It is asserted by the man on deck that the mother seized the sack, and with her sharp teeth tore open the prison of her offspring. This, however, is a mere conjecture. If it did, the little pup was saved; otherwise, it would drown, tied up in the sack. The incident was the more interesting from the fact that the old seal had to follow the sloop at least eighty miles over the ocean in a hopeful endeavour to rescue its young.

THE BRIDLE ON THE TONGUE.

"How have you prospered to-day, my son?" said Mrs. Stone.

"First-rate, mother; and I think it is because I remembered the verse you gave to Sadie and me this morning. You see, we were playing at blindman's buff, and the boys would peep so as to see us. I was so provoked that I wanted to speak right out sharp, but every time I began I could see that verse real plain, 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city,' and I did not say a word. It was hard work, though, to keep from speaking."

"I do not doubt it, Willie; but I am very glad that my little boy was so brave. I think it often requires more true courage to hold the bridle of the tongue than that of a horse."

"That verse helped me too," said Sadie. "I was hurrying along so as to call on Julia Howard before school, but just as I turned the corner, old Mrs. Lane opened her window and asked me if I would go to Mr. Pinkham's store and get a bundle. I was so disappointed that I wanted to say 'No,' but the verse came into my mind so quick, I said, 'Yes'm,' and ran along."

"You did quite right, my children," said Mrs. Stone, "and have each gained a victory that is better than taking a city."

A STORY OF A LONDON CHILD.

This little girl had lived in London all her life, and had actually never seen a tree. She was taken into the country with many others not long ago, by a benevolent society, and, when she saw the trees waving with the wind, she clung in frantic terror to her teacher, thinking that they were some species of horrible living monsters about to attack her. Much persuasion was required to induce her to go near them.