

## TOIL AND REST.

When sets the weary sun,  
And the long day is done,  
And starry orbs their solemn vigils keep;  
When, bent with toil and care,  
We breathe our evening prayer,  
God gently giveth His beloved sleep.

When by some sland'rous tongue  
The heart is sharply stung,  
And with the sense of cruel wrong we weep;  
How like some heavy calm  
Comes down the soothing balm,  
What time He giveth His beloved sleep.

O, sweet and blessed rest,  
With these sore burdens yressed,  
To lose ourselves in slumber long and deep;  
To drop our heavy load  
Beside the dusty road,  
When he hath given His beloved sleep!

And on our closed eyes  
What visions may arise!  
What sights of joy to make the spirit leap!  
What mem'ries may return  
From out their golden urn,  
If God but giveth His beloved sleep.

And when life's day shall close  
In death's last deep repose,  
When the dark shadows o'er the eyelids creep,  
Let us not be afraid  
At this fast thickening shade  
For so God giveth His beloved sleep.

To sleep? It is to wake—  
When the fresh day shall break—  
When the new sun climbs up the eastern steep;  
To wake with new-born powers,  
Out from the darkened hours,  
For so He giveth His beloved sleep.

To die? It is to rise  
To fairer, brighter skies,  
Where death no more shall his dread harvest reap;  
To soar on angel wings,  
Where life immortal springs—  
For so He giveth His beloved sleep.

## ABOUT FIREARMS AND SHOOTING.

"Well, Stephen, the lock of my gun is again out of order. Will you examine it and see if you can repair it for me while I wait?"

"Certainly, Mr. Harris. Take a seat, if you can find one, and we will see what can be done."

So the old gunsmith left in his vice the unfinished work on which he had been engaged, and began to examine the old-fashioned flint-lock fowling-piece which Mr. Harris had handed him.

Stephen Anderson, the gunsmith had been a soldier in his youth. Having been more than once severely wounded, he at length retired from the army with a pension, too scanty to support himself and his family. He was, however, handy and industrious; and having had some practice in blacksmithing before he went into the army, he opened a shop in a rude shed adjoining his dwelling where he repaired guns and did many other jobs, and was a convenience to the entire village. He was an amiable and talkative person, a great favourite in his neighbourhood, and withal a warm-hearted Christian.

His present visitor, Robert Harris, was now a student in college, but at home at this time for his vacation. Robert was fond of shooting, and was considered a capital shot by his young friends. Of course he was obliged, in order to keep his gun in repair, to avail himself occasionally of old Stephen's skill.

"Stephen, did you ever think," said Robert, "what a difference the invention of firearms has made in the condition of mankind?"

"Yes, indeed," said Stephen; "I often think of that as I sit at my bench repairing a gun. I sometimes try to remember all that the Bible tells us about the arms used

by those nations of old times. Men armed only with swords, darts, lances, javelins, battle-axes, bows and arrows, and slings—which are the only offensive weapons the Bible tells of, so far as I remember—would make a poor fight in our times."

"That is true," replied Robert. "Yet I remember to have heard it very strongly asserted, by those well read in history, that many more persons were killed in battle by the use of those primitive weapons than are now killed while using firearms—i. e., a larger proportion were then killed of the number who went into battle. In war, they say, as the use of firearms—and especially of artillery—became more general, the slaughter of battles diminished; for an army out-manceuvred was an army at the enemy's mercy, and therefore beaten. Such an army would at once retreat, if it were possible; or if that were not possible, it would surrender. But in the old-time fights, where victors and vanquished mixed pell-mell in single combat, a victory could only be really won when an army had either run away, surrendered, or been slain. Thus a great battle, like that of Crecy, for instance, where thirty thousand Frenchmen are said to have fallen victims to the English sword, battle-axe and bow, would now probably be gained with a loss to the vanquished of not more than one thousand men. So the murderous firearms of modern times tend to the preservation of human life, and not to its destruction."

"Well, Robert, that is a very pleasant view of the case," said the gunsmith who had listened very attentively; "and I hope it is true. But it does not look so to one who is on a battle-field. When I have seen my poor fellow-men shot down by hundreds, and lying about on the ground, mangled and bleeding and dying, I have often wished that not another gun, large or small, might ever be made. War is a horrible thing. Since I have seen it, I have felt it to be one of the most precious promises of the Bible, that a time would come when men should 'learn war no more.' God speed that day!"

"Amen," said Robert. "And yet the Lord has a wonderful way of using what to us seems evil to bring about his purposes of mercy. I have heard wise and good men declare that, although men had no such design, the invention and use of firearms had been powerfully promotive of civilization and liberty, and even of Christianity. When firearms came into use, plated armour no longer availed against the weapons of the peasant, and the mailed chivalry who had trampled with iron heels upon all popular rights could no longer carry all before them. Peasants could fire guns as well as lords and knights. The people soon discovered their power to contend with the nobility, and by degrees they rose and fought for liberty, and gradually they gained it."

"There may be much in that, Mr. Harris; I never thought of it before. You collegians learn a great many things we ignorant people never thought of. As you say, the Lord is infinitely wise, and no doubt He will use everything to promote His kingdom on the earth. As you have been learning almost everything at college, Mr. Harris, can you tell me who invented guns and gunpowder?"

"The credit of having discovered the art of making gunpowder," said Robert, "is commonly given to Roger Bacon, an English friar who lived about the year 1250; but learned men say this is a mistake. They tell us that gunpowder was known and used several centuries before by both the Chinese and Hindoos. But when its power was first applied to hurl balls or other weapons is uncertain. It is not unlikely that Friar Bacon heard of gunpowder

and its explosive qualities through the works of East Indian writers, or perhaps from Asiatic travellers. It was not until the reign of King Henry VIII. of England that the iron-founders succeeded in casting iron ordnance. Since that time vast improvements have been made in all kinds of firearms."

"Yes; I have heard wonderful accounts of some of these new inventions. These may all be very useful in good hands. But I cannot help feeling very sorry," said Stephen—who was a tender-hearted man—"that these instruments are so often used for cruel purposes. When dangerous wild beasts are destroyed, it seems to be all right; or when birds and beasts are shot for food, that seems to be within the grant given to man by his Creator; but when God's harmless creatures are killed merely for sport, it does seem to me to be only wanton cruelty."

"I fully agree with you," said Robert; "and I assure you that no gun in my hands has ever killed, or ever will kill, a living thing except for some really useful purpose. I have known boys to shoot poor harmless birds which could not be used for food, merely to try their skill. Such cruelty is shocking. Hunters have written books to tell how they have roamed over regions—in Africa, for example—for mere sport, killing multitudes of wild animals which they did not want when killed. Travellers and sportsmen in our own far West often kill buffalo from mere wantonness. Such acts are heartless and disgraceful."

"I am glad to hear you speak as you do, Mr. Harris. Your gun is now ready for use; and I feel more satisfaction in the job since I know it will not be used for any cruel purpose."

## WHICH SHALL IT BE?

In view of the great dangers besetting young people of the present day, in the form of bad newspapers, illustrated "juvenile" monthlies and weeklies of a vile character, surreptitiously and extensively circulated, and finding their secret way into the best homes and school-houses of the land, the dullest managers of a *pure* periodical for the young can hardly fail to burn with a holy fire. If they can only do a negative good, in crowding bad reading to the wall, in taking up the children's attention so that foul publications are unheeded, a great work is accomplished; their mission is a blessed one, and good citizens everywhere should rally to their assistance.

Let not parents deceive themselves. No home is too sacred or too carefully guarded for those fiendish invaders, the vendors of low and dangerous juvenile publications, to ply their unholy trade. Every child is in danger for whom good, well-selected enjoyable reading is not provided by those most directly having its best interests at heart. All dangerous publications do not betray their character at a glance. Often they wear the mask of graceful information, and even piety. Do not force your child to spend time in reading, but look to it that all his or her reading is properly filled. While you blindly congratulate yourself that your boy or girl, through a fondness for books and periodicals, must necessarily be learning something, it may be well to know what that something is. Undue intellectual stimulus for children is bad enough, but emotional stimulus is worse. In the hands of unprincipled purveyors it opens the way to moral errors of every kind, and by quickening an else slow growth to what is holy, develops only precocity and vice. The point of the wedge is easily inserted, and, at first, as easily thrust back, but beware of the silent force that, having once gained an entrance, may split the peace and purity of your home.