

a certain room on account of an illness sudden and sore. His past years had been spent in another service than the Lord's. In less than an hour, the writer was told by the physician standing by, death would arrive. A half a moment, though sufficient for the saving operations of grace—a half an hour it is feared in this case—was too short a period to begin and complete the requirements for the day of account. The poor fellow was directed to the only Saviour; but a strange blinding unreasonableness suggested attention to Christ when he became better. He listened to assurances that he could never be better. In half an hour another spirit had gone, and on that bed lay the body of one who had left until too late that which should have been attended to long before. May other eyes and ears may be preserved from anything like what was seen and heard during the last half hour of the earthly existence of that man, who had left this world without a Saviour for the next! The season of sore distress is not the good season for first sober reflections upon the soul's welfare and destiny. Should these lines meet some one who is putting off to a more convenient season what God says should be attended to now, let that one know that it is best, for this world and for that which is to come, to fall in with God's way. To Him who is the only Saviour, these lines would point. They would urge acceptance of Him at once, lest when the day of affliction comes the conditions may not be found for the honest repetition of the Psalmist's testimony—"It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

But that testimony is helpful when brought by the Spirit of God to the afflicted believer. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." Sorrow is lightened and pain mitigated by the assurance that underneath are the everlasting arms. And when the sorest affliction is past, the believer in Christ, having reached the place where there is no more pain, will realize to the full that the Lord has been leading, so that it was for his highest good that he had been afflicted.

THE BEST HUNDRED HYMNS.

The *Sunday at Home* gave an invitation to its readers last January to send lists of the hundred best English hymns, and in response to this appeal between 3,400 and 3,500 lists have been received. An analysis of the voting shows that the largest number of votes gave the first place to Toplady's "Rock of Ages." The prime favourites after this are Lyte's "Abide With Me, Fast Falls the Eventide;" Charles Wesley's "Jesus, Lover of my Soul;" Charlotte Elliott's "Just as I am, Without One Plea;" Newton's "How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds;" Charlotte Elliott's "My God, My Father, While I Stray;" Sarah F. Adams' "Nearer, My God, to Thee;" Keble's "Sun of My Soul, Thou Saviour Dear;" Horatius Bonar's "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say;" and J. M. Neale's "Art Thou Weary, Art Thou Languid?" The list contains hymns from fifty-five different authors, of whom Dr. Watts and Charles Wesley stand at the head, each contributing seven to the aggregate. The favourite among Watts' hymns is by general consent his best, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." Cowper and Dr. Bonar have each five; four each are from Bishop Heber and John Mason Neale; while three are given severally from Tait and Brady, Dr. Doddridge, James Montgomery and Frederick William Faber; Charlotte Elliott, Ken and Keble each have two, as also have Newton, Lyte, Edward Caswell, Samuel J. Stone, W. Chatterton Dix, Frances Ridley Havergal and Mrs. C. F. Alexander.

SAYS the *Pall Mall Gazette*: It is distressing to those who value the relics of the book world of to-day, nevertheless it is a fact, that the original manuscript of "The Pickwick Papers" has been secured by a wealthy New York citizen, much to the delight of the idol worshippers of that city."

THE *Congregationalist* points a moral in the following. What a rebuke to this nation, receiving millions of dollars annually from its revenue on liquors, is conveyed by the Queen of Madagascar when she says, in a late proclamation. I cannot consent, as your queen, to take a single penny of revenue from that which destroys the souls and bodies of my subjects!

Our Young Folks.

NOTHING IS SMALL.

Nothing is small in all this world,
Which God has caused to be,
For everything a season has,
And place, in earth or sea.

Each speck of dust, each beam of light,
Fits into all the plan,
Each breath of air across the earth
Holds life, for life of man.

A mustard seed seems small indeed
When looked at in the hand;
But let it grow where God says so
And birds protected stand.

Twopence may seem an offering small
To give at the temple gate.
But "more than they all she gave," said One
Who knows what is truly great.

A little child—does it seem small?
True wisdom speaks of it,
"Except like childhood, simple, pure,
None are for heaven fit."

There's nothing small in all this world,
Which God has caused to be,
Our looks and words, and acts and thoughts
Some time again we'll see.

For small is great when seen beyond
The present passing hour,
For all is held by Him who rules
The world in love and power.

So everything that may seem small,
When lighted from above,
Is seen to fill a place designed
By providence and love.

JUST TOO LATE.

School was out, but George North and Bert Fulton lingered to work out a long, difficult problem. This was to be expected of George, who was the steady, studious boy of the school; there is always one such, you know. The teacher looked approvingly at him as he went home, but paid no attention to Bert. Bert's studious fits were too spasmodic to be worth much notice. Only the day before Mr. Lennox said, "I will turn you just three weeks longer; then, if you have not turned over a new leaf, I will turn you out of the school."

Bert was always so full of fun that he was heedless, beyond words to express, and this term he had fallen far behind his classes. He was not naturally stupid, but of late it seemed as if he would not think or learn. He ceased to make as much fun as formerly, but Mr. Lennox thought this was because he was getting sullen after so many rebukes. Bert himself was puzzled to know what had made him so dull. This night he had resolved to please the teacher by solving a problem that all the boys except George had given up; for Bert was quicker at mathematics than he was at any other study.

The two boys figured away in silence a while; then George put book and slate in his desk, locked the latter and went out to play. He was sure he must have worked out his task correctly. Half an hour after he saw Bert come out to join a companion, who said, "Got that old puzzle, Bert?"

"I think so," replied Bert, telling him the answer he had obtained, with the remark, "That ought to be right, I'm sure."

George, who heard distinctly the bit of dialogue, thought to himself, "If Bert's answer is correct, mine is not, for they are unlike."

About sundown the playground was deserted, and nobody saw George North return to the schoolhouse and go in. He did not consider that he was doing anything very wrong, but he did not care to be seen. Once in the room, he unlocked his desk, got his slate, took it to Bert's desk, which was never locked, and, taking Bert's slate, he compared the worked-out problems. They were thought out in quite dissimilar ways, and Bert's method seemed as reasonable as George's.

"If I had Mr. Lennox's 'Key,' I could tell in a second," thought George, "and I know where he keeps it. What is the harm of just satisfying my curiosity?"

He concluded that there was no harm. So he searched through a row of shelves under the teacher's private desk and found the "Key to the Algebra." He carried it down to Bert's seat and went over the

figures on his slate again. He found Bert had done his work correctly. Now, after all this, you doubtless think that George either copied over his own problem or else rubbed out Bert's. Well, he was tempted to do the first, but after a while he concluded he would not be quite so mean. He tumbled over Bert's books, already in great disorder, then, taking up, as he really supposed, the teacher's book, he carried it back to the shelf and left it there.

Next morning none of the boys save Bert had worked the problem out correctly. Mr. Lennox praised him heartily for his unusual perseverance, and George secretly considered himself very honourable. Just before school was dismissed, Mr. Lennox found Bert's grammar on his shelf. He was walking about the room, so he took it round to Bert, saying, "This is your book."

"No, sir; mine is here," said Bert, opening his desk and quickly catching up a very similar book—Mr. Lennox's "Key to the Algebra."

The angry teacher thought he understood it all, and he poured out his indignation and disgust toward poor Bert, in the presence of the whole school.

"I don't know anything about it," was all Bert could say.

It seemed then just impossible for George North, the "good" boy of the school, to tell of his part in the performance, so he kept still. For a week after, Bert was so dull and sullen that George silenced his conscience by saying to himself that Bert did not care for a few extra scoldings, he got more or less of them anyway. If he confessed, everybody would say he left the "Key" there on purpose, whereas he thought himself very honourable not to copy the right answer.

A week passed, and Bert was not at school one day. "Expelled," the boys said, until Mr. Lennox gravely announced that Bert was dangerously ill, and the doctor said he must have been greatly out of health for weeks—that his dulness and languor were the result of disease. "I have far more charity now for poor Bert's fault than I have had," added Mr. Lennox kindly. "I think he may not have been quite in his right mind. He was careless, but never before dishonourable."

George North, conscious-smitten, resolved to explain everything if—if—well, if Bert got worse or seemed to care when he got well. Two days passed; then late one afternoon a messenger came to say Bert Fulton was dead.

"He died very quietly; he sent his love to all the boys," begged Mr. Lennox to forgive all his faults, and to believe him when he said he did not cheat about that 'Key.'"

There were low sobs in the school room, but no such bitter grief as that which broke forth from George North, and no boy who heard his confession would have been in his place for anything then or afterward.

"God may forgive me, but I wronged Bert, and he never can come back to speak to me," was his sorry cry.

WHO HIS OWN SELF BARE OUR SINS.

Some time ago a war raged in India, between the English and a native monarch named Tippoo Sahib. On one occasion several English officers were taken prisoners, among them one named Baird. One day a native officer brought in fetters to be put on each of the prisoners, the wounded, not excepted. Baird had been severely wounded and was suffering from pain and weakness. A gray haired officer said to the native official.

"You do not think of putting chains upon that wounded young man?"

"There are just as many pairs of fetters as there are captives," was the answer, "and every pair must be worn."

"Then," said the officer, "put two pairs on me. I will wear his as well as my own."

The end of the story is that Baird lived to regain his freedom, lived to take that very city, but the generous friend died in prison. He wore two pairs of fetters. But what if he wore the fetters for all in the prison? What if, instead of being a captive himself, he had been free and great, and had quitted a glorious palace to live in their loathsome dungeon, to wear their chains, to bear their stripes, to suffer and die in their stead, that they might go free! Such a thing has been done. For all who receive the grace of God's Son, the chains are struck off, and the prison is thrown wide open.