

Our Young Folks.

Red-Ripe Apples.

Red-ripe Apples! Red-ripe Apples! A large bill was stuck upon the walls of a house, and the letters were about six times larger than those which you have just read. They were so on purpose, that even those who ran might read. Girls, who had been sent to school, and boys who had been dispatched to run on errands, were certain to see these letters, and to understand what they meant. Harry was a very little fellow, but he had learnt A B C, and could spell easy words, and, of course, he had no difficulty in understanding the meaning of the large placard. If nothing else had enlightened him, he saw enough when he looked at the crowd of girls and boys with their noses pressed flat against the window-pane, and a very unsatisfied look upon their faces. "It is enough to make your mouth water," said one boy, who was very hot and thirsty. Hearing him, Harry hastened to the window and looked in. There he saw a great heap of the most lovely and inviting apples that he had ever looked at. "How I should like some," said Harry. "Have some, then," said the boy. "I cannot," said Harry, "for I have no money—not so much as a farthing." "What a pity!" said the boy; "but perhaps if you try you can get a penny or two." Harry shook his head. He thought it very unlikely, but he resolved to keep his eyes and ears open, and do the best he could. He went away from the window presently, though he would rather have remained, to gaze upon the beautiful fruit, but he knew his mother would be expecting his return. When he opened the door his mother said, "Have you done what I told you, Henry?" "Yes, mother."

Catching a Sunbeam.

The light streams in at the open window and the rays sparkle and dance: as the eager little one watches the particles of light, she cries:—"may I catch it mamma? Can I hold it?" and the tiny fingers reach up and clasp themselves tightly. "O! I dot my hand full; hold your lap, mamma, and I will put it in." But when the little fingers unclasp, such a look of disappointment! and again she tries to grasp.

Just so are we larger children grasping at sunbeams; the glitter and glare dazzle and hold us; we eagerly reach forward, but it is all empty and vain; it does not satisfy. There is a sunbeam that can satisfy, that will shine right in our hearts; we feel its warmth, and the glow will sustain us through all ills, will feed us with the bread of life and clothe us with the robe of righteousness, and we will grasp it, can hold it fast; it is not all empty air; it will bear us up when we feel that we are almost sinking, and send out a ray to light us on our way when all else is dark, and the troubles of this life blind us an' seem almost to swallow us up. The blessed Jesus will lighten our path, let the darkness be ever so great, if we only cling to Him and trust Him entirely.

Save the Young Man.

One of the great dangers just now is that our large boys will go to destruction. We are specially concerned for the boy between seventeen and twenty. Peculiar temptations are in his way, which are in the way of no others in the family or the church. His sisters are comparatively safe. His father and mother are mature in their religious faith and practice, and are not in a tithe of the danger of going astray that he is. Almost all his surroundings are such as lead him away from religion; and but few of them lead him towards it. If he is in college, his nights are apt to be spent in festive frolics. If in business, it is more than likely that his employers lie and steal, and he knows of their habits, and is tempted to follow their example as the road to lucrative success. If he is neither getting education nor working for his living, he has idle time on his hands, and that is bad for him. If he is in a boarding-house, his associates may be unprofitable, and lead him into mischievous associations at night. Even at home he may be led astray by some bad fellow who lives round the corner, and whose fascinating influence he finds it impossible to resist.

Prayer-meeting does not always present sufficient inducement to the youth to compel his attendance. The fact is that a great many of our prayer-meetings are too dry and too cold. The prayers and speeches are so formal and stiff, that while they may edify mature Christians who have been brought up upon them, they provoke the criticism of the young man, and lead him to inquire if the men who pray and speak really mean what they say. He goes to church, and hears sermons which he is told are "deep." Some of them are so deep as to be unapproachable. Whatever may be the depth of their profundity, if they fail to interest him they do him very little good. The man who preaches the sermons is, he is told, a "very able" man, but he never shook hands with the youth except once, and then it was in a hurry, and so coldly as almost to shake him off. And we mourn and lament that the institutions of religion have no power over the young man. We reprove him for not being more religious. We shake our grave heads at him and call him a sad boy for liking everything else better than he likes his church; and there we stop. At the most critical period of his life we lose our hold on him. We let him wander away from religious influence to those of the club, the billiard-hall, and the bar-room. Then we lament his depravity and sorrow over his downfall.

The successful minister of to-day is the man who can hold the boy of seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, or twenty, and keep him in the church. It is a great thing to preach able sermons, eloquent sermons, profound sermons, prodigious sermons; sermons wonderful in their analysis, rich in their thoughtfulness, and fragrant with flowery fruitfulness of expression. It is fine to have the learned go home from the preaching, and declare that the sermon was more conspicuous for the profundity of the research it exhibited than any they had ever before heard. But it is greater and finer and infinitely more noble to preach a sermon that shall so present the beauties of the religion of Jesus Christ to the mind of the young man as to bring him in and save him. It is well when the minister is a gifted man in conversation and demeanor, and can shine at social reception and party in the houses of wealthy and cultivated parishioners. But greater success awaits the man who can over so formally, and without formality or restraint, find his way to the heart of the youth who is tempted into the evil ways of the world, and who can be saved by his pastor, if anybody can save him.

The doctor, the lawyer, the judge, the scholar, the school-master, the elder, the deacon, are all worth preaching to, and ought to be preached to. But the most of them have long ago made up their minds about religion. It is well to edify them; but beyond computation better to edify the growing young man, and hold him.—N.Y. Christian at Work.

Miss DE ROUSSEAU is contributing a very learned and interesting paper on "Hebrew women," in the New Quarterly Magazine.

GIBRALTER has had a great storm. Many houses were burst open by the force of water, which in some places was eight feet deep. Two vessels were wrecked, with a loss of fifteen lives.

The late Bishop of Bombay, the Right Rev. Henry Alexander Douglass, D.D., died Dec. 18th, aged 68. He was a moderate High Churchman, and was the author of a celebrated "Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury on the subject of Indian missions."

Sabbath School Teacher.

LESSON V.

Jan. 30, 1876. DAVID AND JONATHAN. { 1 Sam. xx 33-32 } COMMIT TO MEMORY, vs. 41, 42. PARALLEL PASSAGES.—2 Sam. i. 20; 2 Sam. ix. 1. SCRIPTURE READINGS.—With v. 85, read vs. 18, 19; with v. 36, read v. 21; with v. 87, read v. 22; with vs. 88-90, read Matt. viii. 9; with v. 41, comp. Gen. xxiii. 8; with v. 42, comp. Gen. xxvi. 28-31. GOLDEN TEXT.—There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.—Prov. xviii. 24. CENTRAL TRUTH.—True saints make true friends. Many of the lower creatures live in societies—as birds, fishes, bees, beasts; but there is no evidence of their forming friendships. This is peculiar to man. It is not good for him to be alone. His nature has been—for wise ends—made with a fitness for confidence in, communion with, and affection for others besides those to whom he is naturally joined as parent, wife, child, brother. The Bible touches every part of our nature and life. Friendships exert a great influence over us. It is fit, therefore, that we should have in Scripture both precept and example on this topic; and where is there among "mere men" such a type of friendship as between Jonathan and David? It is in on the battle-field of Elah. (See last lesson.) It must have cheered and sustained David when his trials were great. Michal, his wife, was not the highest style of woman, though with a kind of attachment for him as belonging to her. (See 1 Sam. xix. 17, and 2 Sam. vi. 20.) Jonathan's love must have been a "stream in the desert;" but all such streams dry up at length. Only the fountain remains in the changelless, endless love of God. So the parting with Jonathan would teach David. That parting is described in our lesson. THE OCCASION OF IT.—Saul had plotted against and tempted the life of David (1 Sam. xix. 15), and pursued him to Naineth in Ramah, where he had taken refuge with Samuel. David fled to Jonathan and told him his troubles in a very desponding mood (v. 1). Jonathan comforts him in vain. David cannot share his hopes regarding his father (v. 3), and anticipates death. Jonathan offers any help he can give (v. 4), and David suggests a plan by which to test Saul's feeling. David would abstain himself from the formal meal on the first day of the month. (See Numb. x. 10.) If Saul missed him and inquired, Jonathan was to explain and account for his absence; and according to the tempo Saul showed would be David's course. If good, then he might return to court and feel safe; if not, then he must flee. But how shall he know which? He shows his innocence and his entire confidence in Jonathan by putting his life in his hand (v. 8). Jonathan solemnly binds himself to reveal the true state of the case in vs. 8-15. Their covenant is removed, vs. 16, 17. Then a plan is arranged for communicating the fact, in case they could not safely meet openly. Let this be noted by the pupils, who will naturally wonder why this roundabout way should be followed, when they could freely meet and speak as in vs. 41, 42. But they could not count on this. Saul was angry in the last degree at Jonathan's friendship for David (v. 80). For anything they knew, they might be watched. Hence the precaution and the secrecy of vs. 20, 21. The new-moon feast (Numb. xxviii. 11-15) occupied two or three days (vs. 26, 27), and was attended by Saul's officers. David was missing. The king made no remark, explaining the thing to himself unfavorably to David, as ill-will commonly does. The second day he inquires, and on getting Jonathan's answer breaks out into an insulting attack on Jonathan (vs. 31, 32), appealing to his self-love, trying to stir up anger in his mind against David as Jonathan's rival. It is all in vain. The friendship of Jonathan is without parallel in its disinterestedness. His reply is final, and sufficient: "Suppose he is to be king and I am not to be—supposing God has given him the kingdom, taken it from you and me—is it that his fault? or a reason for murdering him?" Bad men meet unanswerable arguments with blows; Saul aimed, or rather brandished his javelin at his son—a most undignified act before his court, and that son his heroic warrior against his enemies—which was sign enough of his feeling towards David. Jonathan's "fierce anger" does not make him unkind, even to a bad father. He thinks little of himself—so true and generous is he. He was "grieved for David, because his father was doing him cruel wrong." He appears as a pious man, reconciled to God's will even against his own interests. Grace surely beautified him. II. THE ACTUAL PARTING.—As arranged, David is in some hiding-place, familiar to both; in "the field," i.e. the country, outside the town; Jonathan has an attendant, who is directed in a loud voice that David could hear, in words preconcerted as a signal of evil (vs. 36-39), of which even the lad did not comprehend the secret meaning. How well both must have realized the need of caution, when such a plan was needed! Then David, understanding the state of matters, knew he must flee. Of course if Jonathan had kept his attendant, David must have remained in his hiding-place; for he would not compromise Jonathan needlessly with his father. But when he gave the lad his bow and arrows—called "artillery" here—and dismissed him, David could have an interview. It was deeply affecting. David owns the rank and worth of Jonathan in Eastern fashion, by three prostrations. (See Gen. xlii. 6, and xliii. 26.) They kissed one another and wept, David's strong feeling being irrefragable. When they must separate, Jonathan said, "Go in Peace" (see ch. i. 17), reminding him again of the covenant. He returned to the city; David set out as a wanderer and an outlaw. Many of the expressions in the Psalms can be explained by the loneliness and the peril of his life, when

a king's cruel will was the only law. (See Ps. xliii, lii, lv, lvii, lix, etc.)

III. REFLECTIONS PROPER TO THIS LESSON.—(1) God's wisdom appears in giving such a friend to David. Besides the aid, comfort, and encouragement afforded, there was great moral gain. David might say: "Saul is unworthy of the throne, God gives it to me," and be puffed up. But there is Jonathan every way worthy of it. heroic (ch. xiv. 6), patriotic, a popular favorite (see ch. xiv. 45), most noble, a pious man, and yet God passes him by. David must know that God is sovereign, and must learn as we do, and say in Mr. Chayne's hymn— "Chosen not for good in me." (See Ps. xviii. 32, 47, 50; cxliv. 1, 2, 10.)

(2) In choosing our friends let us look for such as Jonathan. Consider how they stand to God. A man who is false to his Creator is less likely to be true to us. "The heart of the wicked is little worth" (Prov. x. 20). Let us seek friends who will not flatter (Prov. xx. 19), who will—like Jonathan—"strengthen one's hand in God" (1 Sam. xxiii. 16). How many of both sexes have been ruined by false friends! (3) When we have found true friends let us adhere to them. Some are constantly finding new friends; their friendship grows for a month, and then dies. A newer acquaintance supplants the old. This is bad every way, corrupting and demoralizing, stand by old friends whom you find true, though they be poor or lowly. The boy who went to school with you, and was honest always—the friend at college—especially the brother or the sister in your own home—stand by these. It is a bad sign of any one that he has no friends of his youth.

(4) Let us be thankful for all the Bible has done for us in matters of this kind. There are many historic friendships between man and man. One finds them in the classics. The reason is obvious. Women was not in heathen hands—even the most advanced—educated as man's equal. She was a toy of a slave. Men found their equal in man only.

(5) But all human friendships have a limit; in number ("a church," said one, "would not hold my acquaintance, but the pulpit would contain my friends"); in duration, only once again did Jonathan and David meet, till death parted them; and in power to bless. There are many things the most ardent friend cannot do for us. "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Prov. xviii. 24). That is true of Jesus—who unselfishly died to redeem us; who is a king's son; who is "a friend at court" (Heb. vii. 25); who counsels us, protects us, and gives us a crown at last. Let us believe his love, and be true to Him.

SUGGESTIVE TOPICS.

Jonathan—his rank—prospects—character—bravery—duty—friendship for David—when formed—now proved—Saul's hatred to David—how shown—David's danger—Jonathan's sympathy—the covenant—the plan of testing Saul's feeling—how carried out—Saul's anger—Jonathan's plea—David's affection—Jonathan's parting word—the friendships of history—their peculiarity—the reason—woman's place of old—now—the true kind of friends—our duty to them—the limits to friendship—the best friend—and how we should regard Him.

The Population of China.

Why does everybody agree with somebody's conjecture that the population of China is 400,000,000? Is there any reasonable authority for the conjecture? The Shanghai Courier ventures to throw doubt upon the received estimate. It admits that many of the cities of the eighteen provinces, especially in the south, are undoubtedly enormous, and to the casual traveller all Chinese cities are presumptively the same. He has learned in his geography or read in his encyclopaedia that the population of Peking is 700,000, and that of Pekin from 1,500,000 to 2,000,000. These round numbers are generally accepted without question, and on this scale smaller cities are gauged. Thus we meet the most confident estimates of population, formed on scanty data, or on no data at all, by every latest traveller, who, like a supreme court, has the last guess at the case. The difference between the high scale and the low scale of estimating Chinese cities is a difference of nearly one-half. There are those who cling to the old tradition that the population of Peking is 2,000,000, and there are others who consider 700,000 a liberal estimate. Little or no dependence is to be placed on the estimate of transient travellers. Even long residents hesitate to express a decided opinion, for experience has taught them that such conjectures are often misleading. It is as idle to inquire the number of families in a large city of "intelligent natives," as it would be to ask an "intelligent native" the death rate of Liverpool. At certain seasons some approximate statistics are on file, but such things are utterly foreign to the thought of ordinary Chinese. In small villages the number of families is known to all; in large cities it is practically not known at all. The Shanghai Courier invites the average Englishman, whose faith is said to be such that if a safety valve were only labelled "statistics" he would sit on it with perfect confidence to take notice.—Standard.

The Egyptian Commander-in-chief has gone to Abyssinia to assume command of the expeditionary forces there.

The Turkish bondholders propose to relieve Turkey of 78 millions sterling, and to save £6,800,000 per annum on her revenue.

A NEW Viceroy of India, has been appointed in the person of Lord Lytton, son of the writer and statesman. Lord Northbrook, who desires to return, was sent out in 1872.

A coroner's jury at Providence, R.I. decided in the case of a drunken father who killed his child with a kick, that the person who sold the liquor was guilty of murder.

LITERATURE.

Messrs. TRUBNER & Co., will publish immediately a poem entitled "Jonah Fisher," in which the author, who is well known in literary and social circles, tells the story of work among the poor in a large city, with occasional discussions of the greatest social and religious questions of the day.

FREDERICK BLEEK'S "Introduction to the New Testament," a popular edition of which, in two volumes, translated from the latest issue, superintended by Johann Bloek and Adolph Kampfner, by G. H. Vonables, under the care of the Rev. E. Vonables, Canon of Lincoln, is to be issued in a cheap form shortly.

Mr. EDWIN ANSTON has long been known to be engaged on the rendering of the beautiful Sanskrit pastoral of the "Loves of Govinda and Radha" into English verse. The work is ready, and will shortly appear under the title of the "Indian Song of Songs," from the Sanskrit of the Gita Govinda of Jayaloka.

THE QUEEN has accepted from Mr. Francis George Heath a copy of his new work, "The Fern Paradise: a Plea for the culture of Ferns," presented to Her Majesty as a volume designed to increase the popular taste for the study and cultivation of the most graceful and beautiful of the many forms of vegetable life.

THE BRITISH Museum library, which was founded in 1753, contains, among other priceless relics, a copy of the Scriptures written in the Greek language, in capital letters without being divided into chapters, verses, or words. It is supposed to have been written by an Egyptian lady, probably a sister at one of the schools, about the year 330. It was sent from Constantinople as a present to our ill-fated king, Charles I., in 1628.

The new psychological and philosophical quarterly to be called Mind, announced some time ago, will begin to appear in January next. Among those who have been engaged to contribute to the first number are Mr. Herbert Spencer, Mr. G. H. Lewes, Mr. H. Sedgwick, Rev. John Venn, Mr. S. H. Hodgson, Mr. James Sully Professor of St. Andrew's; Dr. A. Kendrick, of Edinburgh; and Professor Landisay, of the Free Church College, Glasgow. The Editor of Mind will write on the state of philosophical study at Oxford. Professor Bain will have an article on the early life of James Mill, based on new and special inquiries.

A TRANSLATION of the "Pueria's Progress" has been issued by a native Japanese publisher. The vernacular literature of Japan is extending at a rapid rate, adaptations of the best English text-books on geography and physical science being published almost monthly, and, though far from being perfect productions, containing a wide circulation. Japanese writers have the greatest difficulty in finding accurate equivalents in their own language for European words used to denote recent European discoveries and scientific terms. They are almost always obliged to paraphrase. Thus dynamite becomes "the powerful thing," torpedo "under water burster," and so on. The great evil is that each different writer chooses his own paraphrases for such terms as "polarization," "spectroscope," "protoplasm," etc.—Atheneum.

THE ASTRONOMER ROYAL.—Vanity Fair says—We have among us in the various departments of science, some truly great men whose names will live in their work to many future ages; and of these is Sir George Airy. Born in Northumberland four-and-seventy years ago, with a splendid intellect, but to no inheritance, he has made of himself, by an unremitting course of labor of the most trying kind, what he is—one of the glories of his country. Not without difficulty he succeeded at eighteen in entering Trinity College, Cambridge. He came out Senior Wrangler, was elected Lucasian Professor at twenty-five, and at once proceeded to deliver a most remarkable series of lectures on Experimental Philosophy, in which he fully developed for the first time the undulatory theory of light. At twenty-seven he was elected Plumian Professor, and now he took charge of the Cambridge Observatory, and devoted himself with all his rare powers to astronomy. The best mathematician of his time, and with a natural turn besides for the most delicate forms of mechanics, he at once began to revolutionize all the astronomical calculations, and to perfect the observations by adapting to them every modern resource of the mechanical arts; and at thirty-four he was taken into official recognition by receiving the post of Astronomer-Royal, one of these few appointments which must, even in these times, be given solely for ability and aptitude. In this capacity he has served the State and the Science like the enthusiast that he is, nor could there be named a man who has done so much and such wearying work as he. He superintends the compilation of the Nautical Almanack, he is appealed to in all questions of boundary, he regulates chronometers and corrects compasses, and will find time to organize expeditions, to start new theories in optics, and to contribute many papers to the public press. A sober, steady man, with an immense capacity for and delight in his work, his life has been spent where his work lies, on Greenwich hill, and he is little known to society; yet he is still young, he knows almost everything, and his accomplishments and simplicity render him the most charming of companions.

CHRISTIANS, if you long to bring forth all the fruit of the Spirit, strike your roots deep and wide in private prayer. That faith and support, which you seek of God in secret, that they may be exercised in the hour of need, God will in that hour give you.

I do believe that, for the first ten thousand years after we enter into the kingdom of glory, it will be all surprise; but will this surprise never end? Never, while we behold the Person of our Lord. "You are going to be with Jesus, and to see Him as he is," said a friend. "Yes," replied Mr. Hill, with emphasis, "and I shall be like Him; that is the crowning point."—Rev. Rowland Hill.