

Growth.

BY MARIAN E. WINBLOW.

You, build your dam as high as you can;
You think I'm small, but I'll tell you all
I'll get over it—over just so.
And make your wheel buzz down below,
You can't stop me while water flows;
I may be a river yet—who knows?

See how the brown mould over me sifts,
Bury me deeper 'neath leaves in drifts,
Forgot I'm here, deep out of sight,
Where it is dark—as dark as night,
You can't hide me while acorns grow,
I'll be an oak-tree the next you know.

Keep me in dresses and play I'm a girl,
Keep my long hair nicely in curl,
But I'm a boy—doubt that who can?
And some bright day I'll be a man,
The world will know me—that's what I
said;

For I've a thinker in my head.

—St. Nicholas.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK
Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, MARCH 5, 1898.

BICYCLE LESSONS.

BY REV. LEANDER S. KEYSER.

And so you have been having a "spin"
on your wheel, have you, my boy? I
am pleased to see you ride so well. It
is fine sport and healthful exercise. If
you do not become too much absorbed
in it, you will work and study all the
better for a swift ride along the streets
or out into the country.

But now set your wheel up against this
maple, and let us have a friendly talk
about riding a bicycle. It is an in-
teresting vehicle, because it has been only
a few years since no one supposed that
a man could ride on fewer than three
wheels at the least. Now a third wheel
in a cycle would be as useless as a fifth
wheel in a waggon. These handsome
"safeties" are quite an improvement on
the old-fashioned velocipedes which chil-
dren used, to ride and which might be
called the grandparents of the modern
bicycle.

Do you remember the ungainly cycles
that were first used, having a high wheel
in front and a small one behind, while
the rider went soaring away up in the
air? Is it not wonderful, my lad, how
inventive the mind of man is? Our
grandfathers never dreamed of riding on
two wheels as so many people do to-day.

But what I meant to say chiefly was
this: Have you ever gone to school to a
bicycle? Why do you laugh? Oh! you
didn't know that a wheel was a
school-teacher? It is, however. Every-
thing is a teacher if we are only in the
proper frame of mind for learning. Now
tell me, what is the principal secret in
learning to ride a bicycle?

Just as I supposed—it is to learn to
balance oneself. The beginner sways
awkwardly from side to side, and very
likely rolls over on the ground, tumbling
in the dust. Yes, sometimes even be-
fore he can get his feet on the pedals
over he topples. Well, don't you see,
my boy, that the same is true all through
life? The little child cannot walk be-
cause he has not learned to keep his
balance. After he has learned, he hardly

thinks of tumbling over as he runs along
with lightsome steps.

But in other things this is also true, as,
for instance, in learning to think. So
many people cannot think on any subject
firmly and clearly because they do not
take hold with a strong and steady grasp
of the mind, and so they soon lose their
poise and are floundering in the dust.
The way to learn to ride a wheel is to
go at it with a steady purpose which
knows no failure, and keep the nerves
well under control. In the same way
you must master the art of thinking.

My boy, did you ever have any falls
before you acquired skill in riding a
"safety"? You did? Many a one,
you say? What did you do then? Give
it up? You didn't? Picked up the frag-
ments, so to speak, and tried again?
That was manly, sir. I feel like taking
off my hat to a boy with such a stalwart
purpose.

But did I not hear you say the other
day that you never could understand
analyzing sentences in your grammar or
computing promissory notes in your
arithmetic? Come, my boy, you can
master an, study, if you will use will
power, just as you did in learning the
art of riding a wheel; and then, when
you have become familiar with a branch
of knowledge, it will be just as easy for
you as spinning along on your two-
wheeled vehicle.

What would you think if I should tell
you that a wheel is a preacher as well as
a school-teacher? It is true. Doing
right is keeping your balance; doing
wrong is losing your balance; not with
your body, of course, but with your con-
science, your heart. If you do not keep
an upright position and keep moving,
your wheel wobbles from side to side and
then throws you over on the ground.
Doing right is keeping morally upright.
Don't you like to see a boy spinning
along on a cycle when he sits up straight
and keeps his front wheel from wobbling?
It is an admirable sight. But not more
so than to see a boy who is upright and
true and brave; who doesn't lose his poise
when temptation comes; who doesn't
even veer to one side.

Did you say that it is easy for you to
ride now? It wasn't at first, though?
Then you were nervous and afraid; but
now you say you can ride a half day
without even giving yourself even a
thought about falling. I believe it. You
have acquired skill and confidence and
mastery by practice.

At first when boys and girls try to be
Christians, it may be very difficult for
them. They have to learn to keep their
balance in the new kind of life, to keep
praying, to control their tempers, to sub-
due their tongues, to stay out of bad
company, to be gentle and kind even
when provoked. These tasks seem so
hard that they feel many times as if they
could not hold out any longer. But they
should go to the bicyclist and learn to be
wise, for by-and-bye, if they persevere,
they will form the habit of right doing,
and it will become second nature.

What do you say? You balance your-
self, hold the handles steady, tread the
pedals, and keep on the lookout for a
clear path, all without thinking about do-
ing these things? But it wasn't so at
first, my son. No, indeed. While you
were trying to do one thing, you forgot
to keep doing the rest, and as a conse-
quence there was a boy sprawling on
the ground. Just so in learning to live
the Christian life. Keep at it until it
becomes easy, until you can do all the
duties with pleasure, because you do them
without constant strain and effort.

So much for a bicycle sermon, my lad!
I will close now. Boys do not like ser-
mons that are too long; they grow tired
and wish for the benediction. Now, spin
around the block while I time you with
my watch.

A BOY ON PROHIBITION.

BY EDWARD CARSWELL.

I am asked to tell this meeting what
we boys think about a prohibitory law
for Canada. Well, we go in for it, of
course. Why shouldn't we? Ain't
they always putting prohibitory laws on
us boys, and nobody ever asks us
whether we want 'em or not. We can't
ride a "bike" as we want to, or go
swimming, or skating, or coasting, or
snowballing, or anything, without dan-
ger of running up against a prohibitory
law.

Now, there is a steep hill on the main
street of our village, and last winter
there was a heavy rain storm, and then
a freeze and that hill was like glass; and
didn't we boys have a jolly time coasting
down that hill until Billy Smith ran into
an old woman and scattered her two
baskets of eggs all over the hill. Billy
didn't mean to do it, but he was just
scooting when she got in his way. He
hollered, but before he could holler again
an egg went into his mouth and another

hit him on the left eye. Now, the old
lady wasn't much hurt, and we boys
clipped in and bought her some more
eggs and better than the ones she lost.
Billy said so, and he ought to know.

Well, the very next day there was a
sign put up, and it said: "Any boy
found coasting on this hill will be sent to
the lock-up." Now, only a week before,
Tom Guzzle brought a load of wood to
town, and then drank it up at the
saloon at the top of the hill and, mad
with drink drove his team headlong down
the hill, tore away a veranda, smashed
a plate-glass window, and nearly killed
a man who tried to stop 'em. But they
didn't prohibit the saloon! Then be-
cause a barn was burned last Queen's
Birthday, didn't the council pass a law
that no crackers or fireworks should be
let off on any street of the village. Now,
I'd like to know how boys are going to
show their loyalty if they can't let off
fire-crackers and make a racket on
Queen's Birthday and First of July!

Now, they never proved that the barn
was burned by fire-crackers; but we all
know that there was a big fight at that
saloon on Dominion Day, and one man
had his ear bit off. And didn't old
"Flare Up" get drunk at that saloon
and then go and set fire to his shop, and
it was burned up, and himself, too? But
they didn't prohibit the saloon!

Then, didn't they prohibit us swim-
ming in the mill pond 'cause we didn't
have our clothes on? And who wants
to be all fixed up when they go in swim-
ming? And I know lots of boys and
girls that ain't got hardly any clothes to
wear, and what they have is all patched
up, 'cause their fathers drink up all their
money at that saloon. And the saloon
ain't prohibited yet!

Then, just because Tom Scorer ran
over a baby carriage that had twins in it
and tumbled it over, didn't the council
the very next week prohibit anybody rid-
ing a wheel on the sidewalk. Now, Tom
didn't do it on purpose. The carriage
was on right in front of his wheel and
he took an awful tumble trying not to
do it. And the babies wasn't hurted
much, 'cause they were fat and the mud
was real soft. Only they couldn't tell
one from the other till they were washed.

Now, only last year a man left his
team in front of the saloon while he went
in to drink, and didn't they get up a row
in the bar and frightened the horses so
they ran away and smashed a buggy and
one of the ladies in the buggy was so
badly hurt that she died. But the saloon
goes on all the same.

Then, didn't they prohibit snowballing
on the street? And I'd like to know
when they would have found the body of
old Sam Toper if we hadn't seen one of
his boots sticking out of a drift when
we were building a snow fort? But the
saloon where he got drunk ain't prob-
hibited yet!

Of course, if it's right to prohibit bad
things, it can't be right to license what
makes all the badness. And we boys
say it ain't fair to prohibit fighting and
swearing and lots of other things, while
you license the stuff that makes men
do 'em all. So, of course, we boys and
girls are in favour of a prohibitory law
for Canada now and forever.

Then hesitate no longer.

The foe is growing stronger,

The longer we delay;

But, for God and home and right,

Let us rally for the fight,

And work as well as pray."

A FLY'S PROTEST.

One rainy day when Tommy was look-
ing out of the window he saw a fly buz-
zing against the pane.

"I'll catch that fly," said he; and his
little fat fingers went pattering over the
glass, until at last he chased the fly
down into a corner and caught it.

"Let me go!" said the fly.

"I won't!" answered Tommy.

"Do let me go! You hurt me; you
pinch my legs and break my wings."

"I don't care if I do. You're only a
fly—a fly's not worth anything."

"Yes, I am worth something, and I
can do some wonderful things. I can
do something you can't do."

"I don't believe it," said Tommy.
"What can you do?"

"I can walk up the wall."

"Let me see you do it!" and Tommy's
fingers opened so that the fly could get
off.

The fly flew across the room, and
walked up the wall and then down again.

"My!" said Tommy. "What else can
you do?"

"I can walk across the ceiling," said
the fly; and he did so.

"My!" said Tommy again. "How do
you do that?"

"I have little suckers on my feet that
help me to hold on. I can walk any-
where, and fly too. I am smarter than
a boy," said the fly.

"Well, you're not good for anything,
and boys are," answered Tommy, stoutly.

"Indeed, I am good for something. I
helped to save you from getting sick
when the days were hot. Flies eat up
the poison in the air, and if we flies had
not been around in the summer to keep
the air pure, you and baby and mamma
would have been very sick."

"Is that true?" asked Tommy in great
surprise.

"Yes, it is true, and now I will tell
you something else. You are a bad, bad
boy."

"I am not," cried Tommy, growing
very red in the face. "I don't steal, or
say bad words, or tell what is not true."

"Well, you are a bad boy, anyhow. It
is bad to hurt flies. It is bad to pull off
their legs and wings. It is bad to hurt
anything that lives. Flies can feel, and
it is bad to hurt them. Yesterday you
pulled off my brother's wings."

"I never thought of that," answered
Tommy, soberly. "I won't do it again.
I'll never hurt a fly as long as I live, and
be sure that I'll never hurt you."

"You won't get a chance," answered
the fly, as he walked across the ceiling.—
Our Little Ones.

THE PEACOCK AT HOME.

The real home of the peacock or pea-
fowl is in India. There they were and
are hunted, and their flesh is used for
food. As these birds live in the same
region as the tiger, peacock-hunting is a
very dangerous sport. The long train
of the peacock is not its tail, as many
suppose, but is composed of feathers
which grow out just above the tail, and
are called the tail-coverts. Peacocks
have been known for many hundred
years. They are mentioned in the Bible;
Job mentions them, and they are men-
tioned too in 1 Kings, 10. Hundreds of
years ago in Rome many thousand pea-
cocks were killed for the great feasts
which the emperors made. The brains
of the peacock were considered a great
treat, and many had to be killed for a
single feast.—St. Nicholas.

PRIFY NAMES FOR BOOKS.

The following are some of the curious
titles of old English books:

- "A Most Delectable Sweet Perfumed
Nosegay for God's Saints to Smell at."
- "Biscuit Baked in the Oven of Charity,
carefully conserved for the Chickens of
the Church, the Sparrows of the Spirit,
and the sweet Swallows of Salvation."
- "A Sigh of Sorrow for the Sinners
of Zion breathed out of a Hole in the
Wall of an Earthly Vessel known among
men by the name of Samuel Fish" (a
Quaker who had been imprisoned).
- "Eggs of Charity Layed for the
Chickens of the Covenant and Bofled
with the Water of Divine Love. Take
ye out and eat."
- "Seven Sobs of a Sorrowful Soul for
Sin."
- "The Spiritual Mustard-Pot to make
the Soul Sneezed with Devotion."

Most of these were published in the
time of Cromwell.—St. Nicholas.

JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

MARCH 13, 1898.

By Bible reading.—2 Tim. 3. 15-17;
John 5. 39; Psalm 119. 11, 105.

BIBLE READING IN FAMILIES.

The Jews were particular relative to
their inculcating Bible reading in their
households. The first text in our lesson
shows the benefit of the practice. The
same practice should be followed in all
families, in every age, and blessed re-
sults would be sure to follow. Young
Christians would grow more in grace and
would not be so soon driven from their
steadfastness if they were more familiar
with the Holy Scriptures.

CHRIST'S COMMAND.

Second text. These are Christ's words.
"Search," not merely read, as you read
a story or an article of news, but search,
dig deep, compare one part with another.
The Scriptures, when carefully examined,
always repay the labour thus expended.
Too many neglect the reading of this
holy book, but no day should be allowed
to pass without reading at least some
portion. If you receive a letter from
a friend, you peruse it until you thor-
oughly understand it. The Bible is
God's letter to you. A heathen convert
once said, "When I pray I talk to God,
but when I read the Bible, God talks to
me." Read, mark, learn, and inwardly
digest the contents of the Bible. Say
with the Psalmist, "Thy word have I
hid in my heart, that I might not sin
against thee."