

his heart to Christ, and declared his purpose to spend himself in the service of God. In order to avoid the temptations of the world, he went, as people then believed it necessary, when he was in the bloom of youth, into a hermit's life, and distinguished himself above his comrades by the strictness with which he lived.

After the death of his parents he resolved to employ the whole of his rich inheritance for the honor of God in services of brotherly love, and few have ever fulfilled their vow more truly and perfectly than he. Whenever want or need came to his knowledge, there was he to help as far as gold and silver could rescue. And this help always seemed to come down directly from heaven, for it was his whole care to let no one know from whence came the charitable deed to the needy. His cup of joy was full, if God alone received the praise. He not only helped out of present trouble, but he foresaw and averted as much as possible troubles that threatened to come. The knowledge of a household care or a secret family sorrow was enough to open his heart and hand. In order to save a poor soldier whom he knew from an unpleasant embarrassment, he sent a rich gift of money to him for his three praiseworthy daughters, and did this in such a manner that they could only lay down their offering of thanks on the steps of the throne of God. He had secretly put the gift into the warrior's shoe in order to prepare a pleasant surprise for him in the morning. The widely prevailing custom of the children's placing a candy shoe or slipper upon the table in order that St. Nicholas may understand that they hope for a gift, has been referred to this event. He was a wise counselor of the oppressed, a comforter of the sorrowing, and an enlightened leader of those who were not yet firm in the faith. He was also a powerful preacher of repentance to the hardened and those gone astray.

He became honored as a patron saint of the children, because he found his greatest joy in instructing them and in watching their childish simplicity, which is often wiser than the wisest among the old. His remarkable humility and modesty did not hinder the light of his virtues from spreading out far beyond the boundaries of his cloister. He early received from the high and low the honor and admiration due to him. At Myra, in Lycia, where Paul stopped when sailing to Rome, there happened a vacancy in the bishopric, and when the heads of the Church assembled to elect one to fill this, one of the number called a few together and stated that a voice had spoken to him in the night and indicated the one who should become bishop, namely, the person who on the morning of the election should be first seen upon the way to the church. This was received as a command from God, and so they anxiously watched, and lo! almost at break of day the good Nicholas was seen wending his way thither, and was the chosen one.

Nicholas closed his godly and richly charitable life in 342, in a peaceful and happy death. Soon after his memory was celebrated as that of one of the most distinguished saints. The Emperor Justinian built at Constantinople a church in honor of him, and many temples since then have been adorned with his name.

In the year 1087 the merchants of Naples stole his remains out of his cathedral and took them to Apulia, where the Church of St. Stephanas boasts of their possession to-day. When the remains were interred here, a legend relates that a fountain of fragrant oil burst forth as a symbol of the spiritual healing stream of consolation and peace which once poured out in such rich abundance from the earnest activity of this pious man's life. His fame spread wide, and the Russian Church holds no saint in higher esteem than him. He possessed in its fullness that brotherly love which in all its charitable deeds seeks alone the honor of God, and does not let the left hand know what the right hand doeth.

An idle boy will probably make a mean old man.



For the Sunday-School Advocate.

RUB-A-DUB DUB!

BY MRS. H. C. GARDNER.

A LITTLE boy stands in the sunlight gay,
On the broad front door-step over the way:
A crowd of children about him come,
While he merrily beats on a little drum,
Rub-a-dub dub!

Now he strikes up a march with its measured notes;
Then a call to arms on the March wind floats;
Then a patriot air echoes full and free,
And a sturdy roll beats the *reville*:
Rub-a-dub dub!

The wondering children hear with awe
The martial clangor which calls to war,
For the drummer-boy is a soldier's son,
And he wears his mimic sword and gun.
Rub-a-dub dub!

A gentle lad is the soldier's boy,
His father's pride and his mother's joy,
With moral courage to choose the right,
But little spirit for murderous fight.
Rub-a-dub dub!

In the morning fair you can see him stand
With his sounding drum in his little hand;
His soldier airs make him look so droll,
As he roughly wakens the rattling roll,
Rub-a-dub dub!

All boys should brave little patriots be;
All children should love the songs of the free;
But O for a drum and a warlike din
That should marshal the children to fight with sin.
Rub-a-dub dub!

We're soldiers all in the battle of life,
And we fiercely join in its varied strife;
Some faint on the field, some cowardly flee,
And few at the last shout, *Victory!*
Rub-a-dub dub!

There's glorious news from the war to-day—
Ah, little one, out in the sunshine gay,
Forget not the holler strife to come
While you merrily beat your little drum,
Rub-a-dub dub!

WHAT CHARLIE DID.

TURNING into a certain street, I saw a company of boys playing very earnestly, and evidently enjoying themselves finely. One I noticed in particular, who seemed to be the leader of their sports; and just as I came up with them he was proposing a new game, and giving instructions in regard to it. His whole heart seemed to be in the thing.●

At this moment a window was thrown open in the house I was passing, and a sweet, gentle voice called, "Charlie, your father wants you."

The window was at once closed, and that mother, as I took her to be, immediately withdrew, without even stopping to see whether Charlie heard.

The boy was so busy that I doubted if that quiet

voice would reach his ear. But it seemed she knew better than I. The words hardly escaped her lips when everything was dropped, the boys left at play, and Charlie within the doors, where, of course, I could not follow him.

"A fine fellow that," thought I; "he will make his mark in the world. If a man would govern others, he must learn to obey; and surely Charlie has learned to obey."

Yes, boys, that is the way. Prompt, cheerful obedience is what you are to render parents and teachers. Do not wait to be spoken to the second time, but drop all and run at the first call.

For the Sunday-School Advocate.

IDLE JOE.

JOE was an idler. Of course, Joe was always in mischief. Did you ever know an idler whose fingers were not found meddling with what did not concern him?

Joe often got into bad scrapes, for which he was sometimes soundly thwacked. But the whip did



not make Joe mend his manners much. It is hard work to whip evil out of a thoroughly bad boy.

One day Joe went to church. The minister in his sermon quoted these words, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Joe started to his feet, forgetful of everything but the words spoken, and cried aloud:

"Then Joe is called to repentance, for Joe is a big sinner."

From that time Joe repented and sought the Saviour. Do you suppose the Saviour cared for idle Joe? Yes he did, for Jesus knew the value of his soul. So when Joe prayed Jesus heard him, answered his prayer, and forgave his "big" sins.

Joe was now no longer idle Joe. The love of Jesus did what the whip failed to do, it drew the laziness out of his bones and the sin out of his heart. It made Joe a diligent, faithful, loving, and lovable boy. No one wanted to whip Joe any more.

Listen! ye idle, prankish, wicked boys and girls who, like Idle Joe, are always in mischief! Jesus loves *you*. You grieve him, but he loves you and wishes to make you worthy of his love. Will you let him? If you will, tell him so directly. Down upon your knees, each of you, and cry, "O Jesus, save me from my sins! O Saviour, wash my heart! O Lord Jesus, make me a good, a pure, and a true child!"

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