

Our Young Folks.

CONQUER YOURSELF.

It's no use to grumble and sigh,
It's no use to worry and fret,
It is useless to growl or to cry,
Or fling yourself down in a pet.
You'll never be wise or be great,
If you bluster like bees when they swarm;
'Tis folly your woes to berate,
And pitch like a ship in a storm.

Don't get in a tantrum and shout
When obstacles rise in your path,
And don't—let me beg of you—pout,
By way of displaying your wrath;
Don't butt out your brains just to spite
Some fancied injustice of Fate,
For time will set everything right,
If you only have patience to wait.

The blustering wind cannot chill
The lake, though he ruffles its face,
But the frost, with its presence so still,
Locks it fast in a silent embrace.
So you may win fame beyond price,
And conquer the world with its pelf,
If you only will heed this advice,
And first learn to conquer yourself.

THE KING'S GOLDFINCH.

One afternoon the good King Rhoud went to take his customary walk in the woods of Ledre, with his friend, Earl Reigin, who felt very much alarmed about the dangerous enemies that were daily multiplying themselves in the king's own palace. He urged the king to consider some means to prevent it, and to send immediately away from his household any whom he suspected of being treacherous or untrustworthy.

As they were walking and talking thus earnestly through the beautiful wood, they heard something scream piteously in a tree.

"It is only a little bird," said Reigin.

"It does not sing, it screams," said the king. "The poor thing is in trouble."

"Let it scream," said Reigin. "Just now we have more important affairs to think of than a little bird in a tree."

"The nearest duty first," said the king. "There is nothing more important just now." And he looked up into the tree.

"It is impossible to rescue it," said Reigin; "it sits too high up."

"In youth I have learned to climb a tree; and am not yet so old that I have forgotten it."

"But there are no branches down below on the trunk," urged the earl.

"Then you must lift me. I am only a small man, not heavy to raise."

"But if you fall and get killed, it will be an eternal shame to have it said that our king lost his life for the sake of a bird."

"Many have lost it for less," said the king, as he prepared to climb the tree. So the strong, square shoulders of the earl helped to lift the slender, agile king up the trunk; and thence he climbed and ventured himself out on the uppermost branch. He came down safely with a little goldfinch in his hand. It had caught its little leg in a narrow crevice of the wood, and could not fly.

"It shall be my adoption," said the king, tenderly stroking the feathers, "and the playmate of my little son."

He took the bird home and had a beautiful cage made for it.

"How childish the king is," said one of his most faithful warriors, who disapproved of his giving time or thought to so small a thing as a bird. "At the moment when war is at the door, he finds time to save a little bird, and takes care of it himself. Does he not carelessly run into his own misfortune?"

Meanwhile, their desire for vengeance never slept. The death of Rhoud was decided upon. He had discovered the secret conspirators; he had their destiny in his hands, and he must soon die. They had secretly sworn his death, and by promise and threatening had bribed the two slaves that waited on the king's bedchamber, promising them liberty and great wealth if they helped in the king's destruction.

One day, when the king was hunting with his men, an oaken plank was loosened in the king's bedchamber, over his head; and some ingenious contrivance they had made it keep in its place until some one could lower it down from the second storey with a rope and let it fall. The king could thus be crushed on his couch, and the whole be thought a terrible accident.

The king returned at night late and weary, and went to bed. He soon was sound asleep, and would probably never have risen again had not the little bird, by its screaming, suddenly awakened him. He sat up in bed, and collecting his thoughts, perceived immediately that he had forgotten that day to give the little creature water and food, and at evening was so overcome by fatigue that he had not thought of it then. He sprang from his couch, saying:

"O thou poor little creature! Did I save thy life to let thee perish?"

With these words, he poured water into the little glass, and put grain in the little can.

Just then the plank fell from the ceiling with a tremendous noise, and striking the bed, crushed it flat to the floor. There

was a great commotion in the palace yard; the warriors awoke and seized their swords, the frightened servants rushed in with torches shaking in their trembling hands.

"The king is killed!" they cried. "King Rhoud is crushed."

But there stood the king, unhurt and smiling with the bird cage in his hand, and he cried out to them:

"Do not fear, my friends; God keeps me with His hand."

When Earl Reigin heard how everything had happened, how the plank had fallen, and what had saved the king, he stood long speechless. Then fixing his tearful eyes on the king, he said:

"I shall never again doubt a divine Providence."

"Then you can see, Reigin, one should not scorn little folk. Can a king save a bird? Then the bird can also save the king!"

A BRAVE MAN'S MAGNANIMITY.

The gallant devotion of Stanley's little band of Arab heroes, who, two hundred strong, beat back vast hordes of cunning and devilish cannibals, along a thousand miles of country, all the while carrying his big canoes overland around the Congo cataracts, taking roads over mountains and through jungles, dashing forth in search of food, forms a tale as pathetic and beautiful as it is amazing. One incident, however, must be told, if only for the light it throws on Stanley's character. He had much trouble with his men on account of their current propensity to steal, the results of which brought upon the last expedition much actual disaster. At last Stanley doomed the next man caught stealing to death. His grief and distress were unbounded when the next thief, detected in a case of peculiar flagrancy, was found to be Uledi, the bravest, truest, noblest of his dusky followers. Uledi had saved a hundred lives, his own among the number. He had performed acts of the most brilliant daring, always successful, always faithful, always kind. Must Uledi die? He called all his men around him in a council. He explained to them the gravity of Uledi's crime. He reminded them of his stern decree, but said he was not hard enough to enforce it against Uledi. His arm was not strong enough to lift the gun that would kill Uledi, and he would not bid one of them to do what he could not do himself. But some punishment, and a hard one, must be meted out. What should it be? The council must decide. They took a vote. Uledi must be flogged. When the decision was reached, Stanley standing, Uledi crouching at his feet, and the solemn circle drawn closely around them, one man whose life Uledi had saved under circumstances of frightful peril, stood forth and said, "Give me half the blows, master." Then another said, in the faintest accents, while tears fell from his eyes, "Will the master give his slave leave to speak?" "Yes," said Stanley. The Arab came forward and knelt by Uledi's side. His words came slowly, and now and then a sob broke them. "The master is wise," he said. "He knows all that has been, for he writes them in a book. I am black, and know not. Nor can I remember what is past. What we saw yesterday is today forgotten. But the master forgets nothing. He puts it all in that book. Each day something is written. Let your slave fetch the book, master, and turn its leaves. Maybe you will find some words there about Uledi. Maybe there is something that tells how he saved Zaidi from the white waters of the cataract; how he saved many men—how many I forget, Bin Ali, Mabruki, Koni Kusi—others too, how he is worthier than any three of us, how he always listens when the master speaks, and flies forth at his word. Look, master, at the book. Then, if the blows must be struck, Shumari will take half and I the other half. The master will do what is right. Saywa has spoken." And Saywa's speech deserves to live forever. Stanley threw away his whip. "Uledi is free," he said. "Shumari and Saywa are pardoned."

PERSEVERE.

One morning not long since, a teacher of music was giving his usual lesson in a certain primary school of New England. He had requested several of the little people to sing alone the exercises on the chart.

At length he turned to a bright-eyed little boy, five or six years old. The little fellow arose, his face aglow with interest, but he failed to sing even the first measure correctly. He repeated the attempt with the same result.

Had they been allowed to do so, several of the children were inclined to laugh at the discordant notes. The little boy turned questioningly his flushed face toward the teacher, who said, "I think you can't sing to-day, Johnnie."

"Yes, sir, I can; please let me try again."

But it was a failure this time, and the music teacher himself said, "No, little boy; we will let some one else sing it. You have done your best, but it isn't quite right."

"Please, sir," said Johnnie timidly, yet standing as firm as a soldier, "I know I can sing that piece."

The gentleman smiled, thought of the few moments left and replied, "You may try it again, my little man."

It was better this time, and, after repeating it once or twice more, Johnnie stood triumphant; and he had at last sung it without a mistake.

That boy will make a true man. He will not turn aside for trifles, but will try again and again, until he succeeds in what he has undertaken. Such boys are wanted everywhere—boys who can and will.

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

April 13,
1890.

THE WIDOW OF NAIN.

{ Luke: 7: 11-15.

GOLDEN TEXT.—They glorified God, saying, That a great Prophet is risen up among us.—Luke vii. 16.

INTRODUCTORY.

This touching and impressive incident in which the divine power and compassion were so strikingly illustrated, took place on the day after Jesus had healed the Roman centurion's sick servant. Both miracles were wrought soon after He had preached the memorable Sermon on the Mount. Its subject is the kingdom of God. These miracles illustrate the power and the spirit in which that kingdom is governed. Glory to God in the highest, and compassion for the weak and helpless are conspicuous as the aim and design of Christ's earthly ministry as it is the great object of His atoning sacrifice for sin.

I. The Funeral Procession.—After healing the servant of the Roman centurion Jesus left Capernaum, accompanied by several of those who were to be afterwards His apostles, a number of disciples, those who received Christ's teaching and many others. They reached the little city of Nain, near the southern border of Galilee. Here they were met by a procession coming out of the city gate. Mournful as was that procession, it was common then and is common still. It is common as death. It was customary among the Jews to bury their dead outside the city walls. For sanitary reasons the arrangement was a wise one. The body was not enclosed in a coffin as with us, but, wrapped in garments or clothes, was carried forth and deposited in rock-hewn sepulchres or in the ground. This particular funeral was that of a young man who had died. The family in which this death had occurred was a small one. It consisted of a widowed mother and her only son. That son had sickened and died, and now the bereaved and sorrowing mother is left all alone. The people of the town were deeply moved with compassion for her in her great sorrow. They are going forth bearing the lifeless body to the grave. The funeral procession was met by Jesus and those that accompanied Him. He never looks on human sorrows without compassion. He said to the mourning mother, "Weep not." He it is who can effectively wipe the tears from sorrowing eyes.

II. The Dead Raised to Life Again.—Having checked the grief of the weeping mother, not by chiding her, but in tones of tenderest sympathy, asked her to restrain her tears. Jesus touched the bier, in token that He wished to arrest the procession. There was no need for it to go any further. Those who bore the sorrowful burden did not question Jesus' purpose in thus bringing the procession to a stand-still. Their interest and curiosity were no doubt aroused, but they stood still. He who was meek and lowly probably spoke in quiet tones, yet such as the cold ear of death could hear. Few were His words: Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. The effect was wonderful. The young man who was unconscious of all around him at once sat up and began to speak. Those powers stilled in death were restored, and the lips on which the silence of death had fallen speak again in familiar human language. In fullest harmony with that compassionate nature of Jesus, He delivered him to his mother. Some have imagined that under this form of speech a deep, if not hidden, meaning lies. That the gift of life to the son would be productive of spiritual life in the mother. That the miracle wrought by Jesus, and its remarkable relation to herself would produce a deep spiritual impression on her, can hardly be doubted. But it is not necessary to search beneath the ordinary and natural meaning of the words to see how they illustrate the wonderful character of the compassionate Saviour. Sometimes to those He benefited He gave the command, "Follow Me;" sometimes He imposed tests of self-denial and sacrifice as evidences of devotion and sincerity. To the lonely widow He restores her son, that to care for her and comfort her declining days might be his first duty. In this restoration of the young man to his mother after life had been restored to him some have seen a hint that at the general resurrection there will be a reunion of families that have been divided by death. Parents and children, brothers and sisters who have been parted by death will thus, they reason, be restored to each other in that immortal land where the inhabitant shall no more say I am sick. Be this as it may, one thing is certain, that if such blessed reunions are to take place, it can only be by faith in Him who raises the dead. Christ says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you: He that heareth My word, and believeth in Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life."

III. The Effect of the Miracle.—It is not said how long a time had been occupied in the accomplishment of this stupendous miracle. The narrative would indicate that only a brief space had intervened between the meeting of the two companies—Jesus and those with Him, and the people going to the grave with the dead body of the young man—and the restoration to his mother of him who had been raised to life again. Time is only relative. The greatest events may depend on a momentary decision. Conversion—being raised from the death of sin—may be often an instantaneous act. In the presence of death human hearts are likely to be in a tender mood. The manifestation of Christ's divine power made a deep impression on the people; "there came a fear on all." Not terror and dread, but a sense of solemnity and holy awe. They felt as if standing in the immediate presence of God, for none but God had the power of raising the dead. Their feelings found expression in praise; "they glorified God;" To Him they ascribed this marvellous work. It is not said that they recognized Jesus as the Messiah, but they did see in Him a great prophet, a divinely-inspired Messenger of God, to declare His will. They interpreted the miracle wrought by Jesus as a merciful visitation from God, and so far were on the right way to a full recognition of Him as the Son of God with power. The reality of this miracle was apparent to all. It was not done in a corner, but on the public highway, in the open light of day, and in the presence of a large multitude. The young man who had died and was raised to life could bear direct testimony to the fact. So could his mother and all who had a personal knowledge of the circumstances. No wonder, then, that a report of this marvellous occurrence should be spread abroad far and wide. Throughout all Judea and throughout all the region round about, the tidings were swiftly carried. For the comfort and encouragement of the prisoner in the fort of Macherus, the news was born to John the Baptist, who may possibly, during the months of his imprisonment, have had occasional seasons of depression and despondency. Christ's work of raising the spiritually dead to newness of life is going on all the time. Every soul that enters the kingdom of God through a living faith in Christ Jesus is raised from the death of sin to everlasting life. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

At the gate of death, as on the cross, sin and salvation, life and death, meet.

In seasons of deepest sorrow and distress, Jesus is the Divine Consoler. He can say to the mourning "Weep not."

To all who are dead in trespasses and sins, Jesus' words still are, "I say unto thee, Arise." In its deepest and most extensive sense Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

We should glorify Jesus for what He has done, and spread abroad the knowledge of His blessed work.