

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

WHO TAUGHT THE BIRDS.

"My little bird, pray tell me now,
Who taught you how to sing?"
"Why, it was God, for don't you know,
'Tis He does everything.

"He taught me how to build my nest,
He taught me how to fly,
And how to find the worms to feed
My babies when they cry.

"And when the summer days are gone,
And nights are long and chill,
He tells me how to find a place
Where it is summer still.

"He tells me just the course to take,
And just how far to go,
That I may never frozen be,
Nor buried in the snow."

This was what the birdie said,
As he hopped about the tree,
And swung upon the branches—
'Twas the answer he gave me.

THE VAIN OLD WOMAN.

There was once an old woman so poor that she had no house, but lived in a hollow tree. One day she found a piece of money lying in the road. Full of joy at her good fortune, she began to consider what she would buy with the money.

"If I get anything to eat," she said to herself, "I will quickly devour it, and that will be the end of the matter. That will not do at all. If I buy clothes, people will call me proud, and that will not do, and, besides, I have no closet to keep them in. Ah! I have it! I will buy a broom, and then everybody I meet will think I have a house. A broom is the thing. A broom it shall be."

So the old woman went into the next town and bought a broom. She walked proudly along with her purchase, looking about her all the time to see if people noticed her and looked envious, thinking of her house. But as no one seemed to remark her, she began to be discontented with her bargain.

"Does everybody have a house except me?" she said to herself crossly. "I wish I had bought something else."

Presently she met a man carrying a small jar of oil.

"This is what I want," exclaimed the old woman, "anybody can have a house, but only the truly rich can have oil to light it with."

So she bartered her broom for the oil, and went on more proudly than ever, holding the jar so that all could see it. Still she failed to attract any particular notice, and she was once more discontented. As she went moodily along she met a woman with a bunch of large flowers.

"Here, at last, I have what I want," the old woman thought. "If I can get these, all that see me will believe I am just getting my house ready for a brilliant party. Then they'll be jealous I hope."

So when the woman with the flowers came close to her she offered her oil for them, and the other gladly made the change.

"Now I am indeed fortunate!" she said to herself. "Now I am somebody!"

But still she failed to attract attention, and, happening to glance at her old dress, it suddenly occurred to her that she might be mistaken for a servant carrying flowers for her

master. She was so much vexed by the thought that she flung the bouquet into the ditch, and went home to her tree empty-handed.

"Now I am well rid of it all," she said to herself. — *Adapted from the German, by Arlo Bates, in the August St. Nicholas.*

WHAT HELPED THEM.

Three little German girls, whose friends were in America, wanted to go thither. They were from eight to twelve years old, and the question was how to get them across the great ocean and away into the interior of America. There was no one to go with them, they must go alone, and no one could tell what troubles might assail or what dangers might surround them. But their friends had faith in God, and before they sent them out they got a book, and on the fly-leaf of it they wrote a sentence in German, in French, and in English, and they told the little children when they started:

"If you get into trouble, or need any help, you just stand still and open this book, and hold it right up before you."

Then they started off on their long journey by railway and by steamship, from place to place and from port to port: and wherever they went, if any trouble occurred or any difficulty arose, the children would stop and open the book, and hold it before them, and they always found some one who could read German or English or French, and who was ready to help them on their way.

And what were those words which proved such a talisman and protection to these children among strangers and in a strange land? What were the words that made the careless civil and thoughtful, and the rough and reckless kind, that gave them protection and help in every hour of need and opened doors before them? They were the words of One who lived on the earth long years ago, and who, though He has passed away from human vision, yet holds His grasp upon the minds of men. These were the words:—"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

STEPHEN ALLEN'S POCKET PIECE.

Among the victims of the "Henry Clay" disaster, over twenty years ago, was Stephen Allen, Esq., an aged man of the purest character, formerly of New York. In his pocket-book was found a printed slip, apparently cut from a newspaper, of which the following is a copy:—

Keep good company or none. Never be idle.

If your hands cannot be usefully employed, attend to the cultivation of your mind.

Always speak the truth.

Make few promises.

Live up to your engagements.

Keep your own secrets, if you have any.

When you speak to a person look him in the face.

Good company and good conversation are the very sinews of virtue.

Good character is above all things else.

Your character cannot be essentially injured except by your own acts.

If any one speaks evil of you, let your life be so that no one will believe him.

Drink no kind of intoxicating liquors.

Ever live (misfortune excepted) within your income.

When you retire to bed think over what you have been doing during the day.

Make no haste to be rich if you would prosper.

Small and steady gains give competency with tranquillity of mind.

Never play at any game of chance.

Avoid temptation through fear you may not withstand it.

Earn money before you spend it.

Never run into debt, unless you see plain, a way to get out again.

Never borrow if you can possibly avoid it.

Do not marry until you are able to support a wife.

Never speak evil of any one.

Be just before you are generous.

Keep yourself innocent if you would be happy.

Save when you are young, to spend when you are old.

Read over the above maxims at least once a week.

THE VIRTUE OF A CHEERFUL FACE.

In one of the boarding schools situated in a densely-populated district of Glasgow, Scotland, on the morning immediately succeeding the short vacation at the New Year time, the young lady and gentleman teachers at the head of the "infant" section were made the delighted recipients of a present from their young charges. The gifts, which were entirely unlooked for, consisted of two of those highly ornate short-cakes, with appropriate sentiments in sugar which we were all as children familiar with, and which as "old fogies" we do not entirely taboo. The purchase, doubtless, had been made at one of the neighbouring confectioners, and the young donors laid their offerings blushing and in childish fashion, without a word, before their teachers. Both were alike astonished, but the gentleman managed to stammer out some thanks. The young lady's delight was more lingering, and she, blushing, inquired what she had done to merit such kindness. For a time no response was made, until at last a chubby boy on a back bench chirruped out, "'Cause you're aye smilin', Miss." It was a day of smiles after that.

BE SURE TO SING.

Much of the service in the Sunday school is made up of the singing of sacred hymns and songs. This is all right and good. The angels sing. We also read of much singing in heaven. Song began in heaven, and it is heavenly to join in holy song.

A little girl who was being told of the song of the angels when Christ was born, said, "Did Jesus sing?" Yes, He did sing. He sang a hymn with His disciples on the very night He was betrayed. See Matt. xxvi. 13.