

ENLARGED SERIES .- Vol. VII.]

TORONTO, JULY 9, 1887.

[No. 14.

The Barefoot Boy.

BY J. G. WHITTIER.

BLESSINGS on thee, little man,

Barefoot boy, with cheek of tan!

With thy turned-up pantaloons, And thy merry whistled

tunes;
With thy red lip, redder

still Kissed by strawberries on

the hill;
With the sunshine on thy

face, Through thy torn brim's

jaunty grace;
From my heart I give thee
joy,—

I was once a barefoot boy! Prince thou art,-the grownup man

Only is republican.

Let the million-dollared ride!

Barefoot, trudging at his side,

Thou hast more than he can buy

In the reach of ear and eye,—

Outward sunshine, inward joy:

Blessings on thee, barefoot boy!

O for boyhood's painless play,

Sleep that wakes in laughing day,

Health that mock's the doctor's rules, Knowledge never learned of

schools,
Of the wild bee's morning chase,

Of the wild-flower's time and place,

Flight of fowl and habitude Of the tenants of the

wood;
How the tortoise bears his

shell, How the woodchuck digs

his cell,
And the ground-mole sinks

And the ground-mole sinks his well;

How the robin feeds her young, How the oriole's nest is

hung; Where the whitest lilies

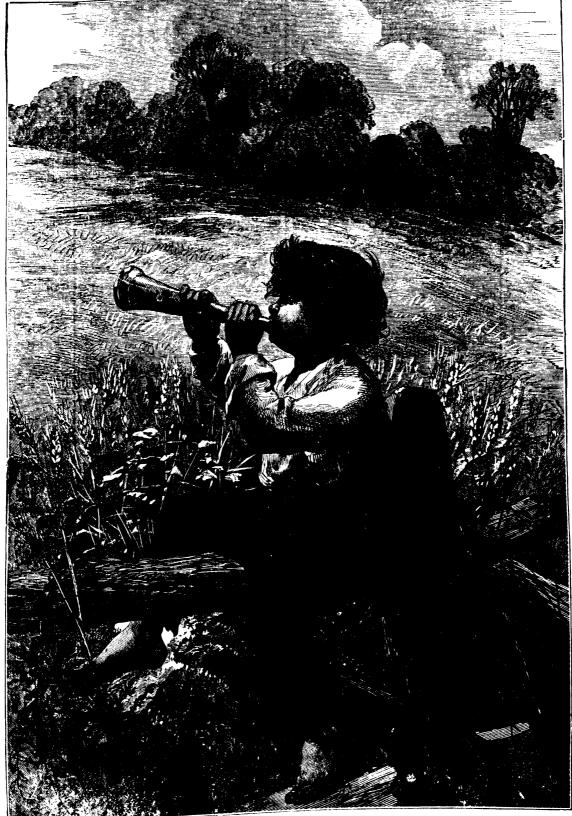
blow,

Where the freshest berries grow,

Where the groundnut trails its vine.

its vine,
Where the wood-grape's clusters shine;

Of the black wasp's cunning way,



THE BAREFOOT BOY.

Mason of his walls of clay, And the architectural plans Of gray hornet artisans!— For, eschewing books and tasks,

Nature answers all he asks; Hand in hand with her he walks,

Face to face with her he talks,

Part and parcel of her joy,--

Blessings on the barefoot boy!

O for festal dainties spread Like my bowl of milk and bread,—

Pewter spoon and bowl of wood, On the door-stone, gray and

rude!
O'er me, like a regal tent,

Cloudy-ribbed, the sunset bent,
Purple-curtained, fringed

with gold, Looped in many a wind-

swung fold;
While for music came the play

Of the pied frogs' orchestra; And, to light the noisy choir,

Lit the fly his lamp of fire.

I was monarch; pomp and joy

Waited on the barefoot boy!

Cheerily, then, my little man,

Live and laugh, as boyhood can!

Though the flinty slopes be hard,
Stubble-speared the new-

mown sward, Every morn shall lead thee

through
Fresh baptisms of the dew;
Every evening from thy
feet

Shall the cool wind kiss the heat:

All too soon these feet must hide

In the prison cells of pride, Lose the freedom of the sod, Like a colt's for work be shod,

Made to tread the mills of toil,

Up and down in ceaseless moil:

Happy if their track be found

Never on forbidden ground; Happy if they sink not in Quick and treacherous sands of sin.

Ah! that thou couldst know thy joy,

Ere it passes, barefoot boy