

Correspondence

A Story Competition.

Dear Boys and Girls,—On these warm summer days we sometimes get tired of running about, and are glad to sit down on the grass and listen to someone who will tell us a story, and I think it would be a good plan for the 'Messenger' boys and girls to try who can tell the best short story—it must be very short.

The story may be one you have heard or it may be about someone you know. The only condition is that it must be about some person who helped others. You see there are two kinds of people:—

The two kinds of people on earth I mean
Are the people who lift and the people who lean.

Wherever you go you will find the world's masses
Are always divided in just these two classes.

And, oddly enough, you will find, too, I ween,
There is only one lifter to twenty who lean.

We do not want stories about those selfish people who only think of themselves, and get so tiresome, no one wishes to be near them.

There was an old lady of Delf,
Who was wholly wrapped up in herself.
Though it might have been kinder
To try to unwind her,
They left her in knots on the shelf!

It is pleasanter on the whole to hear of those who have done good and kind deeds.

I live to learn their story,
Who suffered for my sake;
To emulate their glory,
And follow in their wake;
Bards, patriots, martyrs, sages,
The noble of all ages,
Whose deeds crown history's pages,
And time's great volume make.

Hoping that a number of the stories will be good enough to print,

Your affectionate friend,
CORRESPONDENCE EDITOR.

P.S.—Stories must be written on one side of the paper only, and mailed to the Editor of the Correspondence Page of the 'Messenger,' 'Witness' Office, Montreal, before September 1st.

The Shepherd's Wish.

(The Rev. Jas. Learmount, in the 'Examiner'.)

There is an old legend which tells how once there was a shepherd youth who was all alone in the world. He had nobody to love and nobody seemed to love him, and he was unhappy.

A fairy, taking pity upon him, visited him one day, and, putting a pipe in his hand, he said: 'Now pipe with it once, twice, three times, and each time as the sound of the pipe dies away wish, and each wish you shall have given to you.'

He blew the pipe once, and wished that he might be rich. Riches came to him, but much to his surprise riches did not make him happy. They brought him care and trouble.

He once more resorted to his pipe and wished. 'Let me be wise' was his request. And he became wondrous wise, and had all sorts of knowledge, but this did not make him very happy. It all seemed so cold and cheerless and dark. He took his pipe in his hand once more and piped. This was his last chance of happiness. He wondered before he piped what he should wish. Then he blew, and this was his last wish: 'Let others be rich and others be wise.'

Then he became filled with joy and gladness, and he became a beautiful and unselfish man.

'There,' said the fairy; 'you are wise and rich at last.' And thus he learned one of life's greatest lessons, the secret of the beautiful life.

How many of us still need to learn that

lesson. Let me say to you that your life's happiness largely depends upon your learning the lesson the shepherd learned. For the unhappy people, the most miserable boys and girls, are the selfish ones.

I read a story once of a little girl who was always wanting to have 'a good time,' and mourning over the delightful opportunities that other girls had which she had not.

'I never have any chance to enjoy myself,' she said, complainingly.

Her aunt glanced at the frowning, discontented face, and the dejected, drooping mouth, and said:

'No, you don't, that's a fact. It's a great pity, but I really don't see how you can enjoy yourself at all. Now, there's your mother, everybody can enjoy her, even though she is an invalid, shut up in her home most of the time. She is always bright and so cheery, interested in what is going on in the world, ready to forget herself in the pleasures and sorrows of others. You can enjoy your father, too, and I have no doubt he enjoys himself, though he does have to spend his days in his dingy office, without much time for pleasure. He's doing his share of the world's work—good, useful work—and has a kind word and helping hand for everybody near him. I should think you might even enjoy Bridget, for she goes singing about her sweeping and dish-washing, trying to live for somebody besides herself. You cannot enjoy anything that hasn't in it something enjoyable, and so I really don't see how you can enjoy yourself, poor child! The worst of it is that other people don't have much chance to enjoy you either.'

Then the aunt left her, having given her much food for thought. I wish I could get all boys and girls to see that half the pains spent upon having one's own way, turned into the direction of doing something for God in the world, something for others, would give more real happiness than all their striving to have their own way would give them in a lifetime. Unselfishness is the way to happiness.

In one of his romances, Jules Verne represents his hero, who is a Turk, as travelling by carriage all round the Black Sea, at great expense and amid prodigious hardships, just to escape a Government tax of a penny for crossing the bridge over the Bosphorus from Constantinople to Scutari, where he lived.

Selfish people are just as foolish, and their efforts to please themselves are just as unsatisfactory and costly. And the worst of it is that it kills the persons who cultivate the selfish habit. They come at last to think of nothing but their poor, miserable selves, and what they want, and what they do and say.

I read once of a couple who were on the boat sailing between Blackpool and the Isle of Man. A gale sprang up, and the wife was frightened.

'Oh, John! John!' she groaned, 'the ship is going down!'

'Well, never mind,' said her husband, 'it isn't ours!'

Poor miserable wretch. He had been so accustomed to think selfishly, that now, although he was in danger of losing his life, he only thought about things as was his habit.

Do cultivate the spirit of unselfishness. And you can only do that truly by possessing the spirit of Christ.

A mother, about to leave home for a few hours one day, called her little seven-year-old boy to her, and kissed him good-bye, and said, 'I hope you will be happy, dear, whilst I am gone.'

'Well, mother,' he answered, 'if when you come home I tell you I've not been happy, you will know it is because I have not been good.' And the little fellow was right. Goodness learned from Jesus is the secret of the unselfish, happy life.

A beautiful incident is related by Mr. Ralph Wells. It happened during his visit to a State convention in Minnesota. After one of the sessions a little girl went forward and handed to him a bouquet of ordinary flowers, doubtless the best she could procure at that season. He asked her why she gave him the bouquet. 'Because I love you,' the child answered. 'Do you bring any little gifts to Jesus?' asked Mr. Wells. 'Oh,' said the little girl, 'I give myself to him.' You do that, too, and it will give you the right spirit and the kind eye and hand, and will help you to

forget self, and find your happiness in blessing and helping others.

Self-denial has been defined by Neal Dow as 'living with reference to the future.' If you will remember that, it will help you. You are living so as one day to receive the approval of Jesus. Remember that always.

Kinde.

Dear Editor,—I have been reading some of the letters from the little girls and boys in the 'Messenger,' and thought I would like to see one of my own in print. My brother has taken the 'Messenger' for almost a year, and we all like it very much. I am twelve years of age, and live on a farm about a mile and a half from the village of Kinde. My father has twenty-one cows, and I often help milk when I am not very busy with my studies, as I am taking music lessons and am teaching a private pupil in arithmetic.

GRACE L. P.

Stanbury.

Dear Editor,—This is my first letter to the 'Messenger.' There are seven in our family, four boys and three girls. My mother died this year on Easter Sunday. I like to read very much, and have read many books. I like the Pansy Books very much. I like 'Miss Lou,' by E. P. Roe, and 'Little Fishers and their Nets' as well as any I ever read. My favorite flower is the water lily, as it seems so pure and white. We go to the Methodist Church in Belton, where we used to live. There are from forty to sixty Sunday-school scholars every Sunday. We have the picture of Mr. John Dougall, Senior, in our house. My grandfather's house is large, and it is well shaded by maple trees. They have a fine lawn for croquet, and have a lovely flower garden. We have been berrying once this year, and had our dinner in the woods, and we had a splendid time. I am eleven years old.

JANE H.

Thank you, Jane, for the sweet fern.—Cor. Ed.

The Dutchman Settled It.

(C. L. Allen.)

In the good old times when every country store was a lyceum, where all subjects were freely, fully and ably discussed, the conversation in a certain village store was frequently on religious matters, the leading disputants being the Methodist and Baptist clergymen. Quite frequently a good-natured Irishman, a mechanic, who had more wit and good sound sense than most of the company combined, joined in. No one present could present their side of the case as well as he. It is well to say that there were a few of other denominations occasionally present, although there were but the two churches in the village or very near.

On one occasion the discussion got very warm, everyone present having his say excepting a jolly, good-natured Dutchman who sat quietly smoking the regulation clay pipe of the period. Each asserted positively he was right, consequently all others must be wrong. The Baptist said no one could enter the kingdom unless immersed. The Presbyterian said you must come by the way of Calvin while the Irishman stoutly affirmed that the Pope held the only key and the one which came in direct line from St. Peter. The Methodist said the door to the kingdom was as broad as necessity, and would open to 'whomsoever would.' When each denomination had shown its claim, a Universalist asked the Dutchman for his opinion, who gave it as follows:

'My friends, you makes me dink of de time when I was de boy and went wid my fadder to Albany mid our wheat; near most forty miles. Some of de farmers came by de Troy road, some by de Triskany road, some by de Columby road, some by de river road. And some by every odder road. But when we got to Albany, no one asked by which road did you come by, but ish your wheat good.'

Sample Copies.

Any subscriber who would like to have specimen copies of the 'Northern Messenger' sent to friends can send the names with addresses and we will be pleased to supply them, free of cost.