



The Family Circle.

AM I A SOLDIER OF THE CROSS.

REVISED VERSION.

Am I a soldier of the cross?
I'm sure I hardly know;
I like to shuffle cards and "trip
The light fantastic too."

Then of the horse race I am fond,
And almost every game,
Some preachers are, and deacons, too;
So I need feel no shame.

I go to church and Sunday school
And bow the suppliant knee,
But when a play is on the board
I like to go and see.

Of course, some shows are not the thing:
Some actors go astray.
But when that kind is advertised
I always stay away.

I know some can't discriminate
Between the wrong and right
But why should I o'er think of them?
God cares for those not bright.

'Tis said Paul would not do these things
Nor to such places go,
But he was 'way behind the times
And always rather slow.

Had he been cultured as are we,
What might he not have done?
At any rate, with greater ease
He might the race have run.

Must I be carried to the skies
On beds of fluffy down?
I must, or I shall never want
To leave this lovely town.

Are there no foes for me to face?
Yes,—conscience,—when awake.
And then there are the Scriptures, too;
These sometimes make me quake.

Well, I must fight if I would reign;
True soldiers never run.
I'll send my invitations out
And drown my fears in fun.

Am I a soldier of the cross?
I truly hope I am.
If there's one thing I really hate,
Believe me 'tis a sham.

—The Advance.

BUSINESS BOYS.

(By Margaret E. Sangster, in Harper's Young People.)

The talk I propose to give is addressed to boys who are about to leave school and enter the shop, office, or counting-room, the warehouse or factory. In whatever department of trade or business you have found your niche, if you are a business boy, I have a word for you.

Hitherto, having been at school or at home, you have been under the care and protection of your parents and teachers. Your daily routine has been marked for you, and you have been held responsible only for good lessons and good conduct. You have had a great deal more leisure, much more time to play, and many more holidays than you can expect to have hereafter. For every business boy is the making of a business man, and business men, as you know have to give their minds and their whole strength to their work. In no other way can they expect to succeed. From the time when the Wise Man wrote, "Seest thou a man diligent in his business, he shall stand before kings," until the present day, there is no royal road to success. A business boy must give himself to his work. A business boy, though under orders to his employer, must to a degree look out for and control himself.

In few business establishments, however earnest might be the desire of the employer to reform a sullen or trifling or useless lad, would it be possible long to retain one who was idle or disobedient. After a trial or two the lad who was influencing others in a wrong direction, and arresting the orderly progress of the general business, would find himself dismissed. It is expected, you see, that a business boy shall be manly. He must put away the childishness which interferes with his right and steady performance of duty.

One of the first principles underlying success in business is thorough honesty. Your employer buys your time; the hours, therefore, for which he pays do not belong any longer to you, but to him. If, therefore, you are due at the office at six or seven or eight o'clock, you owe it to the man or the house employing you to be at your post on time precisely. It is better to be ten or fifteen minutes too early than even one minute too late.

You owe your employer attention; your mind must not be wool-gathering while you have work to do, but you should devote the whole strength of your powers to doing whatever you are set to do in the very best way. Sent on an errand, do not loiter; intrusted with a message, deliver it promptly and precisely as it was given to you; charged with carrying a package, despatched to the post-office or the bank, go straight as an arrow from the bow to the place indicated, and return as promptly.

"Because thou hast been faithful in a few things," said the ruler in the parable to the man with ten talents, "I will make thee ruler over many things."

The faithful, attentive, apt boy will never stay long at the bottom of the ladder. About money let me give you a caution. Never, even for five minutes, cheat yourself into the notion that any one else's money belongs to you. Never borrow without leave any sum, from a penny to a thousand dollars. Gloss it over as you may, such borrowing is theft. The boy or man who takes what does not belong to him is a thief. He may never be discovered, but whether or not his dishonesty is revealed, he is a thief, and he knows it, and God knows it.

Cultivate in yourself a nice sense of honor. Not a grape on the myriad clusters heaped up before the grocer's door, not a candy on the confectioner's counter, not an apple or a peach on the table in the house where you happen to be stopping, belongs to you, unless you can buy and pay for it, or unless it is bestowed upon you as a gift. Be above pilfering; to steal the smallest trifle is morally as wrong as to embezzle thousands of dollars.

It is no disgrace to a boy to wear an old patched coat, clumsy shoes, trousers baggy at the knees, a battered hat. It is in some circumstances a great honor for him to appear in the garb of poverty, especially when his earnings are given to help an ailing father or a widowed mother, or to drive the wolf from the door of some aged relative. The real disgrace is in dressing or living beyond one's means, and so rushing into temptation and incurring debt.

May I say a word about your earnings? They will not be very large at first, because while you are inexperienced, and only learning the first steps in business, your services are not very valuable. In fact, the opportunity to learn is in itself a part of your payment, and in many cases a boy may well be content to work without salary for several years if he can thereby be taught his chosen business in a desirable establishment.

Make up your mind not to spend all you earn. If you are living at home with your parents, and are not required to pay anything for your board, perhaps not allowed to contribute to the cost of your clothing, you should be able to save a good sum every year. Where, as often is the case, a boy is expected mainly to clothe himself, perhaps to help toward family expenses, he can, of course, save less; but if he sees the importance of thrift, he will put something by. It is a good plan to go to a savings-bank, make a deposit, have a book of your own, and from time to time, regularly if possible, add to the little fund, which will be gathering interest as the months roll by. In time you may have enough to be of great assistance to you when the time comes for investing some portion of the little capital.

The bank-book will keep you from much useless spending, for the money itself will be out of your hands, and safely locked up where it cannot burn a hole in your pocket. Immense amounts are wasted in trifles by boys who smoke cigarettes to the detriment of their health and growth, who eat peanuts and chew gum, buy tawdry papers and trashy books, and spend money in silly amusements.

If you are, as I hope, a sensible fellow, either living in a boarding-house (a very lonely life, too, for a boy of your age, which,

I take it, is between fourteen and eighteen), or living at home, you will attach yourself regularly to some church and Sunday-school. Companionship, recreation, congenial friends, will thus be insured to you; in the pastor and superintendent you will find advisers in whom you may confide, and whose counsel will be worth your listening to, if you ever are in need of help. A word of recommendation from the clergyman whose church a lad attends, or from the Sunday-school superintendent or teacher who takes a personal interest in his welfare, is usually taken as a certificate of character—a voucher for the boy's respectability, good morals, and general trustworthiness. In connection, too, with church life and work, there are usually sociables, entertainments, and helpful clubs, which afford in the business boy's crowded life the diversion and recreation he needs. I cannot speak too strongly on this point. Attached to a church a boy is anchored. He is not in danger of being set adrift, without rudder or pilot, on the sea that is fatal to so many barks.

If there is a Young Men's Christian Association in your town, I would urge you availing yourself, so far as you can, of its privileges. At a small monthly, quarterly, or yearly cost, a boy may secure the freedom here of ample parlors, well warmed and lighted, of gymnasiums equipped with everything necessary for physical exercises, and of a well-stocked reading-room and library. Classes for instruction in science, art, and languages are provided with the best appliances, and taught by accomplished tutors and professors, so that at the Young Men's Christian Association a boy's evenings may be spent in solid profit, as well as in sparkling pleasure.

Amusement and diversion you of course must have, but seek them in the right way, in good places, in good company.

As a rule, the boy in business must not expect very rapid promotion. He must climb, and often climb slowly. He does not come in contact with the heads of the great house where he works, and his very name may be unknown to them; but he must not forget that his place and the work that he has to do are important. One flaw in the ship's timber, and the fatal leak may spring, to the destruction of the vessel with all on board. In the carrying forward of great business enterprises, it is important that everybody, from the merchant himself to the lowest of the errand-boys, should fulfil his part honorably and thoroughly.

In speaking of saving some portion of your earnings, I do not want to omit reminding you of the duty of giving a part of them away. Every honest and conscientious person should regard himself as placed in trust of whatever he earns, bound to spend and to save as in the sight of God. Determine the amount you ought to set aside for the collection box, for charity, for the helping on of the Kingdom of Heaven. Having resolved on the sum, whether it be a penny a week, two cents, or five, or ever so much more, set that amount religiously aside. It is the Lord's money now, not your own. It is the willing heart which pleases God, and surely when he bestows on us so much, we are churls if we refrain from returning our gifts to him. But never make a parade of your self-denial, and do not fancy that it entitles you to any special praise or credit. "Let not your left hand know what your right hand doeth" is the Bible rule about almsgiving.

A business boy should cultivate a genial and agreeable manner, at once obliging and deferential. Nothing is more unfortunate than a boorish or bearish or surly manner in business.

Let me illustrate. I am not especially unamiable, but the other day, wanting to buy a portiere for a certain doorway in my home, I visited a shop where such articles were displayed in abundance. You will think it strange, but I absolutely could not make a selection in that establishment, where fabric and color and price were in wildest variety, because of the manner of the salesman. This young gentleman absolutely antagonized me by his lofty patronage. He began by informing me that I did not know what I wanted, scoffed at my taste, insinuated that I could not afford anything costly, and altogether made himself so insufferable that I left the place without becoming a purchaser. A half-

hour later, in another shop, I bought not only the article of which I had been in search, but several others which I had not then intended to procure. In the second instance, the clerk was kind, polite, and respectful, leaving to his customer also the right of private judgment.

"Can you sell goods?" asked a merchant one day of a young man who had applied for a vacancy in one of his rooms.

"Certainly, sir; I can sell goods to anybody who wants to buy."

"No doubt. But that is not the question. Can you sell goods to people who are rather indifferent in the matter, to people who do not want to buy? There is the test," said the man of affairs.

As a business boy you should write a fair, legible hand, easily read, bold and free from useless flourishes, and you should be able to add up accounts quickly and exactly; also to write a brief, courteous business letter. Likewise you should take care of your dress. Let it be clean and whole, well brushed, and free from grease and other spots. Nicely brushed hair, clean hands and finger-nails, politeness in speaking to those above you, alertness in obeying a call or an order, are all worth thinking about, if you mean to be in the line of promotion.

In truth, dear boy, there are no trifles beneath our notice, if we mean to get on in life. Merchants sometimes select boys for their service or reject them because of something which the boys never meant for their inspection. The oath which leaped thoughtlessly from the lips of the boy who had picked up the vulgar and wicked habit of profanity in the streets may have lost him the good position for which he longed, and changed the tenor of his whole life. No gentleman swears, and many gentlemen utterly refuse to have around them boys who prove themselves cads by their habit of swearing.

A boy once gained a good situation through his careful way of handling money when it was given him in change.

"See there!" said an elderly man, seated near the ferry gates, "that lad folds up his money, and puts it quickly yet carefully into his purse. That is the boy I've been looking for to go into my office."

A distinguished American, in addressing the graduates of a certain college gave them this advice: Stick, dig, save. Of saving I have already spoken. Let me speak of sticking fast. It is a mistake to change one's place of business lightly or frequently, laying you open to an imputation of fickleness or vacillation, making people shy of employing you in any capacity. A rolling stone gathers no moss, says the familiar adage. Stay where you are and do the best you can, is the motto dictated by common sense. Do not be afraid of work, nor envious of somebody whose work is lighter than your own. Work as if the business belonged to you, and consider your employer's interests as if they were yours. Be faithful, for fidelity is worth its weight in gold.

"Honor and shame from no condition rise,
Act well your part; there all the honor lies."

In a commercial country great power is vested in business men. But business men must lay the foundations of their honorable success by being thorough and diligent, honest and prompt, polite and well-bred, while they are yet business boys.

OLD SAIL CLOTHS are used extensively for the Oxford Bibles. There are huge piles of the old material gathered into the Bible warehouse, after battling with breezes in all the seas under heaven. They come in to be torn to shreds and beaten into pulp and bleached, drawn out into beautiful white sheets, to be presently printed on, and wafted off again to the ends of the earth—a curious metamorphosis.

THE DEPARTMENT for promotion of social purity of the W. C. T. U., of which Miss Frances E. Willard is national superintendent, has now forty-seven state superintendents in as many states and territories. The interest in this department has greatly increased during the past year. Hundreds of local superintendents are at work distributing the pledges and literature of the department, of which tens of thousands of pages are being annually sent out from Miss Willard's office at Evanston, and from the publishing house.