

Youth's Corner.

LEARNING TO THINK, AGAIN.

Now for it, Henry! Now for it! Here I am, and it wants a quarter to six. Now I shall know why my hoop bowls along when a handkerchief will not stir; why a peg-top spins, a ball bounces, a humming-top makes a noise, and a kite flies in the air. Ah! and why a battledoor will not fly like a kite; for I dare say you can tell me."

"First, let me give you another instance of the value of learning to think, Charles. When I first spoke to you, you seemed to care nothing at all about it; so I thought to myself, 'If I can say something about his hoop, his peg-top, his ball, his humming-top, and his kite, it will, perhaps, lead him on to want to know about the matter.'"

"And did you speak about them for the purpose?"

"I did, just for the purpose of making you long to learn to think; and you see that, by forethought, I have brought about what I wanted."

"Capital! capital! But now for the hoop; that comes first, you know. Why does it run along so famously?"

"Now listen, then, very attentively. My tutor tells me, that there are certain laws in nature which are universal; that is, they always act in the same manner one time as well as another, unless they are interfered with. For instance, it is a law of nature that water will find its level. If you let water run out of a pit, it will run on until it has risen in the lower pit as high as the upper one, and then it will stop."

"I think I understand that."

"It is also a law of nature, that a stone cast into the air will fall to the earth. And now I will mention another law, which has something to do with the hoop as it runs along the ground."

"Now for it!"

"It is a law of nature, that matter, or every substance around us, will always remain in the same state in which it is, unless forced into another state. A stone lying on the ground would lie there for ever, if nothing moved it; and a bullet fired out of a gun would fly forward for ever, if nothing stopped it."

"Would it really?"

"Yes; and in like manner your hoop, when once set in motion, would run on for ever, if nothing prevented it."

"But what does prevent it? There is nothing stops it, unless it happens to run against a wall or a post."

"There you are wrong. Every pebble it meets with, however small, prevents it in some degree from running on as it otherwise would do. When you drive it through the mud, or water, it will not go far without stopping, because the mud and the water stop its progress. When you drive it over grass, it is the same; the grass stops it."

"Yes, I know that; but when I drive it on broad flag stones, it runs along smoothly, and nothing stops it then."

"In this case, as you say, it runs on faster; but still, to say nothing of the wind which it may have to pass through, it rubs against the ground, and this rubbing, or friction as it is called, makes it, if you do not strike it again, gradually go slower and slower till it stops. The reason, then, why your hoop, when once set in motion, runs so famously, is because it has little friction, so small a part of it rubs against the ground. And the reason why a pocket handkerchief will not run along at all, is because it has so much friction, or rubs so much against the ground."

"Well, come, I am glad I know at last: but why does my narrow iron hoop run along better than my broad wooden one?"

"For this simple reason: it is heavier according to its bulk, and has less friction. Your broad hoop has two or three times as much wind to push through, when it meets the wind; and, being two or three times broader, it must of necessity rub more against the ground than the other."

"I understand, then, that when I have once knocked my hoop along with my stick, it runs on, according to the law you spoke of, 'until the rubbing' or friction stops it by degrees?"

"Exactly so; and it is just the same with the peg-top. The string, by being wrapped round it, forces it to spin when you dash it on the ground, and there it would spin for ever, or until it wore itself away, if the friction against the air and the ground did not gradually stop it."

"That is just like the hoop. I understand it, now, thoroughly; so please to explain why a ball bounces?"

"Do you remember what elasticity is?"

"Oh, yes! That is one of the qualities that you told me of: it is springiness!"

"What do you mean by 'springiness'?"

"I mean the quality of springing back again when a thing is pushed out of its place."

"Very good! Now here is a bit of Indian rubber. If I stretch it out, the moment I loose it, it springs into its place again; and if I push it hard with my finger, and dent it in, the instant I take away my finger, the dented part springs up to its former position. Thus it is with the ball, which is elastic. The blow against the ground dents it in; and it is its elasticity, or sudden effort to force itself into its former round form, that makes it spring into the air."

"Capital! I shall never forget why a

ball bounces now. The humming-top comes next."

"Yes. Now for the humming-top. You must know that all solid bodies vibrate or shake when they are struck, and this vibration makes the air round them vibrate too; as soon as this vibrating air reaches our ears, it produces the sensation of sound. If you strike a drum with a drumstick, the tightened parchment begins to vibrate or shake; and if you put a bit of paper on the drum, you will see it tremble: this is a positive proof of its vibration. If you put water in a glass, and rub round the edge of the glass with your wet finger till the glass sounds, you will see the water tremble, a proof that the glass vibrates: you shall see me do it; I have a glass here ready. Now, hark! There! do you not see the water tremble?"

"Oh, yes, quite plain."

"Well, then, you must be satisfied that the glass vibrates, though you cannot see it move. When a violin player draws his bow against the strings of his violin, the stretched strings begin directly to vibrate: when a flute player blows into his flute, the flute and air vibrate immediately: and when your humming-top is set spinning, the air comes in contact with the hole in the side, and the top and air around it vibrate instantly; the vibrating air strikes against your ear, and the humming of the top is distinctly heard."

"Then it is the trembling or shaking of the top and the air that makes the noise?"

"Exactly so; or, as perhaps my tutor would say, it is this that produces the sensation of sound. And now comes the last thing that I have to explain; and that is, Why does a kite fly in the air?"

"Ay! Now for the kite!"

"The reason why a kite flies in the air, is, because being made of light materials, and always kept with its face or broad surface to the wind, the wind is powerful enough to bear it up. If it were turned side-ways, the wind would not have surface enough to press against it; if it had no tail, it would be unsteady, and turn round and round: and if the string were cut, the kite, not having its face kept to the wind, must come down. The long string on the one side, and the tail on the other, balance and hold the kite steady between them."

"But why will not my battledoor fly?"

"Simply because it is too heavy according to its surface. A penny piece will not fly in the air, though not a tenth part so heavy as a large kite; because it can only present about a square inch of surface to the wind: whereas paper of the same weight as a penny piece, would present a surface to the wind of five hundred square inches."

"I see it very clearly; and now I am a great deal wiser than I was when I came. You may expect me in good time again tomorrow night; for I like learning to think better than ever."

"You will find me ready for you, I dare say. Farewell!"—Children's Companion.

THE BLACKSMITH. (From the French.)

As Mr. Wilson passed late one evening by the shop of a blacksmith, he heard the sound of his hammer, and stopped to ask the reason why he worked so much beyond his usual time. "I am not at work for myself," said the blacksmith, "but for one of my poor neighbours whose cottage was burnt down last week; he has lost every thing. I mean to work an hour earlier in the morning, and two hours later at night for him. This is all I can do to help him, for I have to earn bread for myself and my family; but provisions are cheap, and a little now will go further than it used to do." "This is kind of you," said Mr. Wilson, "for I suppose your neighbour will never be able to pay you again."

"I do not expect it," replied the blacksmith, "but if I was in his situation, and he in mine, I am sure he would do as much for me."

Mr. Wilson thought he had better not hinder this good man any longer; so he wished him good night, and proceeded home.

The next morning he called again on the blacksmith, and, wishing to reward his kindness, he offered to lend him ten pounds, without interest, that he might be able to buy his iron at the cheapest rate, and undertake more work, and thus increase his profits. His surprise was great when the blacksmith said, "Sir, I thank you, but I will not take your money; I would rather not have it, because I have not earned it. I can pay for all the iron I want at present, and if I should want more, the person I buy of would trust me."

"But if you took this money to some one else," said Mr. Wilson, "you would perhaps be able to buy cheaper." "Why as for that, Sir," replied the smith, "I can't say I think it would be right on my part: I know he is a fair dealing man, and when I first took this forge and had nothing I could call my own, except the clothes on my back, he trusted me; surely I ought not to go and deal elsewhere now." "Keep your money, Sir, I thank you for the offer;—or stop, perhaps you would lend it to the poor man who was burnt out; it would go far to help him in rebuilding his little cottage." "And this would be helping me too, you know; for then I need not work quite so hard for him!" Mr. Wilson complied with the blacksmith's request. The loan of the money was very useful to the poor cottager; and Mr. Wilson had the pleasure of making two persons happy instead of one, as he had at first intended.

"My Reader, remember the words of Christ: 'All things whatsoever ye would

that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.' Matt. vii. 12. S. G.

THE ENCHANTED POST-CHAISE.

Edward and Alfred had been play-fellows in childhood, class-mates at school, and companions while preparing for professions. They separated, to perfect themselves in Europe. Edward went to Edinburgh and took his degree in medicine; Alfred proceeded to London and engaged in a solicitor's office to improve himself as a lawyer. At the end of three or four years, unexpectedly they met in the streets of Boston, and they at once renewed companionship, promising to each other to spend all the time together that they could spare from attending the pursuits peculiar to each. So during the day, Edward went to see hospitals and attend medical lectures; Alfred sat and heard lawyers plead and judges sum up cases: but in the evening they found each other out, and a great deal each of them had to tell of the manner in which he had spent his time, since they parted on the Saint Lawrence.

Their conversation went on a long while upon nothing beyond the common affairs of life: but at last Alfred inquired of Edward, where he attended public worship; for he had only just arrived, but Edward had been in Boston several weeks. The young Doctor gave a toss with his head, and answered in a careless manner, "Oh, I stroll—I stroll—I have heard some of the big guns here, and there is one or two more I want to hear, before I leave the place." This mode of speaking surprised his friend exceedingly; for they had been piously brought up, had attended Sunday School and a Bible-Class until the very time they crossed the Atlantic; and they had been regular attendants upon godly preaching. The young lawyer had continued in this course during his residence from home. He had steadily sat under a pious ministry on the Lord's day, and had been introduced to families where meetings for religious improvement were held. Thus, once or twice every week, he met a dozen friends—either a Clergyman or some old experienced Christian taking the lead in offering up prayer:—they sang hymns, and conversed upon some portion of Scripture. He had useful books always lent him, and attended a Sunday School regularly to hear how practised teachers tried to make things plain; or he himself took a class, if a vacancy occurred by the absence of the regular teacher. He now saw at once that his former companion had gone sadly astray, since he could speak in so negligent a manner of public worship. "How is this, Edward?" said he, "we did not use to spend the Lord's day in a search for great guns formerly, nor to talk in that way of God's ordinance of preaching neither."—"No, indeed, we didn't," replied his companion with a contemptuous laugh, "we were at nurse then; but now we are become men, and I will hope you are not led by leading-strings any longer."—"Truly, Edward," said the young lawyer now in a very serious manner, "I feel that I am not; for I seem to find out, every hour, more and more that I have to answer for: I should think myself very childish indeed, if I allowed a thoughtless crowd around me to lead me after its liking and choosing, instead of thinking for myself and keeping in that walk with God to which parents and teachers used to invite me when I was giddy and had not sense to know the serious work of life."—"O Alfred! then you really think that a sensible person should mope and whine and plague himself after the manner that a parcel of poor wretches do who haven't mind enough to see through the follies of that absurd book, the Bible, with which we used to be teased? I have escaped from that, Alfred; I have got free, I tell you."

"Alfred! take care lest you be bound more hopelessly now than you were when a nurse was leading you. Did you indeed apply sense, when you were brought to think the Bible an absurd book, and your lessons in it a teasing? You did not treat them like that formerly, when we used to study our Bible together, you must recollect. Do you remember your telling me that the manner in which you were required to study the Bible at school when you were a little boy, and to come answering questions upon it without book, was the thing that made you afterwards keep your thoughts close to your books of medicine; and our turning to all the parallel passages and tracing the connection, as we prepared for the Bible Class, that gave you the skill of tacking all that you learned together, one to the other; so as to make you thorough in your studies;—and now the high testimonials you have got at Edinburgh, do they not hang some how together with the closeness of your Bible studies, Edward?"—"Why, yes, I don't deny that;—but all the strengthening of mind which we got from the way they made us study the Bible, might have been given us without laying in store all the rubbish of 'miracles'—parables—types—prophecies, which I do not know now how to get rid of, it sticks to me so."—"And you really would wish to part with it, Edward?"—"My dear fellow—now seriously who can have patience with those lies of miracles which reason and observation tell you

never could have been performed—those vulgar apostles—that heap of tasteless books which they have bound up into one bible—those hard commandments which nobody ever kept—those promises of on-thusiasmatic ravishment which never were fulfilled but to madmen—that requirement of self-denial which kills all human happiness: now, let me tell you, Alfred, that you will be sorry yet for having wasted so much time and effort upon absurdities; and if you wish to keep Sundays in a really improving manner, as it becomes intellectual young men like you and me, let's take a drive to Harvard College and spend some weeks among the Unitarian Professors and Students; they will rid you of those antiquated notions which are sticking to you yet, I see."

The young Doctor had run into a rattling, positive way of talking, and had become quite warm with zeal to change his young friend's views. He was now waiting for an answer. Alfred looked at him in silent grief for a while—at last he quietly asked: "And we must travel by the Enchanted Post-Chaise?" At this question, Edward opened his eyes wide, and looked for an explanation. But the lawyer was silent, till his friend inquired what he meant? "Why, you have been travelling by the Enchanted Post-Chaise all this time, I perceive—and do you not know it?" Another silence, and then the Doctor seemed to get impatient: "Don't tease me—what is it you mean?"

Alfred took the word: "A party of young men set out to see the world, little concerned about where the journey might lead them to. A Post-Chaise had been provided—as light as a feather—four fleet horses were harnessed to it, and seemed to go more flying than galloping—two postillions kept only just patting and stroking them—the road was even and smooth like a drawing-room—the travellers were in the best of spirits. But as they were rounding the corner of a thick wood, out rushed a band of villains with clubs, and axes; and with a tremendous crash they broke the four wheels of the carriage to splinters. The young men were almost frightened to death, you may conceive; but what was their amazement when the chaise went on as fast as it did before the wheels were gone! They were recovering from their terror, though not from their surprise, when, at two reports of fire-arms, the postillions dropped from their horses, and yet these cattle pursued their course with precisely the former steadiness and rapidity. Presently another set of men—or it may have been the same, for it was all enchantment—were seen clinging to the traces, and in the twinkling of an eye the horses themselves were loose and scattered right and left; still the carriage went on as if nothing had happened. A new disaster threatened: these horrible men had rolled in the way large masses of rock, against which the light Post-Chaise must certainly be smashed to pieces;—but it passes over them as smoothly as a dove flies over the roofs and chimneys of a city. Just beyond the rocks, these ruffians have cut ditches across the road, where the travellers are as sure to break their necks as their vehicle to be shivered to fragments: but it leaps the ditches with its unaltered speed and safety. And now the enemy throw heavy boxes right upon the roof of the chaise, so that the travellers begin to think of making their escape from under so dangerous a load—but as it is all enchantment, they perceive that neither is the roof crushed, nor the velocity of their journey impeded. The Post-Chaise goes on as rapidly as ever. That is the way we must go to Harvard College, Edward." To be continued.

THE IRON CROWN OF LOMBARDY.

I could not resist the temptation to pay a visit to the far famed Iron Crown of Lombardy, which is kept in the Cathedral of Monza, about ten miles distant. Furnished with an order from the Governor of Milan—without which the real crown is never shown, but a model only—we went thither by railway, over a perfectly level country. On showing the Governor's mandate, an hour was named when the precious relic should be exhibited. Meanwhile we witnessed a funeral, which proceeded with great pomp and solemnity; and visited the palace—for Monza is a royal residence. At the appointed hour we returned to the Cathedral, and were first shown the treasures of the place, amongst which were the regalia of Lombardy, and the model of the iron crown. Then came the ceremony of showing the real crown, which is always kept over an altar, at the left of the grand altar. This operation required two priests, besides the lad who managed the incense. One priest ascended the altar, whilst the other stood below, and the lad with his censor in front. After allowing a picture which formed the altar-piece, to drop down, half a dozen ponderous bolts were displaced, and then a door, very much like that of an iron safe, being thrown open, the relic stood disclosed! At this moment the lad swung high his censor, and the incense rose in clouds; whilst the priest who stood on the altar, removed from its place a large cross, in a cavity at the centre of which was the crown, and handed it to the priest below, who reverently offered it to our wondering gaze. The crown itself is a circle of gold,

about three inches broad, covered with gems. But what gives such sacred value to it, is a tiny band, which passes round the inside, about the size of a watch spring, affirmed to be made of one of the nails which fastened our Saviour to the Cross! The crown is as old as the time of Charlemagne, and is frequently called the "Iron Crown of Charlemagne." In this ancient Cathedral, more than thirty Kings have been crowned with it. Napoleon who was the last, took the crown from the Archbishop and put it upon his own head, saying with an air that defied both heaven and earth, "God has given it to me; woo to him that touches it."

There are other relics which possess kindred associations, arranged in the form of small crosses, and inserted in cruciform cavities in the large cross. 1st. A piece of the true cross. 2d. Fragments of our Saviour's tomb. 3d. A piece of the reed on which the sponge was put. 4th. A piece of the sponge. 5th. A piece of the pillar at which our Saviour was scourged. When we had sufficiently viewed these extraordinary objects, and those who had more faith than I could command, had duly knelt before them, they were reverently restored to their former place. This may be taken as a fair specimen of the whole system of relics in these countries.—Notes of a Traveller.

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