

The Boy and the Bobolink.

A THREE-YEAR-OLD boy on the gatepost was leaning,
And watching the frolicsome flight of the birds,
When a sweet bobolink round the orchard
came gleaming,
And stopped as if listening for somebody's words—

Stopped close to the boy till his natural feeling,
Impulsive, obeying, he lifted a rock,
And, raising it high, then quietly kneeling,
He steadied himself to give birdie a knock.

Just then the soft throat, with pent melody swelling,
Gently opened, and forth came the song ever new,

"Bobolink, bobolink," as if someone were telling
The bird what the baby was going to do:

"Bobolink, bobolink, bobolink a-no weat ;"
"Bobolink, bobolink, I know it, I know it ;"

"Bobolink, Bobolink," (O the song was so sweet !)

"Bobolink, bobolink, don't throw it, don't throw it !"

Robbie didn't. His fingers fell down by his side,
And he gazed at the charmer in joyful surprise

Till the solo was over, and then satisfied,
Let the innocent singer fly up to the skies.

Then he looked at me doubtful, and read in my face
The question my lips were preparing to ask.

"Cos he sung so, me couldn't," he lisped with quaint grace,
And left me to go to his play or his task.

But he left me a thought for the poem of years :

When the demon of danger comes to your nest,

Sing a song ; sing it bravely ; sing through your tears,
And the arm that is lifted will fall. It is best

To sing while you can, like the brave bobolink ;

For the song of your heart shall your enemy reach,

And the danger will vanish. Ah ! do you not think

That the brave bobolink a sweet lesson can teach ?

JULIA H. MAY.

THE CRASH IN THE MINE.

THEY are working down in the dingy, dusky old mine. You can see the shadows of the men and boys falling athwart the rays shed by the miner's lanterns. You can hear the dull, heavy sound of the pick, or the rattle of the coal as it falls from the shovel. That scene, those sounds you have one moment. The next—hark ! What is that suspicious rumble, that ominous jar ? O quick ! Fly, everybody ! The mine is caving in ! Great masses of coal heavy timbers used in propping, are now thundering down into the galleries that have been cleared. See Tom Gavin leading off in his fright, shrieking while he throws up hands pitifully appealing for help ! At his side is his uncle Jerry, shouting away swinging a lantern in his hand. Tom's father, hatless, wild with terror, is running also. Nobody stops. Shovels

and picks have all been thrown down. John Gaines, an awful horror in his face, turns one moment to look at the crashing avalanche. The next moment they may all be buried under this cruel, overwhelming torrent of earth, rocks, coal.

But how did this happen ? It was possible in two ways. The miners may not have properly supported the roof of the galleries they had excavated. The props, of whatever nature, may have given way. The water may have worked into this great dark cavern, stealthily boring away, persistently undermining, till this frightful collapse occurred.

Worse than this downfall in that pit is the collapse of a life. "Why did So-and-so turn out to be a criminal ?" people ask. "Why did young T— turn out to be a thief, a prodigal, a murderer ?"

His life was not propped. It was not held up by those good supports of prayer, the Bible, and the Church. He neglected these. Temptation came. He fell.

On the other hand, he may have permitted the development of some wrong habit. People whose lives have been propped, apparently, who may have been found in the Church, have yet permitted some evil course of action slyly to make headway, and by-and-bye there was a sound of a tumbling avalanche ! The water had got into the mine.

Look out for your life and prop it. Brace it up with consecration to God, and with the helps of his Church. Look out for your habits, and cut off the wrong thing slyly making headway. Don't let the water get into the mine.

THAT'S JUST ME.

YEARS ago, into a wholesale grocery-store, walked a tall, muscular man, evidently a fresh-comer from some backwoods town in Maine or New Hampshire. Accosting the first person he met, who happened to be the merchant himself, he asked :

"You don't want to hire a man in your store, do you ?"

"Well," said the merchant, "I don't know. What can you do ?"

"Do ?" said the man ; "I rather guess I can turn my hand to almost anything. What do you want done ?"

"Well, if I was to hire a man it would be one that could lift well, a strong, wiry fellow ; one, for instance, that could lift a sack of coffee like that yonder and carry it across the store and never lay it down."

"There, now, cap'n," said the countryman, "that's just me. I can lift anything I can hitch to. You can't suit me better. What will you give a man that suits you ?"

"I'll tell you," said the merchant ; "if you shoulder that sack of coffee and carry it across the store twice, and never lay it down, I will hire you for one year at one hundred dollars a month."

"Done !" said the stranger.

By this time every clerk in the store had gathered around and was waiting to join in the laugh against the man, who threw the sack across his shoulder with perfect ease, and carrying it twice across the floor, went to a large hook which was fastened to the wall and hung it up, and then turned to the merchant, and said :

"There now, it may hang there till doomsday ; I shall never lay it down. What shall I go about, mister ? Just give me plenty to do and a hundred a month, and it's all right."

The clerks broke into a laugh, and the merchant discomfited, yet satisfied, kept his agreement ; and to-day the green countryman is the senior partner in the firm, and worth a million dollars.

PETER AND HIS FREEDOM.

MRS. R. M. WILBUR.

IT was before the war, when there were slaves in our country. Every little while, some of them would run away and try to be free.

One day, as Mr. and Mrs. Allston left the house for a walk, they noticed a coloured boy coming across the garden. It was a runaway. After days of fatigue and hunger in getting away, he felt safe at last.

But Mr. and Mrs. Allston taught Pete how much worse than slavery of the body it is, to be a slave to sin. They told him, too, of Jesus, who alone can free us from sin.

In his new home in Canada, Pete thought about these things, and became, with Jesus' help, a free man indeed, because in bonds to sin no longer.

You are just as truly a slave, a slave to sin, my little friend, unless made free by the same blessed Lord. If you try to become a Christian, as I hope you will, you will find that Satan has great power over you. But Jesus can enable you to overcome the evil one. Trust him.

Seek this freedom, and be slaves no more.

THE MAN AND HIS MAD DOG.

A CERTAIN man kept a mad dog to bite his neighbours. Some of them raised a row about it, and he went to the legislature and got a law passed licensing him and his dog. He was then very independent, and went all over the land with his dog, and he let him bite every person he could get near enough to. This wicked man and this death-dealing dog caused at least one hundred thousand persons to die of hydrophobia every year. But the owner of the dog made a great deal of money off of the business. He made the people believe that the bite of the dog would not hurt them, but would only cause a wonderful exhilaration, making the poor man believe he was rich, the weak man think he was strong, the fool think he was a wise man, so that they paid him a vast amount of money. But the good

people of the land determined to put a stop to this most shocking evil that ever was heard of under the sun. Then what do you think this man does ? He goes to the legislature and asks them to pass a law compensating him for the loss of his dog. He said it was not right that he should be deprived of his liberties. He said they had no more right to take his dog from him than they had to deprive any other man of any other business by which he was making a living for his family.

The leader will see in this allegory the whiskey business, and he will see that there is no more justice in remunerating one than the other.—By J. R. H., in Issue.

HOME AMUSEMENTS.

AN excellent home entertainment is that of drawing together. In nearly every neighbourhood there is someone who knows something of the elements of this fine and valuable art. But if not, good prints abound and much can be learned from them, if one only has sharp eyes. A good plan is for all the members of the family to try and draw a picture of some one thing—a chair, or a stove, a pile of books, a dog or a cat. Or one may sit as a "model" and give the others twenty minutes in which to make a sketch. This often produces great merriment, and if persevered in it sometimes happens that some member of the family develops real talent for drawing. The twilight hour may be improved by the recital of the events of the day. Each one should take his turn at this, and be obliged to make his description as interesting as possible.

This exercise tends to accuracy, if you please, and develops the descriptive powers. Insist upon having the story duly embellished with details. Stirring ballads, fine poems, and choice bits of prose or verse chime in well at this hour, if recited. Choose specific subjects of conversation. Ask the children to tell all they know about mining, or painting, or new inventions. A pan of modelling clay, or of mud of the proper consistency, will entertain a group of youngsters for an evening, in modelling. The quick-witted boy or girl will make a rude framework of wire and wood, upon which to fashion and model the clay, so it will not tumble down. In drawing and modelling, young people observe a good many things not before thought of. Home talk and home occupations do much toward developing their minds and talents.

A SMALL boy who was struggling with a large umbrella came to his mother in grief. "Mamma," he said emphatically, "you must take me down at once and get me measured for an umbrella. This is entirely too large for me."