

BOYS AND GIRLS

[For the 'Messenger']

The Robin.

(By Isabel Simpson.)

What has he seen in the Southland
That makes him so joyous and gay?
What are the words of his message
He carols at dawn of the day?
Can it be he is proud to be planning
A snug little home in a tree?
Or is it a jubilant anthem,
His old friends and neighbors to see?
Perhaps he is proud to be herald
Of on-coming blossoms and bees?
Who knows but his gay heart runs over
With the promise of beauty he sees?
Whate'er it may be, dear old songster,
We welcome you gladly each year;
You bring us the tidings of summer
With you merry, blithe notes of good cheer.

He Knew How to Say No.

Five boys were together on the playground of a school house. They had grown tired of the game in which they had been engaged and were seated on the grass near the schoolhouse door.

'Let's go to the fishing pond,' said Joe Hartman. 'We can be back before books.'

'So we can,' said Billy Benson, rising. 'I'm with you—I'm always ready for a swim. I know we can be back before books, but it won't hurt much if we do lose a little time. I don't care for losing a little time.'

'Maybe the teacher will whip us if we are not back by one o'clock.' This came from John Jennings. 'He doesn't like it when we are past one o'clock coming in. And he punished Ralph Rankin for being too late one day.'

'Oh, you're a scary boy—you're always afraid of getting whipped! Come along and don't be a baby. We can be back in time for books.'

'Yes, I'll go,' said John. He didn't have sufficient firmness to say no.

Another boy, Edwin Harris, was asked if he would go, and he readily assented.

Then Joe Hartman asked the fifth boy if he would go with them to 'the swimming place,' as it was often called.

'No,' promptly replied Henry Dale. 'I'll not go.'

'And why not, Mr. Dale?' asked Joe somewhat imperiously.

'Because I promised my mother I would not.'

This was Henry's answer, and it was followed by a loud burst of laughter from the other boys. Joe, however, was the first to lead in the laughter.

'Then you must be tied to your mother's apron string,' said Joe, derisively. 'I thought you could be a man in spite of your mother.'

'We need not stop now to discuss the matter of manhood,' said Henry. 'I have told my mother that I would not go again from school to that place, and I intend to be as good as my word. If you all intend to go you can go right along. You need not wait for me.'

'But,' added one of the boys in derision, 'we'd like to have you along to take care of us.'

'Yes,' added another, 'and we'd feel safer if we had a real good mother's boy along.'

These derisive remarks, however, were lost on Henry. He turned away and went to another part of the playground.

The boys were absent when 'books' were called by the teacher, and they were punished.

Nine years had passed and Henry was engaged in a mercantile house in the city. He had been in this position for three months. He

liked the business and the employer was beginning to feel that he had employed a young man of integrity—a young man who could be trusted. No great temptation, however, had appeared to turn the young man from his own course.

He had made the acquaintance of some young men who were somewhat reckless, and these young men, whom we shall designate as Tom, Dick and Harry, came to him one evening at his boarding place with the intention of 'breaking him in,' as they called it.

'We want you to go with us and see the sights,' said Tom.

'And,' added Dick, 'we'll not let you get into any trouble. We merely want to show you city life as it is.'

'And,' continued Harry, 'you can then walk understandingly. You don't want to be called a greenhorn. We want you to be smart. We want you to see some of the wickedness of the world so that you can understand where you are. We want to "break you in," so to speak. We don't want you to be considered a greeny. You have been here long enough to learn something about city life and we want you now to commence to learn. We'll show you around and we'll see that you don't get into any trouble.'

Henry was willing to go. He didn't know just how these young men stood. They had been friendly, had treated him well, and those who had spoken of them had said nothing derogatory to their character.

Henry went with them, and when they had walked and talked for a while Dick proposed that they go into a saloon and have a drink.

'I don't drink,' said Henry.

'But it won't hurt you to take a soft drink.'

'I don't drink,' said Henry, 'neither hard nor soft.'

'Oh,' said Harry, 'don't be a dunce; come and take a drink. We want you to be like other people.'

'Now,' said Henry, as he straightened himself manfully, 'you have my answer. I don't drink. If you want to drink I will not detain you. I know the way to my boarding-house. You can go your way, and I can go mine. I would not take a drink of intoxicating liquor if by so doing I could gain the whole world. I'm what you might denominate a "sot fellow." I promised my mother that I would never taste intoxicating liquor, and I will not.'

A loud laugh from pretended friends was the answer to this.

'But,' said Tom, returning to the attack, 'we don't ask you you to drink anything intoxicating. It was soft drinks we were talking about.'

'I class them all as intoxicating drinks,' said Henry. 'Good-night. I am going home.'

Another shout of laughter followed him, but he cared not. He had unexpectedly found out the kind of friends they were, and he was very thankful.

Ten years have gone into the cycles of the past. Henry has a prominent position in a large mercantile house in the city of N—. Tom went into the by-paths of the wicked and was accidentally killed while under the influence of intoxicating liquor. Dick is an outcast and Harry is considered a cipher.

'As ye sow so shall ye also reap.'—H. Elliott McBride, in 'United Presbyterian.'

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Incongruities.

- A cushion for the seat of war.
- A sheet for the bed of a river.
- A ring for the finger of scorn.
- A glove for the hand of fate.
- A shoe for the foot of a mountain.
- A sleeve for the arm of the law.
- An opener for the jaws of death.
- A lock for the trunk of an elephant.
- A pair of glasses for the eyes of the law.
- A feather for the wing of the wind.
- A key to the lock of the door of success.
- A blanket for the cradle of the deep.
- Food for reflection.
- Scales for the weight of years.
- A button for the coat of paint.
- A thermometer to measure the heat of an argument.
- A rung for the ladder of fame.
- A hinge for the gait of a horse.
- A tombstone for the dead of night.
- A razor to shave the face of the earth.
- A link for a chain of evidence.
- A pump for the well of knowledge.
- A telescope to watch the flight of time.
- A song that will reach an ear of corn.
- A hone to sharpen a blade of grass.
- A cemetery in which to bury some dead languages.
- A front and back for the sides of an argument.
- A book on how the water works and the frost bites.
- A medicine to keep the ink well.
- A dog to replace the bark of a tree.
- A pair of pincers to pull the root of evil.
- A new rudder for the ship of state.
- A liniment to stop the pane of glass.
- A treatise on what makes the weather vane and the roads cross.—Selected. Author unknown.

A Japanese Story.

A group of girls were around the well one day. They belonged to the richer class of small landowners in that part, and were all well-dressed and well-fed. To them came a youth very poor, and meanly clad, and asked to be allowed to drink out of one of their pitchers; but they all turned away disdainfully because of his poverty, giving him scornful looks and cold comfort, and he went upon his way unrefreshed and sorrowful. Then the teller of tales, who was sitting on the seat in the shade of the cherry-trees, called the girls to him, and they left the well and crowded around him, thinking to hear some pretty story, and he told them a tale.

'Once when the earth was very gay and glad,' said the story-teller, 'a great bamboo reared its graceful head toward the skies, a thing of beauty and a joy forever. And all who passed by stopped to look at it, because it was so tall and proud and swayed so gracefully to every passing breeze. Close to this fair, strong bamboo dwelt a rough old willow tree, so old and rugged that none ever thought of giving it more than a passing glance, and the bamboo in its pride looked down upon the hoary willow. One morning, when the dew was on the grass, the bamboo and the willow saw a thin, weak little green shoot rising between them, a futile thing that had leaped out of the ground in the night, and the wind blew hither and thither until it was twisted and tangled and almost broken, and the bamboo laughed at the weak little thing, and told it to crawl along the ground and not try to stand alone; but the willow whispered to the newcomer to be brave and pa-