

Our Young Folks.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Oh, what can little children do to make the great world glad?
For pain and sin are everywhere, and many a life is sad.
Our hearts must bloom with charity wherever sorrow lowers,
For how could summer days be sweet without the little flowers.

Oh, what can little children do to make the dark world bright?
For many a soul in shadow sits, and longs to see the light.
Oh, we must lift our lamps of love, and let them gleam afar;
For how should night be beautiful without each little star?

Oh, what can little children do to bring some comfort sweet
For weary roads where men must climb with toiling, wayworn feet?

Our lives must ripple clear and fresh, that thirsty souls may sing:
Could Robin pipe so merrily without the little spring?

All this may little children do, the saddened world to bless,
For God sends forth all loving souls to deeds of tenderness,
That this poor earth may bloom and sing like His dear home above;
But all the work would fail and cease without the children's love.

LITTLE CORNERS.

Georgia Willis was rubbing the knives. Somebody had been careless, and let one get rusty, but Georgia rubbed with all her might; rubbed and sang softly a little song. "In the world is darkness, so we must shine, you in your little corner and I in mine."

"What do you rub at them knives forever for?" Mary said. Mary was the cook.

"Because they are in my corner," Georgia said, brightly. "You in your little corner, you know, and 'I in mine.' I'll do the best I can, that's all I can do."

"I wouldn't waste my strength," said Mary. "I know that no one will notice."

"Jesus will," said Georgia, and then she sang again. "You in your little corner and I in mine."

"This steak is in my corner, I suppose," said Mary to herself. "If that child must do what she can, I s'pose I must. If He knows about knives, it's likely He does about steak," and she broiled it beautifully.

"Mary, the steak was very nicely done to-day," Miss Emma said.

"That's all along of Georgia," said Mary, with a pleased red face, and then she told about the knives. Miss Emma was ironing ruffles; she was tired and warm. "Helen will no care whether they are fluted nicely or not," she said; "I'll hurry them over;" but after she had heard about the knives she did her best.

"How beautifully my dress is done," Helen said, and Emma, laughing, answered, "That is owing to Georgia;" then she told about the knives.

"No," said Helen to her friend who urged. "I really cannot go this evening. I am going to prayer meeting; my corner is there."

"Your corner! what do you mean?" Then Helen told about the knives.

"Well," the friend said, "if you will not go with me, perhaps I will with you," and they went to the prayer-meeting.

"You helped us ever so much with the singing this evening." That was what their pastor said to them as they were going home. "I was afraid you wouldn't be there."

"It was owing to our Georgia," said Helen; "she seemed to think she must do what she could, if it was only knives." Then she told him the story.

"I believe I will go in here again," said the minister stopping before a poor little house. "I said yesterday there was no use, but I must do what I can." In the house a sick man was lying; again and again the minister had called, and he wouldn't listen to him; but to-night he said, "I have come to tell you a little story." Then he told him about Georgia Willis, about her knives, and her little corner, and her "doing what she could," and the sick man wiped the tears from his eyes, and said, "I'll find my corner, too; I'll try to shine for Him." And the sick man was Georgia's father. Jesus, looking down at her that day, said, "She hath done what she could," and He gave the blessing.

"I believe I won't go to walk," said Helen, hesitating. "I'll finish that dress of mother's; I suppose I can if I think so."

"Why, child, are you here sewing?" her mother said; "I thought you had gone to walk."

"No, ma'am; this dress seemed to be in my corner, so I thought I would finish it."

"In your corner?" her mother repeated in surprise, and then Helen told about the knives. The door-bell rang, and the mother went thoughtfully forward to receive her pastor. "I suppose I could give more," she said to herself, as she slowly took out the ten dollars that she had laid aside for Home Missions. "If that poor child in the kitchen is trying to do what she can, I wonder if I am? I'll make it twenty-five."

And Georgia's guardian angel said to another angel, "Georgia Willis gave twenty-five dollars to our dear people in Iowa to-day."

"Twenty-five dollars?" said the other angel. "Why, I thought she was poor?"

"Oh, well, she thinks she is, but her Father in heaven isn't you know! She did what she could, and He did the rest."

But Georgia knew nothing about all this, and the next morning she brightened her knives and sang cheerily:

In the world is darkness,
So we must shine,
You in your little corner,
And I in mine.

HOW TO PLEASE.

"One great source of pleasing others lies in our wish to please them," said a father to his daughter, discoursing on "small, sweet courtesies of life." "I want to tell you a secret. The way to make yourself pleasant to others is to show them attention."

"The whole world is like the Miller of Mansfield, 'who cared for nobody—no, not he—because nobody cared for him,' and the whole world would do so if you gave them the cause."

"Let people see that you care for them by showing them what Sterne so happily called the small courtesies, in which there is no parade, whose voice is too still to tease, and which manifest themselves by tender, affectionate looks, and the little acts of attention, giving others the preference in every little enjoyment, at the table, in the field, walking, sitting and standing."

THE LITTLE SWEDISH GIRL.

A little Swedish girl, eleven years old, was taken to a hospital, where, after an illness of several months, she recovered.

She was a homely child, but, being very kind and thoughtful, she endeared herself to all around her. There was brought into the hospital a little girl of peevish and disagreeable disposition who was very sick. The Swedish girl at once took her place by the cot of the little stranger and assumed entire charge of her—in fact, acted the part of a little mother. The little girl grew rapidly worse, and at last she died. When the little mother, as she was called, was asked by the matron why she had treated the sick baby so tenderly, she looked bewildered and said:

"Do not all the people in the world help one another? You have helped me."

"But why did you choose that baby?" the matron insisted. "There are many others here prettier, better tempered, more lovable."

"Yes," replied the little Swede, with tears in her eyes, but she had nobody but me to take care of her, madam."

THE POWER OF KINDNESS.

A new boy had joined a public day school. He was a pale-faced lad, and, although he looked very neat and tidy, his clothes were not at all costly, and would not bear comparison with those of his fellows. The boy was fatherless, and his mother, determined to give him the best education she could, was compelled to study economy in every way. She made cloth caps for her son, and turned a coat when the right side had become much worn. Now it is not at all an easy task to turn a coat, and, unfortunately, in the back, where the seams met, it looked a little faded. Somehow, during the morning this domestic secret leaked out, and when recess came poor Harold had an unpleasant time of it.

"Hullo, Browning, who's your hatter?" and the boy's cap was whisked off his head, and tossed, amid much hilarity, about the playground.

"Turncoat!" cried another boy, pointing to the jacket.

"I say, Browning, where did your mother learn the tailoring business?" shouted a tall lad, who, with all his expensive clothing, was always most untidy, and did not present half such a respectable appearance as did the lad, he was bullying.

Now a boy can stand a good deal. He can put up with taunts and sneers when they refer to himself, but let his mother's name be included, and, if he has any grit in him, that is a thing he cannot brook, especially when he knows how groundless and unkind the remark may be.

Harold's pale face flushed scarlet in a moment, his hands were tightly clenched, and, with set teeth, he rushed at the boy who had said that unkind thing, with arm uplifted, which had it descended, would have undoubtedly laid the scorners in the dust.

Ah, but in that moment Harold felt his mother's kiss on his forehead, as she bade him good-bye that morning, and remembered her tender words, "Harold, dear, it will not be all bright for you at school; some of your school-fellows may look down upon you, but remember that kindness will accomplish a great many things." Oh, how difficult it was to choke back the just anger in his heart. It was with great difficulty the burning tears in his eyes were suppressed, and he could hardly speak for his quivering lips, and that lump in his throat which we all know so well, or ought to know.

"I don't think you meant to be unkind, Herbert," he said, "but if you knew my mother you would not have said that."

The boys who had crowded round to see what they called "a jolly fight" fell back ashamed. As for Herbert, he would have preferred to have had the blow from Harold's fist, ten times over, than that gentle reproof which cut him so deeply, and made him powerless to reply.

When school assembled the following morning, Harold found a little note on his desk, which read as follows: "Dear Harold,—Will you forgive me for behaving so shamefully to you yesterday? I have been awfully wretched ever since, and so have the other fellows. Please meet me by the playground gate in recess. I am giving a little picnic to-morrow, and we must have you with us. Hoping to be, from now, your sincere chum, HERBERT STANWAY." So it all ended very happily. Harold soon had many warm-hearted friends, and he often found out how much better it was to rely upon kindness instead of hasty words and bitterness of heart.

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

June 15,
1890.

THE RICH MAN'S FOLLY.

[Luke 12:
13-21.]

GOLDEN TEXT.—Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.—Luke xii. 15.

INTRODUCTORY.

The precise time when the incident happened on which to-day's lesson is founded has not been definitely determined. Some are of opinion that it occurred during the time Jesus was in Galilee; others conclude that it took place in Perea during the last journey towards Jerusalem. At all events the incident and the important lesson to which it gave rise lose nothing because all the minute circumstances, day and date, are wanting. The words of the Saviour in this connection are just as directly applicable to the people living in Canada to-day as they were to the Jewish people eighteen hundred years ago.

I. A Selfish Appeal to Christ.—Jesus had been teaching the people the principles of His heavenly kingdom. While so engaged, one in the crowd, interrupting Jesus, said to Him, "Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me." It would in no degree strengthen the lesson this incident and the parable that follows are intended to teach to suppose that this man had a desire to obtain unjustly what did not rightly belong to him. There is nothing in the narrative to give countenance to such a supposition. Had he been an unjust and rapacious man, the Saviour would have spoken in other tones than those He used. Had such been the man's character, then his request would have meant that Christ should sanction an injustice. According to Jewish law the oldest brother, on the father's death, received a share of the inheritance double what fell to the other brothers. It was required of him, however, that he should support his mother and unmarried sisters. It might be that this man had been defrauded of his share by his elder brother. Christ's teaching, so truthful and just, may have suggested to him the thought that here was One who might have influence with his unjust brother, and persuade him to redress the wrong under which he was smarting. The man's fault lay in his worldly-mindedness. He had suffered what he felt to be a great wrong, and he allowed that to fill his whole thoughts. Christ had been speaking of heavenly things, and his mind was entirely engrossed with earthly concerns. To this state of mind Jesus makes answer, "Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?" It was not the province of Christ to interfere in the settlement of legal questions. If the man was dealt with unjustly the ordinary machinery of the law was at his disposal. Jesus did not interfere in family disputes, neither was there any occasion for Him to discharge judicial functions in contentions over the disposal of property. That was not His mission. To have so engaged would have interfered with the special work He came to accomplish. It cannot, however, be inferred that Jesus was indifferent to the cause of justice between man and man. If this man's elder brother had defrauded him Christ's refusal to mediate gives no countenance to injustice. To the man and to all within hearing Jesus then gave a most impressive warning against the sin of covetousness. Covetousness is the morbid desire of gain, by unjust and dishonest means. When a man takes wrongfully what is not his own, human law punishes; but if in his heart he ardently longs to acquire what rightfully belongs to others, the law of God condemns. So the Saviour, to show how great a spiritual danger avarice is, gives the solemn warning, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness." This sin is expressly forbidden in the moral law. Against it the tenth commandment is directed. The reason on which the warning is based is one worthy of the most serious thought, all the more so as the principle it contains is far too generally overlooked. Life in its truest and deepest sense is of far more consequence than abundance of earthly possession. Outward condition does not determine character. All the splendours of royalty could not transform a fool into a wise man. The direst of poverty cannot deprive a just man of his integrity. The common error of the age is to suppose that wealth of itself entitles a man to respect, and that poverty is inherently disgraceful. The Son of Man had not where to lay His head. If a man's happiness consists in his worldly possessions, he will in time find out how great a mistake he has made.

II. The Parable of the Rich Fool.—Covetousness is not confined to any class. A poor man may be just as covetous as a rich man. Nor does it follow that every rich man is covetous. It is, however, the tendency of increase in wealth to make its possessor still more eager in his desire to add to his gains. This rich man's ground is represented as yielding plentifully. Did he fail to recognize God's hand in nature's bountifulness? He valued highly his gains. Did he think of the Giver? It is not hinted that the rich man was dishonest. He was justly entitled to the gains he made. The narrative implies that he was prudent and industrious. This man's great possessions had got the mastery over him. They possessed him to the exclusion of other and higher thoughts and aims. So great was the increase of his wealth that it was in danger of being wasted, because his storehouses had become too small. Now he communes with himself, and resolves to make adequate provision by building new and larger barns for storing the rich produce of his fields. We next get a glimpse of this rich man's theory of life. He soliloquizes with his own soul. His possessions are great, they will last for many years. In his sense of what constitutes the highest enjoyment, though he addresses his soul, he does not rise to a higher plane than that which animals reach. "Eat, drink and be merry," is his highest good in life. In striking contrast with this poor rich man's complaisant boasting to his own soul comes to him God's message beginning, "Thou fool." Many of his fellow-men would not have thought him a fool for what he said. He certainly did not think so himself, but this is what God, who knows all hearts, says, "Thou fool." Instead of the man's many years laid out for mere animal enjoyment comes the startling "this night." Then the soul itself is summoned into God's presence for judgment. The barns have to be left unbuilt, and all the wealth goes to others; it is no longer his, and instead of doing him good it has brought infinite harm. The parable ends with the true and weighty words, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." It is not worldly wealth but soul wealth that truly enriches a man. Wealth rightly used for God's glory and for the promotion of the welfare of others has a good influence in strengthening the nobility of the soul. Used only for selfish gratification it fails to prove a blessing. Sometimes great wealth has proved a curse. Instances will readily occur to memory of those who have suddenly succeeded to wealth who have made shipwreck of character and life. If we would understand what is meant by being rich toward God, let us remember what was endured by the noble army of martyrs and those who took joyfully the spoiling of their goods for Christ's sake.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

We are to take heed and beware of covetousness because it makes us selfish, cruel and unjust.

We are warned to take heed and beware of covetousness because it makes human life sordid and mean.

We should take heed and beware of covetousness because if unchecked, unrepented of and unforgiven, it will ruin the soul eternally.