

They were only lads; and, as they worked, they talked of what they would do with the money when it came into their hands.

"What shall you spend your share upon?" asked the second in age, Frank, of his younger companion.

The boy's face flushed, and he hesitated a little, as if he scarcely wished to tell. But his companions urged that they had told him, and it wasn't fair.

"I don't know that I need mind," said George; "but perhaps you will think what I say sounds strange."

"Out with it," said the eldest lad; "I'm getting quite impatient—you make such a mystery of it, George."

"Well, I'm going to give it to God."

"How? In what way? What do you mean?" were questions uttered by John and Frank, one after the other, and in rapid succession.

If there had been hesitation in the face of the youngest lad before, there was none now. He looked bravely towards his companions and said, "I have always had the thought that the very first money I ever earned should be given to God's service in some way. If you read the Bible you will see it was a custom from the very beginning to offer Him the first-fruits. I know it is not a law as it was in Jewish times, and perhaps I could not quite make you understand what I feel. But God has given me everything—health and strength, and a head to think, and hands to labour. I have no land to sow; so I cannot take a harvest-offering; and no fruit—except the fruit of my labour; so I will give Him that."

George's companions looked at each other in utter astonishment. They could not understand the feelings that moved him—the gratitude and love to God which impelled him to show both, by devoting his little treasure to the service of his Divine Master. They did not laugh at him. They only said, "You were always a queer lad, George, and did things like nobody else, and you get queerer every day."

No more was said about the spending of the money. The work was finished, the workers paid, and still in the ears of the youngest seemed to sound the words: "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase."

Before he had decided how to spend his earnings, George did not fail to consult his parents, and they gladly consented to his plan, and thanked God for having put the desire into their boy's heart.

John did not purchase the silk umbrella or the new hat and tinsel scarf pin of which he had thought.

He wanted so many things, that he could not make up his mind which to buy. He carried his money in his pocket, proud that he was master of so much at once. But he dipped into it again and again for some trifle to indulge a passing fancy, and little by little it was frittered away, and he was fain to confess at length that it was all gone, and he had nothing to show for it.

Frank lost no time in investing his savings, and very proud was he to take home the little book with the record of his money in the bank, and show it to his mother. She was glad to think he had not wasted it on worthless trifles; but she sighed as she turned towards a little couch whereon lay a pale-faced child, almost always to be seen there. This child, a girl of eight, was both delicate and lame. She had been used to go on crutches a year before; but then came an interval of more serious illness, and she had lain there quietly from day to day, unable to move.

Nellie was better now, and as the spring sunshine set in at the window was longing to feel the fresh air on her pale cheeks. The doctor had given her leave to go out, but the crutches—a poorly made pair at first—were now useless. Nellie had grown too tall for them. She must have longer and better made articles to support her still feeble limbs. So she was waiting until her mother could spare the money to buy them; and the time seemed long, and promised to be longer still.

If only Frank had thought what he could do to shorten it! But Frank's mind was absorbed in his new account at the Savings Bank, and planning how he could earn more in order to increase the amount. He had nothing for Nellie.

The child was often soothed and amused by a visit from her brother's friend, George. He knew all about Nellie's longings and hopes oft deferred; he cheered her with kind words, took her little dainties, and when tears would steal down her cheeks he wiped them away, and tried to coax back smiles in their place.

The very day after Frank had exhibited his bank-book with such pride, a queer-shaped parcel came to his mother's door. It was for "Nellie, with George's love, and would she come to his mother's to tea that afternoon."

The little trembling fingers could hardly get the strings untied; but the paper was off at last, and in a few more moments the child standing upright, supported by a pair of the most beautiful made crutches that could be got for a reasonable price.

Nellie and Nellie's mother understood now why George had asked so many questions about size and make, and what the doctor said as to the kind of crutches that would be best. And when Nellie made her appearance, the very picture of happiness, and with a colour on her cheeks such as no one had seen there for many a month before, we may be sure that George did not regret the use to which he had put the first-fruits of his own labour.

Frank's bank-book did not please him quite so well after he heard his mother tell, with tears of joy in her eyes, that Nellie had gone out walking by the help of the new crutches bought for her by her kind friend, George.

A light flashed across Frank's mind. "Why he must have spent his share of the money in that way. What a queer fellow he is! He told John and me that he was going to give it to God."

"And did you never read, Frank," asked his mother, "what Jesus Himself said, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto me?'"

A BIT OF POTTERY.

The potter stood at his daily work,
One patient foot on the ground;
The other, with never slackening speed,
Turning his swift wheel round.
Silent we stood beside him there,
Watching the restless knee,
Till my friend said low, in pitying voice,
"How tired his foot must be!"
The potter never paused in his work,
Shaping the wondrous thing;
'Twas only a common flower-pot,
But perfect in fashioning.
Slowly he raised his patient eyes,
With homely truth inspired:
"No, marm; it isn't the foot that kicks,
The one that stands gets tired."

—The Continent.

A WORD TO THE BOYS.

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

Water is the strongest drink. It drives mills; it's the drink of lions and horses, and Samson never drank anything else. Let young men be teetotalers if only for economy's sake. The beer money will soon build a house. If what goes into the mash-tub went into the kneading-trough, families would be better fed and better taught. If what is spent in waste were only saved against a rainy day, workhouses would never be built. The man who spends his money with the publican, and thinks the landlord's bow and "How do ye do, my good fellow?" mean true respect, is a perfect simpleton. We don't light fires for the herring's comfort, but to roast him. Men do not keep pothouses for labourer's good; if they do, they certainly miss their aim. Why, then, should people drink "for the good of the house?" If I spend money for the good of any house, let it be my own, and not the landlord's. It is a bad well into which you must put water; and the beer-house is a bad friend, because it takes your all and leaves you nothing but headaches. He who calls those his friends who let him sit and drink by the hour is ignorant—very ignorant. Why, Red Lions, and Tigers, and Eagles, and Vultures are all creatures of prey, and why do so many put themselves within the power of their jaws and talons? Such as drink and live riotously, and wonder why their faces are so blotchy and their pockets so bare, would leave off wondering if they had two grains of wisdom. They might as well ask an elm-tree for pears as look to those habits for health and wealth. Those who go to the public-house for happiness climb a tree to find fish.

A CAUSE FOR THANKFULNESS.

A Sunday-school teacher, at the close of the lesson on a recent Sunday, handed to her scholars little slips of paper, on which was printed the question, "What have I to be thankful for?" asking that each should take time to consider and answer on the following Sunday. Among the replies that were then given was the following pathetic sentence, written by a little girl who had doubtless learned by bitter processes the painful truths it told, "I am thankful there are no public-houses in heaven."—*Temperance Record*.