

## Our Young Folks.

### WORK AND WIN.

The sweetest cherries, mind you, lad,  
Grow highest on the tree;  
And would you win the fairest fruit,  
One thing I'll say to thee;  
It falls not at the clicking gay  
Of an idler's pelf—  
You'll have to climb the rugged tree,  
And gather for yourself.

'Tis vain to wait the fruit to fall,  
Or pelt the tree with stones—  
You'll have to struggle bravely up,  
And risk some broken bones;  
You only waste your time below,  
And get indifferent pay—  
If you would reach the ripest fruit,  
Just throw your fears away.

'Tis so with everything in life  
That's worth the owning, lad—  
With learning, wealth and character—  
The best, the good and great have had  
They come not at the nod or hest  
Of any idle hand—  
'Tis only those who bravely toil,  
May have them at command.

If, then, you want the ripest fruit,  
Just labour till you win;  
But mind thee, boy, while up you climb,  
Keep heart and hand from sin;  
The best and grandest guerdon, lad,  
If bought with wicked wage,  
No peace and comfort yields at last,  
But curses on your age.

### BREAKERS AHEAD.

A furious winter storm roared over the sea. The huge steamer rolled helplessly. Ice had clogged her wheels, and she refused to mind her helm. Foaming breakers were just ahead, and the winds were driving the ship directly on them. Despair had settled upon the hearts of the half-frozen crew. Even the brave captain could see small hope of saving the steamer and the lives in it.

But he had battled with fierce storms before now, and had by God's mercy conquered. Why not again? He would try. He fastened the hatches down upon the shrinking passengers. He lashed the pilot to the wheel, bidding him to steer straight through the breakers. He lashed the look-out to the mast, and himself to his place, and then awaited the shock. Like a maddened steer plunged the ship headlong among the breakers.

The salt foam dashed over them, freezing as it struck. It blinded all eyes. The waves hissed and howled over the decks, sweeping all before them, and bursting into the cabins where were the appalled passengers, who had been desperately struggling to escape from probable to certain death, for not one of them could have remained a moment on the decks. The ship seemed to have entered the jaws of destruction, to have gone down to the depths of the sea. Each man gave himself up for lost.

Presently all felt a steadier motion; the waters fell from the good ship's decks, and were shaken from her sides.

"Pilot!" shouted the captain in renewed hope, "does she mind her helm?"

"Ay, ay, sir," was the glad reply.

The breakers they had expected would prove their death, had cleared the steamer's clogged wheels, and she was saved.

Each human soul is a ship upon a stormy sea. Breakers are near, and sometimes there is no escaping them. Sometimes with clogged wheels and powerless helm we find ourselves blown upon them. What shall we do? Give way to terror and confusion? Settle into despair?

Not so. Let Captain Will take full command; let him nail down the hatches on all that would add to the tumult and danger; let him lash each faculty to the post of duty, and himself to the vital standpoint; then let him dash "head on" against the breakers, and force the good ship through.

The will is the captain in every human craft. As that is true or false to God and duty, the ship sails safely into port, despite all ocean perils; or she is left to roll helplessly among the rocks, a wreck.

### DON'T MENTION THE BRIERS.

It is not only a wise and happy thing to make the best of life, and always look on the bright side, for one's own sake, but it is a blessing to others. Fancy a man forever telling his family how much they cost him! A little sermon on this subject was unconsciously preached by a child one day.

A man met a little fellow on the road carrying a basket of blackberries, and said to him, "Sammy, where did you get such nice berries?"

"Over there, sir, in the briers!"

"Won't your mother be glad to see you come home with a basketful of such nice, ripe fruit?"

"Yes, sir," said Sammy, "she always seems glad when I hold up the berries, and I don't tell her anything about the briers in my feet."

The man rode on. Sammy's remarks had given him a lesson, and he resolved that henceforth he would try to hold up the berries and say nothing about the briers.

### COUNTING THE JEWELS.

The king of one of the Asiatic countries—so reports a recent writer—causes all the royal jewels to be displayed before him twice a year, that he may handle them, count them and gloat over their splendour.

A certain portion of them belong, as in the case in most monarchies, not to the king personally, but to the crown. He cannot sell them, nor give them away, a fact which may be supposed to lessen materially his enjoyment in handling them.

A Southern woman who died lately, at a great age, and who had carried to the last days of her life a happy heart and a singularly gay temper, thus explained the mystery of her unfailing cheerfulness:

"I was taught by my mother when a child to reckon each morning, before I rose, the blessings which God had given me with which to begin the day. I was not simply to say:

When all Thy mercies, O my God,  
My rising soul surveys,  
Transported with the view, I'm lost  
In wonder, love and praise,

but I was to count the mercies one by one, from the neat and serviceable shoes that covered my cold feet to the sunlight shining on the hill-tops. My school friends, my play, my fun, my mother's kiss, the baby sister in the cradle—all these I learned to consider separately, and of every one to say, 'He gave it to me.'

"This practice taught me the habit of thankfulness. It kept my heart near to Him, kept it light and happy. These every-day blessings were not to me mere matters of course, but special, loving touches from His paternal hand. No pain or sorrow could outweigh them."

We have all a store of richer jewels than the heathen kings; and, unlike the crown regalia, these jewels are our own, given to us by our Father.

How many of us mutter over, as the day begins, some perfunctory words of thanks which mean nothing? How many number their mercies, tasting the delight and joy of each, and out of glad hearts thanking the Giver?

And how many quite forget to think either of them or of him?

### DO THY BEST.

Though the majority of people never rise above mediocrity, this is no excuse for slighting one's work or for doing nothing at all. The injunction to all is to act, and anything worth doing at all is worth engaging all the energies of the doer; and he who conscientiously attempts the highest, and labours the best he can, gains in the action a satisfaction that is his highest reward. Not only is this true, but it is usually the same kind of labour that leads to prosperity. A young painter was directed by his master to complete a picture on which the master had been obliged to suspend his labours on account of his growing infirmities.

"I commission thee, my son," said the aged artist, "to do thy best on this work. Do thy best."

The young man had such reverence for his master's skill that he felt incompetent to touch canvas which bore the work of that renowned hand.

But "Do thy best," was the old man's calm reply; and again, to repeated solicitation, he answered, "Do thy best."

The youth trembling seized the brush, and kneeling before his appointed work, he prayed:

"It is for the sake of my beloved master that I implore skill and power to do this deed."

His hand grew steady as he panted. Slumbering genius awoke in his eye. Enthusiasm took the place of fear. Forgetfulness of himself supplanted his self-distrust, and with a calm joy he finished his labour. The "beloved master" was borne on his couch into the studio to pass judgment on the result. As his eye fell on the triumph of art before him he burst into tears, and, throwing his enfeebled arms around the young artist, he exclaimed, "My son, I paint no more!" That youth, Leonardo da Vinci, became the painter of "The Last Supper," the ruins of which, after the lapse of three hundred years, still attract annually to the refectory of an obscure convent in Milan hundreds of the worshippers of art.

### A BOYS TEMPTATIONS.

Professor Henry Drummond, of Glasgow, says: "You have heard of the old castle that was taken by a single gun. The attacking force had only one gun, and it seemed hopeless to try to take the castle, but one soldier said: 'I will show you how you can take the castle,' and he pointed the cannon to one spot and fired, and went on all day, never moving the cannon."

About nightfall there were a few grains knocked off the wall. He did the same the next and the next. By-and-by the stones began to come away, and by steadily working his gun for one week he made a hole in that castle big enough for the army to walk through. Now with a single gun firing away at every boy's life, the devil is trying to get in at one opening. Temptation is the practice of the soul, and if you never have any temptation you will never have any practice. A boy that attends fifty drills in a year is a much better soldier than the one that drills twice.

Do not quarrel with your temptations; set yourself resolutely to face them.

### THE BRIDLE.

"Don't go without a bridle, boys," was my grandfather's favourite bit of advice.

Do you suppose we were all teamsters or horse jockeys? No such thing. If he heard one cursing or swearing, or given to much vain or foolish talk, "That man has lost his bridle," he would say.

Without a bridle, the tongue, though a little member, "boasteth great things." It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." Put a bridle on, and it is one of the best servants the body and soul have. "I will keep my mouth with a bridle," said King David. And who can do better than follow his example?

When my grandfather saw a man drinking and carousing, or a boy spending all his money for cakes and candy, "Poor fellow," he would say, "he's let off his bridle." The appetite needs a reining. Let it loose, and it will run you to gluttony, drunkenness and all sorts of disorder. Be sure to keep a bridle on your appetite, do not let it be master. And don't neglect to have one on your passions. They go mad if they get unmanageable, driving you down a blind and headlong course to ruin. Keep the check-rein tight, don't let it slip; hold it steady. Never go without your bridle.

That was the bridle my grandfather meant,—the bridle of self-government. Parents try to restrain and check their children, and you can generally tell by their behaviour what children have such wise and faithful parents. But parents cannot do everything. And some children have no parents to care for them. Every boy must have his own bridle, and every girl must have hers. They must learn to check and govern themselves. Self-government is the most difficult and the most important government in the world. It becomes easier every day, if you practise it with steady and resolute will. It is the foundation of excellence. It is the cutting and pruning which makes the noble and vigorous tree of character.

### A LITTLE STORY.

Four stalwart men sat around the fire in the old home-stead in Connecticut. They had come home for a family reunion, bringing their wives with them. They were all on the bright side of thirty-five, and altogether a "very likely" set—honest, upright, industrious, Christian. Their mother, a vigorous woman for her years, welcomed them and could not do enough for them to make their home-coming pleasant. Their father had been many years dead.

One of the daughters-in-law, in moving around the rooms paused at the window to look out on the landscape. It was snowing heavily, but there was no wind. Across the road that ran past the house she saw a big wood-pile, and at the wood-pile was a woman using the axe. She looked more closely; it could not be her husband's mother! She looked again through the blinding flakes. Yes, certainly it was the mother of these four stalwart men.

She crossed the room to where her husband was sitting, led him to the window, pointed toward the wood-pile, only saying:

"John, look at your mother!"

John quickly got his hat and went to his mother's aid, while his wife pondered on what had made her wonder through many years. John was kind, true, a "good provider," a just man, but he allowed his wife, unless she protested against it, to bring in the wood, to split the kindling, to wade through the snow in hanging out her clothes, to do any kind of hard, rough work she would do, while he sat quietly by the fire and saw her do it.

She had trained him, in a measure, to do his part of the chores and relieve her, and when she saw his old mother splitting wood in the snow storm, rather than call on her sons to do it, she understood how her troubles had come about. The mother had not brought up her boys to be considerate and helpful, and to do their part in the general work of the household.

### WHAT BOYS SHOULD LEARN.

There are a great many things that boys, while boys, should learn. And if they learn these lessons so well as never to forget them during life, they will prove of incalculable help to them oftentimes when they need help.

Among other things that a boy should learn, an exchange classes the following, to wit:

Not to tease boys or girls smaller than themselves.

Not to take the easiest chair in the room, put it in the pleasantest place, and forget to offer it to the mother when she comes in to sit down.

To treat the mother as politely as if she was a strange lady who did not spend her life in their service.

To be as kind and helpful to their sisters as they expect their sisters to be to them.

To make their friends among good boys.

To take pride in being a gentleman at home.

To take their mothers into their confidence if they do anything wrong; and above all never lie about anything they have done.

To make up their minds not to learn to smoke, chew or drink, remembering that these things cannot easily be unlearned, and that they are terrible drawbacks to young men, and necessities to bad ones.

THE *Canada Citizen* says: In dealing with any question connected with Presbyterianism in Canada, there are hardly any facts that one will want to get at regarding this large and influential body that will not be found in THE PRESBYTERIAN YEAR BOOK.