

His Yoke is Easy.

CHRIST never asks of us such busy labour
As leaves no time for resting at his feet;
The waiting attitude of expectation
He oftentimes counts a service most complete.

He sometimes wants our ears—our rapt attention,
That he some sweetest secret may impart;
'Tis always in the time of deepest silence
That heart finds deepest fellowship with heart.

We sometimes wonder why our Lord has placed us
Within a space so narrow, so obscure,
That nothing we can work can find an entrance;
There's only room to suffer—to endure.

Well, God loves patience; souls that dwell in stillness,
Doing the little things or resting quite,
May just as perfectly fulfil their mission,
Be just as useful in the Father's sight,

As they who grapple with some giant evil,
Clearing a path that every eye may see;
Our Saviour cares for cheerful acquiescence,
Rather than for a busy ministry.

And yet he does love service, where 'tis given
By grateful love that clothes itself in deed;
But work that's done beneath the scourge of duty,
Be sure to such he gives but little heed.

Then seek to please him, whatso'er he bid thee;
Whether to do, to suffer, to be still;
'Twill matter little by what path he led us,
If in it all we sought to do his will.

"We'll see," whispered the captain.
"Perhaps—"
But here the carriage came to carry the disabled cricketer home.

Some think Baxter dreamed what is now to be told, for the Sunday which followed that Saturday afternoon was very hot, and the boy lay in a dozy sort of state in the south bedroom. But some think the captain, who came into see him while the others were at chess, had something to do with it. The captain was not only the most brilliant cricketer in the county, but the best man in it, and though he was seldom known to talk like this, Baxter always quoted the captain as if the interview which follows was a real report of what he said.

CHAPTER II.

SWIFTS; AND THE STORY OF THE CAPTAIN'S SWILLING.

"Yes, my boy," began the captain, sitting down beside his sofa, "you made a fool of yourself; but you did not know. Someone should have put you up to it. If you will not think me bumptious, I will tell you something about that fellow's bowling.

"Thank you," said the boy, "I believe I could do better if I only knew his form. He's a regular demon."

"I shall begin by telling you his name," said the captain. "It is Temptation."

"Tim who?" said the boy.

"Temptation," repeated the captain.

"Oh!" said the boy, "I hope you're not going to be religious. I thought we were talking about games."

"So we are," replied the captain, cheerily.

"We are talking of the game of Life. You know you asked me last night if you were going to live. If you are to live I had better tell you something about the game. Life is simply a cricket match—with temptation as bowler. He's the fellow who takes nearly every boy's wicket some time or other. But perhaps you can't stand this, Baxter. I'll stop it."

"No," said Baxter, "I'm as right as a trivet. Please go on. I know you won't preach."

"Well," continued the captain, "stop me if I bore you. You see every boy has three wickets to defend. The first is Duty, the second Honour, the third Unselfishness. I—"

"That looks mightily like preaching," interrupted Baxter. "Sermon with three heads: First, Duty. Second—"

"No, my boy, I'm not in that line—I am going to tell you about the bowling. I have three heads, but not these."

"What are they?"

"Swifts, Slows, and Screws."

"That's better. Excuse me," apologized the boy.

"Now here is what I call a swift. Last winter I was ordering some lemons for a football match, at S—, the grocer's. By mistake I dropped some loose silver on the floor, and the pieces went scurrying all over the place. One piece—a shilling—rolled over to where the message-boy was filling a basket, and quick as lightning he covered it with his foot and began to back against the sugar-barrels till he had it safely stowed away. Presently, after I had gathered up the seven or eight other pieces and was completing my purchase, he stooped down and pretended to tie his shoe. Then he whisked the coin into his pocket, whistled 'Rule Britannia,' and went on with his work.

"I said nothing, though I saw the whole game. There stood the culprit with his middle-stump—Honour—as clean bowled as I ever saw it done. It was a downright ugly theft, and but for one thing I should have exposed him there and then. That one thing was that the ball which took him was a swift. The best-of-boys are sometimes taken with swifts. It was a swift that bowled out Peter when the girl sprang that question on him the night the cock crowed. As a matter of fact I found out that this boy was a fairly decent fellow, and a Sunday-school scholar. I waited two days to let the thing right itself—for that often happens with 'swift' catastrophes. Then I waylaid the boy where

For those who never happen to have seen the great English game, it may be explained that the Wickets are three sticks rather over two feet high, planted erect in the ground about a couple of inches or so apart. On the top of these, joining them loosely, are poised two other little pieces, the Bails. This little "citadel" the batsman has to defend against the bowler, and if any part of it is "destroyed" by the ball, he is "out." Every time he hits the ball to a distance, he runs to another "citadel" some distance off, and each "run" counts one in his favour.

I could talk to him without being seen. It was as I expected. The poor soul had spent the two most miserable days of his life. If he had had ten seconds to think what he was doing instead of the tenth of a second he would never have done it. As for the shilling, this penitent thief had bought twelve stamps with it and was watching his chance to post them to my home.

"How to play swifts?" the captain went on, "that's not so easily said. You see the situation is something like this: A boy will tell a sudden lie where he would have spoken the truth if he had had a minute to consider. Well, this means that he is really two boys, a good boy and a bad boy. Now, the bad boy is usually on the spot first. It takes a few seconds for the other, as it were, to come up; and before he arrives the mischief is done. The thing to do therefore, is to hurry up the good boy."

"But why should the bad boy turn up first?"

"You will understand it if we call them the new boy and the old boy. I suspect the old boy has the start at birth. The new boy is born later. The thing is to grow the new boy and starve the old one till he is too thin and broken down to do much harm. We all know boys who could not do a mean thing. It is no effort to them not to do it; they have so nourished the better nature that it would be impossible to do it. What helps a cricketer in playing swifts is largely the sort of physical man he is. All his muscles are so up to the mark, and his faculties so alive and braced that he can rise to anything at a moment's notice. He plays a ball by instinct rather than by premeditation."

"You mean that swifts must be prepared for beforehand rather than when they come."

"Pretty much. The time to get ready a ship for the storm is not when the hurricane is on, but when the planks are being picked, and the bolts driven home in the dockyard. Build a boy of sound timber and he'll weather most things."

"But what if the swifts come straight at your head like that one yesterday," suggested Baxter.

"Oh," said the captain, "it's almost too ignominious to say it, but when that happens you had better get out of the way. It may look cowardly, but it is not really. There are temptations so awful that the strong thing to do is simply to step aside and let them pass. A lion won't face a blaze, though any ignorant baby will. No, Baxter; some balls you can score off, and some you can only stand still and block; some you can slip for three, and some you can drive over the ropes for six. But some—well, the best thing you can do is simply to duck your head."

"Pity we couldn't be all over pads," laughed Baxter. "Head pads wouldn't be bad."

"And forgot to put them on," smiled the captain. "Yes, there are lots of safe-guards and we cannot put on too many, but unfortunately they don't cover everything. I like pads because they have a sort of defensive feel. You seem rather to look down on them, Baxter."

"Yes," said Baxter, ruefully, "because I'm an ass."

(To be continued.)

THE QUEEN'S MERCY.

QUEEN VICTORIA was not twenty years of age when she ascended the throne. Coming into possession of power with a heart fresh, tender, and pure, and with all her instincts inclined to mercy, we may be sure that she found many things that tried her strength of resolution to the utmost.

On a bright, beautiful morning, the young Queen was waited upon at her palace, at Windsor, by the Duke of Wellington, who had brought from London various papers requiring her signature to render them operative. One of them was a sentence of court-martial pronounced against a soldier of the line that he be shot dead. The Queen looked upon the paper, and then upon the wondrous beauties that nature had spread to her view.

"What has this man done?" she asked.

The duke looked at the paper, and replied. "Ah, my royal mistress, that man, I fear is incorrigible. He has deserted three times."

"And can you not say anything in his behalf, my lord?"

Wellington shook his head.

"Oh, think again, I pray you!"

Seeing that her Majesty was so deeply moved, and feeling sure that she would not have the man shot in any event, he finally confessed that the man was brave and gallant, and really a good soldier.

"But," he added, "think of the influence."

"Influence!" the Queen cried, her eyes flashing and her bosom heaving with emotion, "let it be ours to wield influence. I will try mercy in this man's case; and I charge you, your Grace, to let me know the result. 'A good soldier,' you said. Oh! I thank you for that! And you may tell him that your good word saved him."

Then she took the paper and wrote, with a bold, firm hand—across the page—the bright, saving word, "Pardoned!"

The duke was fond of telling the story; and he was willing, also, to confess that the giving of that paper to the pardoned soldier gave him far more joy than he could have experienced from the taking of a city.

An Easter Legend.

There is an ancient legend,
It is both quaint and old—
A legend of the lilies fair,
By old folks long since told.

How at an early dawning,
Of that blest Easter day,
The Lord's disciples came to see
The grave wherein he lay;

But lo! their Lord had risen!
And empty was the tomb!
Christ, all-triumphant over death,
Had robbed it of its gloom!

Amazed, they stood still doubting
Until one, going in,
The linen napkin lifted up,
Where that dear head had been.

When straightway—saith the legend,
That years ago was told—
When straightway sprang up lilies fair,
Most lovely to behold!

There, where the Lord's head rested,
Forth from his glory bright,
They blossomed in that holy spot,
Reflecting heaven's own light.

So bring we fair, sweet lilies,
Their hearts all pure within—
The radiant lilies, white as snow,
"Which neither toil nor spin."

THE DRUNKARDS OF THE FUTURE.

A TEMPERANCE lecturer was preaching on his favourite theme. "Now, boys, when I ask you a question, you must not be afraid to speak up and answer me. When you look around and see all these fine houses, farms, and cattle, do you ever think who owns them all now? Your fathers own them, do they not?"

"Yes, sir," shouted a hundred voices. "Where will your fathers be in twenty years?"

"Dead," shouted the boys. "That's right. And who will own this property then?"

"Us boys," shouted the urchins. "Right. Now tell me, did you ever in going along the street notice the drunkards lounging around the public-house door, waiting for someone to treat them?"

"Yes, sir, lots of them."
"Well, where will they be in twenty years from now?"

"Dead," exclaimed the boys. "And who will be drunkards then?"

"Us boys."
Everybody was thunderstruck. It sounded awful! It was awful; but it was true.

CLEVER REASONING

There is a very clever small girl in England who reasons out a great many things for herself, and who cannot be deceived, as many other small girls are, by things that are told them "for fun."

Having been told by one of her aunts that the moon was made of green cheese, she immediately sought out her grandfather, to whom she said, "Aunt J— says the moon's made of green cheese, but I don't believe it."

"And why not?" asked her grandfather. "Because I've been reading in the Bible, and it proves the moon isn't made of green cheese, because the moon was made before the cows was." —Harper's Young People.

BAXTER'S SECOND INNINGS.

BY

PROFESSOR DRUMMOND.

CHAPTER I.

BAXTER'S FIRST INNINGS.

"MAN IN!" cried the umpire, and the fielders fell into their places. The bowler stepped back a pace and poised the ball in his fingers. You never saw power more clearly written on any face—it was almost weird; and his arm worked like a steel spring. The new batsman, on the other hand, was only a boy. His cricket jacket was painfully new, and so were his cap and wondrously varnished bat. And the expression on the great bowler's face when the "man in" walked to the wicket was strange to see.

This was Baxter's first great match. I suppose this accounts for it that he did not recognize the bowler; but to those of the spectators who did, the casual way in which he handled his bat was really ominous. "Does that greenhorn know he's playing a match?" growled one of them. "If he doesn't wake up I'll back the first straight ball to finish him. The ass hasn't even his pads on."

At that moment the first ball whizzed down the pitch, and if it had been a hair's breadth more to the right it would have been all over with the new batsman. The second ball seemed to the spectators a hundred times swifter than the first, but what exactly happened, no one ever quite understood. Whether the ball rose on an inequality of the ground, or glanced off the top of the bat, is not quite certain, but in any case the boy missed when he struck at it, and it caught him sideways on the head; and the next moment he lay motionless across the pitch.

When he became conscious he found himself lying in the pavilion on a pile of coats. "It was a narrow shave," he heard the doctor say. "Whatever made the young idiot run into a ball like that?"

"He did not know the bowling, doctor," said the captain, who was holding up his head. "It's his first match. I hope the wound's not serious!"

"Just missed the temple," replied the doctor. "If it had struck there he was a dead man—sure. As it is, it may smart a bit, but that may be all."

"Doctor," whispered the patient, suddenly opening his eyes, "shall I be better next Saturday?"

"Why, you young imbecile."

"Because I would like a second innings."

"Innings!" exclaimed the doctor, who pretended to be a little gruff sometimes. "You may get a ball—perhaps two; I should not call that an innings."

"It's about all I deserve," said the victim, drowsily.