

The Old Cider Mill.

BY MATHEW D. KIMBALL.

PEARS to me I see it jilt—
That old cider mill whar we
Uster santer reggeoly
Arter school, us boys, to git
Yaller apple juice, fresh squeezed !
Drunked just oceans of we pleased—
Ev'ry boy could get his fill
Down to Bunker's cider mill.

Seems like only yisterday
Me 'nd Hank 'nd Silas Clark
Way down suller in ther dark,
Found a bar'l stowed away.
Bored a hole through, just for fun
'Nd to let the cider run,
So's that we could git our fill
Down to Bunker's cider mill.

On the soft side of a plank,
We jist lay thar on the groun',
Let the cider trickle down
Our gullets—me 'nd Si 'nd Hank.
One would drink 'nd two stand guard—
Didn't s'pose the staff was hard
Till we'd more'n got our fill
Down to Bunker's cider mill.

Mill has long since gone to rot,
Roof 'nd rafting tumbling through,
Si, he's gone to ruin too,
'Nd Hank, he's jist a whiskey sot.
Cider first, then wine 'nd beer,
Gin 'nd rum 'nd whiskey clear.
That's the way they went down hill—
Down from Bunker's cider mill.

—Union Signal.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

Rev. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, APRIL 7, 1894.

NOT DEAD, BUT SLEEPING.

[LUKE 8. 52.]

THIS was spoken of a little girl twelve years old. Her friends all supposed that she was dead. They were right; she was soon to be buried. Jesus came, and, knowing that she was dead, said, in the words of your text, "She is not dead, but sleepeth." What did he mean? He wanted to have the friends know that he thought that they had a wrong idea of death, and wrong feelings in regard to it; and in the sense in which they spoke and thought of death, the little girl was not dead.

It is a blessed thing to go to sleep, when we are tired out and can drop to sleep in an instant. Sometimes we wish we could have more time to play, but when the hour of sleep comes, how sweetly it takes us in its arms, and nothing is more beautiful than a sleeping child. And it was only a few days ago that I saw a little child who had been suffering day after day, die; and in a few moments such a sweet smile came upon her lips, that I could not help saying, "How sweetly she sleeps."

The next thing for you to remember is, that those who go to sleep wake up. When you have been to school six hours, and have helped mother at home, and have played very hard all the spare moments, you begin

to find it very hard to hold up your head, and nothing seems bright and pleasant; but in the morning, when the sun looks in at the window, how bright the world looks; how strong and happy you feel; how very different from the way in which you felt the night before. So when any of us are put to sleep by Jesus, we can know that there is a morning coming; and when that has come we shall be so strong, and beautiful, and happy, that the night of our sleep will seem to have been very short. But I hear some boy or girl say, "I do not want to go to sleep in the ground; I do not want to be put in a coffin," and you need not. Once in a while my little girl says, "Papa, I don't want to go to bed up-stairs." She does not want to be alone, so her mother allows her to make her bed upon the lounge in the bright sitting-room. At length she falls asleep; then, when I am through with my studies, I carry her to her bed, and she knows nothing of the dark night nor the lonely room. In the same way none of you will ever know anything about the grave or coffin, if you have to be buried in them. You fall asleep at home, and when you wake, if you are Christ's, you awake in a better home.

But another thing, we all grow when we are asleep. The reason why some children do not grow more, is because they do not sleep enough. A few months ago a farmer's boy put a kernel of corn in the ground; you could pinch it between your little fingers, or hold a hundred kernels in your hand; but when the corn slept it grew, and to-day it has become a tall stalk, with full ears and long rows of kernels. So, if a body is taken to the cemetery and left sleeping, it will not be very long, as God counts time, before it will come forth in heaven a most beautiful body, worthy to live in the beautiful land.

A LITTLE BLACK HERO.

SOME of you have hard words to bear at times because you love the Lord Jesus. But in some parts of the world people who say they believe in him are beaten cruelly and even put to death.

In Central Africa, a few years ago, some boys were burned to death by order of the king because they were Christians. Yet in spite of this a boy of about sixteen years was brave enough to become a Christian. He came to the missionary and said in his own language:

"My friend, I wish to be baptized."

"Do you know what you are asking?" said the missionary in surprise.

"I know, my friend."

"But if you say you are a Christian they will kill you."

"I know, my friend."

"But if they ask you if you are a Christian, will you tell a lie and say 'No?'"

Bravely and firmly came the boy's answer: "I shall confess, my friend."

A little talk followed in which he showed clearly that he understood what it was to be a Christian, so the missionary baptized him by the name of Samwell, which is the same as our Samuel.

The king found him so useful that he employed him to collect taxes, which are paid in cowries, little shells in Africa used instead of money.

One day, when he was away on this business, the king again got angry with the Christians, and ordered that all of the leading ones should be killed. Samwell's name was found upon the list. As he came back he heard of the death that was awaiting him. That night, when it was quite dark, the missionary was awakened by a low knocking at the door. It was Samwell and his friends, come to know what he should do. Should he run away, or must he go and hand over the money he had collected? After a silence the missionary said: "Tell me what you think?"

Looking up, Samwell replied: "My friend, I cannot leave the things of the king."

His friends earnestly begged him to fly, but the missionary said, "No, he is right, He has spoken well; he must deliver up the money."

They all knelt down in prayer together, the missionary wondering sadly if he should ever see the young hero again.

"My friend, I will try to start early, and leave the cowries with the chief," said the lad, as he set off; "but I fear my carriers

will not be ready till after daylight, and if I am seen I shall be caught. Good-bye."

But God kept him. He went boldly to the chief's hut, put down his cowries and walked away. He went a few nights after to tell the missionary, who said: "You ran when you got outside!"

"No, my friend, for I should have been noticed at once. I walked quite slowly until I got out of sight, and then I ran as fast as I could, and so I escaped."

This is a true story, taken from Mr. Ashe's book, "Two Kings of Uganda." It shows the love of Christ can make a boy brave to do his duty even in the face of danger and death. "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence."

GOOD FOR EVIL.

A PROMINENT lawyer relates to a correspondent of the New York Sun, that many years ago, while he was Attorney-General of Missouri, he happened to be in Governor Steward's office, when a convict was brought in from the penitentiary to receive a pardon at the Governor's hands. The convict was a "steam-boat man," a large, powerful fellow, with the rough manners of his class.

The Governor looked at the man and seemed strangely affected, scrutinizing him long and closely. Then he signed the document which restored him to liberty; but before handing it to him, he said:

"You will commit some other crime, I fear, and soon be back in the penitentiary."

The man protested solemnly that such a thing should never happen. The Governor looked doubtful, and after a few moments said:

"You will go back on the river and be a mate again I suppose?"

The man said, yes, that was his intention.

"Well I want you to promise me one thing," continued the Governor. "I want you to promise me your word that when you are a mate again you will never take a billet of wood and drive a poor sick boy out of his bunk to help you to load your boat on a stormy night."

The man answered that he never would, and seemed surprised. He inquired why the Governor requested such a pledge.

"Because," said Governor Steward, "some day that boy may become governor, and you may want him to pardon you for some crime. One black, stormy night, many years ago, you stopped your boat on the Mississippi River to take on a load of wood. There was a boy on board working his passage from New Orleans to St. Louis; but he was very sick of a fever, and was lying on his bunk. You had men enough to do the work, but you went to him with a stick of wood in your hand, drove him on deck with blows and curses, and kept him toiling like a slave till the load was completed. I was that boy. Here is your pardon. Never again be guilty of so brutal an act."

The prisoner took the pardon, covered his face and went out.

BOOKS AS FRIENDS.

A GENTLEMAN received a call one afternoon from a lad of twelve. The conversation soon turned on books, and together they examined the gentleman's library. It did not take long to discover that the lad's taste led him to select a trashy kind of fiction that was untrue and misleading.

"I should like to have you feel free to use my books, Harry, and I don't think you can complain of any lack of interest in this book," said the host, selecting one of a series of young folks' histories and reading a page or two as a sample. Harry listened with open ears to the story of the battle of Marathon and the overwhelming defeat of the Persians by the brave little band of Greeks.

"Yes, I think I shall like that," he said, thanking his host when the reading was finished.

In less than a week he returned for another volume, and did not stop until he had finished the series. By that time he had acquired the habit of reading, and he continued the course in history that he had begun. It was a small thing that turned this boy from the companionship of dangerous books to that of interesting and, at the same time, instructive books. It certainly is true that you can form "bad companionship" in your books as well as in your friends.

Beyond all question, a low, disreputable book does more injury than we think. Somehow the printed page carries with it the feeling that what is said by it must be true. It is this subtle influence that does the greatest harm.

There is no need to despair, however, for the charm of a good book is keenly felt by young readers. It is a duty we owe ourselves to make as wise a choice of the books we read as we would of the persons we call our "friends."

CIGARETTES.

THE use of cigarettes by boys and young men is on the increase. It has even gone so far that girls and women old enough to know better indulge themselves in this way.

Perhaps some may not be familiar with materials used to make cigarettes, and the following, from a New York paper, will be somewhat of a revelation to them.

A little red-headed Italian boy, who gave his name as Francis Chicabau, and who said he was eight years old, was brought before Justice White at the Harlem Police Court recently, charged with being a vagrant. He was barefooted and had on ragged clothing. He spoke English very imperfectly. The officer said he found the boy gathering cigar-stumps from the gutter and sidewalks, and showed Justice White a basket half filled with the butts of old cigars covered with mud and water-soaked.

"What do you do with them?" asked the justice.

"I sell them to a man for ten cents a pound," replied the boy; "but I don't know his name, and they are used in making cigarettes, like they sell in all the stores."

The officer corroborated the child's statement, and said that there were many boys and girls scouring the city in search of stumps and half-smoked cigars. These were first dried and then sold to various persons who used them in making cigarettes.

A YOUNG MAN'S LAMENT.

A KIND-HEARTED, sympathetic physician sat by the bed-side of a young man to whom he had been summoned on a professional visit. After considering the patient's case, he frankly informed him that his time for this world was short.

The invalid was alarmed, he had not anticipated death so near. He did not remember that the pale horse and rider come "in such an hour as ye think not." Looking up into the doctor's face with a despairing expression he said:

"I have missed it at last."

"What have you missed?" was the inquiry.

"I have missed it at last," he repeated.

"Missed what?"

"Doctor, I have missed the salvation of my soul!"

"Ah! say not so; it is not so. Do you remember the thief on the cross?"

"I do; and I remember that he never said to the Holy Ghost, 'Go thy way,' but I did. And now he is saying to me, 'Go thy way.'"

While lying there gasping, and looking with a vacant, staring eye, he continued in substance:

"I was awakened and anxious about my soul, but I did not then want to be saved. Something seemed to say, 'Don't put it off, make sure of salvation.' I said to myself, 'I will postpone it.' I knew I ought not to do it, until I had promised that I would take it up again, at a time not remote, and more favourable. I bargained away, resisted and insulted the Holy Spirit. I never thought of coming to this. I neglected to make my salvation sure, and now I have missed it at last."

"You remember," suggested the physician, that there were some who came at the eleventh hour."

"My eleventh hour," he replied, "was when I had that call of the Spirit. I have had none since—shall not have. I am given over to be lost. Oh, I have missed it! I have sold my soul for nothing—a feather, a straw—undone forever."

Soon he raised his head, looked around the room, turning his eyes in every direction, and burying his face in the pillow, and cried out in agony, "I have missed it at last." And thus he passed away.