

## Sunday Reading

The Town of Nogood.

My friend, have you heard of the town of Nogood?  
On the banks of the River Flow,  
Where blooms the Winkwillow flower fair,  
Where the "one" meadow scents the air,  
And the soft Gossamer grow?

It lies in the valley of Whatevise.  
In the province of Letterside;  
Thattiredfeeling is native there,  
It's the home of the reckless town-taire,  
Where the Giveltups abide.

It stands at the bottom of Lazy hill,  
And is easy to reach, I declare;  
You've only to fold up your hands and glide  
Down the slope of Winkwillow's toboggan slide  
To be landed quickly there.

The town is as old as the human race,  
And it grows with the flight of years.  
It is wrapped in the fog of idlers' dreams,  
Its streets are paved with discarded schemes  
And sprinkled with useless tears.

The town of Nogood is all hedged about  
By the mountains of Despair.  
No sentinel stands on its gloomy walls,  
No trumpet to battle and triumph calls,  
For cowards alone are there.

My friend from the dead—live town Nogood,  
If you would keep far away,  
Just follow your duty through good and ill,  
Take this for your motto, "I can, I will,"  
And live up to it each day.

—New Haven Register.

### BAD COMPANY.

'Girls,' said May Lewis to a group playing in the shade of a tree, 'do you see that girl over there standing by that tree? She is the new scholar that I overheard Miss Barber telling the professor about. She said that the girl is a mixture. Doesn't seem to understand the regulations of a school, but in spite of her rough and ready manners she is warm-hearted and teachable, and is anxious to do right. She said in arithmetic she is above the average, as her father keeps a store somewhere in the backwoods, and this girl has been his chief clerk for some time.'

'Well, we shall have to sound her and see if she is good fun,' said Jennie Dicks, her eyes dancing with mischief, as she glanced at the new scholar. The bell clanged imperatively, and the pupils filed into the school rooms. Ruby, the new scholar, walked behind the rest, feeling very much out of place among so many strange faces, some of which turned to regard her curiously, and not a few were thoughtlessly unkind by allowing an expression of ridicule to show in the glance, yet when she passed to her seat Miss Barber smiled upon her so kindly that she felt suddenly warmed and encouraged.

The first class called was the reading class. Ruby's labored efforts and ludicrous blunders so convulsed the class that the teacher took pity on her and told her to be seated, resolving to give her private instruction until she could acquire herself creditably before the class.

Next came the mental arithmetic class and Ruby was on familiar ground at once. She listened to each formula with interest and wondered what was the use of going through all that rigmarole, when she had the answer long in advance. The girl next her rose and went smoothly through the example:

'Charles has forty-eight cents and buys a slate pencil for sixteen cents how many cents has he left?'

Ruby had just time to think that Charles ought to have had more sense than to pay sixteen cents for a slate pencil, when she was asked to rise while the teacher read the following example:

'There are thirty-six wild ducks in a flock and a hunter fires at them and kills eighteen; how many are left?'

Ruby forgot everything and exclaimed in an incredulous tone:

'What, at one shot? I don't believe it! Father is a fine shot, but he never killed eighteen ducks at one clip in all his born days!'

'But, Ruby, I didn't make the statement. It is only an example which I ask you to solve,' said the teacher kindly.

'No, no, please, schoolma'am my folks bring me up to speak the truth, and I couldn't say such a lie as that, even if it is printed in a book,' and Ruby shook her head sadly for feeling obliged to refuse her teacher anything.

'Since you look at it in that light, dear, you may work the next one.'

'In school there are twenty-seven boys and thirty-six girls; how many more girls than boys?'

'Now, that's something like,' said Ruby, casting a triumphant glance at the boys' seats. 'Girls don't run away from school to go fishing as boys does.'

The children burst into a laugh. 'Such remarks disturb the class, Ruby, so please don't make them.'

The school giggled, and Miss Barber smiled in spite of herself. The girl glanced about her in ludicrous dismay. She knew she had blundered, but she did not know how. An old saying of her father's came to her mind: 'A quiet tongue makes a wise head,' and she resolved to act upon it in school hours.

At recess Ruby stood alone, watching



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the others at play. She was a chubby Dutch girl of about twelve years of age. Her face was honest and good natured. It was the habit of a certain group of girls to 'sound' a new pupil to decide if she was 'good fun' or to be 'one of us.' They now approached Ruby, asked her name, age and where she lived. Ruby answered readily, glad to have someone to speak to her. Then a girl with tow-colored curls and white blue eyes slipped up to her.

'You are 'way up in elocution, I noticed' she said with a shy glance at the group.

'Can't hold a candle to you, though, My! when you stood up there and yellocuted, the shivers ran up and down my back all the time,' said Ruby with honest admiration. At this the girls laughed merrily and clapped their hands. The answer was so pat, for the questioner was rather vain of her elocutionary efforts, though a high-pitched voice gave one a feeling of uneasiness instead of pleasure while listening to her. Her part in the 'sounding' process proved unlucky for her, for even her mates thought the joke to good too keep, and from that hour teased her about her 'yellocution.'

'Do you think you will like the school here?' asked gentle-faced May Lewis, who never approved of the 'sounding' process. 'I'm bound to, Pap says none of us is eddicated, so I'm going to,' said Ruby, with determination.

'Pap!' exclaimed several voices at once, thinking the time had arrived for some 'fun.' 'Who is Pap, please?'

'Humph, you are queer if you don't know.'

'Since you call your father 'pap' you must call your mother 'map' said a girl laughing at her own originality.

'I never thought of it before, but a good mother is a sort of map of the world—sort of gives you the lay of the land, you know, said Ruby, with a tender expression.

'How do you like town society?' asked the girl with the white blue eyes.

'It's just as pap said; dogs and town young'uns are alike.'

'How's that?' asked the girl, piqued by the comparison.

'Oh, he says, let a country dog come to town and all the town dogs pitch in to him, answered Ruby, nonchalantly.

This was a telling truth, and some of the girls had a moment of honest shame, but the questioner turned red with resentment, which changed quickly to spite. 'I saw a wild girl at a show one summer. Your sister I suppose?'

'Sh m!' exclaimed several girls under their breath; but Ruby was capable of fighting her own battles, her very innocence and honesty being her best shield.

'My sister, just as much as you are a lady like town girl. Some folks think if they wear kid gloves and a feather bow they are a lady. My mother don't know much book learning; but she's a lady at heart, and if you was to go to our house she would treat you like a lady, said Ruby, looking the girl calmly in the eye.

'There, Clare, that serves you right, and

you brought it upon yourself' one girl exclaimed.

'Come, girls, she had better be one of us,' said Blanche Masters, thinking that one so glib in repartee would better be mustered in at once.

'If you think I am going to join you and help pick on to new scholars, you're mistaken. I won't do it. I'll head 'em off every time,' said Ruby, soberly.

'Oh, we don't mean any harm! It's only in fun,' exclaimed one, feeling ashamed to be reproved by this untaught country girl.

'Queer fun it must be to torment one another.'

Here the school bell called them in doors.

For several days Ruby avoided the 'charmed circle,' as they flatteringly called their special group, and played very contentedly with the little girls. It was seldom that one of the 'big girls,' deigned to notice the little ones, but Ruby had not only called upon all the little house keepers, ranged along the high board 'ence, but she introduced new plays into their imaginary houses, and helped them to have a good time.

In school hours Ruby gave her whole attention to her studies, and had already shown remarkable advancement in them. She was a comfort to her teacher, for she gave heed to her instructions and never had to be told the same thing twice. By and by it began to dawn upon the older girls that Ruby was purposely avoiding them, and they had a curiosity to discover why. So at recess one day, Jennie and Blanche linked arms in hers and asked her to join them in their play. Ruby gently freed herself and slowly backed away. 'Excuse me, but I'd rather play with the little girls.'

'Don't you like us?' asked one.

'My folks are very strict about the company I keep. They are always telling me not to go in bad company, but to choose such as will help me be good,' said Ruby, thoughtfully.

The girls looked at each other aghast. 'Bad company!' and they from some of the best families in town. Preposterous! Yet this simple hearted backwoods girl honestly believed that they were undesirable associates.

'You see,' she explained, 'my folks say we get to be like those we go with—and—and I want to learn manners and how to do things proper, like Miss Barber. I never had much chance, and I want to grow up the best woman I can. The little girls don't make fun of other girls nor of their teacher, nor make faces, and be sly, so I guess I'd rather play with them, if you'll excuse me,' and Ruby walked happily away with half a dozen little children clamoring for her help.

There, girls! exclaimed May Lewis, 'we have had an honest mirror held before our faces, and the reflections ought to be good for us. We see ourselves as others see us. We are looked upon as 'bad company,' and I don't wonder. We have behaved shamefully. 'Bad company!' and May laughed bitterly.

'I for one am ashamed of myself, and I mean to win that girl's respect yet,' exclaimed Jennie, contritely.

'Now I understand,' said May, after a thoughtful silence, 'another way by which Ruby has been measuring us—it is by the expression of Miss Barber's face. She has taken Miss Barber for a model, and well she may, for she is a lady, and I begin to see that we have not treated Miss Barber well, either. I have often noticed that when one of us has annoyed or worried her, Ruby would look so indignant, and, no doubt, mentally placed a black mark after our names, and so has decided to avoid us. So the only way we can win her friendship will be through Miss Barber, by making teaching a pleasure instead of a burden to her.'

'Then I mean to be so good that Miss Barber's face will be wreathed in smiles when I'm in school,' said Jennie, with a little choke in her laugh.

'Girls,' exclaimed Blanche, impulsively 'let us all agree to turn over a new leaf, and be good and make our influence be felt for good.'

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'Who votes for the new leaf?' said May, holding up her hand. Hand after hand went up, even the tow curls joining.

Miss Barber was certainly amazed at the sudden good behavior of her 'special trial,' as she mentally termed the 'charmed circle.' Being girls looked up to, their ways were copied by others of their age. There was no more sly fun in school hours, and their attention to the work in hand helped their teacher to give them of her best. Ruby began to regard the girls in a more favorable light. Her genuine nature and honest heartedness had so attracted them that each felt a desire to 'grow up the best woman I can,' and Ruby little dreamed that it was herself who had awakened in them this desire.

### SOME DAILY THOUGHTS.

Paragraphs Gleaned From Various Religious Sources.

'Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?' (Gen. xxxii. 29.)

'They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.' 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins' (Matt. i. 23, 21.)

A revival cannot be measured by the multiplication table. There may be a revival in a single heart that will mean more to the kingdom of God than a score of new converts.

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In a believer's ear,  
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,  
And drives away his fear.  
It makes the wounded spirit whole,  
And calms the troubled breast;  
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,  
And to the weary rest.

A group of ministers talking at a camp meeting last summer came to this agreement: One of the greatest dangers in the Church today is the presence in official positions of worldly men, who are kept there because the Church feels it cannot do without their money, and who are allowed a proportion of influence beyond either their giving or abilities, for fear of offending them.

It ought to be buried into the hearts of both parents and pastors that the time to aim at conversions, and to expect conversions, is in childhood and early youth. Probably a majority of persons who pass twenty-one irreligious are never converted at all. Mr. Spurgeon used to say that those church members who gave him the least trouble were those who gave their hearts to Jesus when young. When a child is old enough to love, to trust and obey its parents, it is old enough to love, trust and obey Christ. The bible never makes age a condition of salvation; and when Christ is truly accepted, then Christ ought to be openly confessed. What is the use of having a fold in the lambs are to be kept out until they can stand the winter?

It is vital Christianity when the believer can say: 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' This is not a shadow which we pursue, nor a dream of the night. The union of sunlight with flower, of heat with fire, of life with the body, is not more real. There is a life which is hid with Christ in God for sinful, helpless men and women; not a fancy of the mystic in his solitude, a prize for him who has leisure and learning, but a reality for all believers amid their temptations, troubles, duties, cares. Man has a body, he is a spirit. Spiritually he may be joined with Christ and become a son of God. But this union does not destroy personality. It is, however, vital—the life of Christ within the believer as distinguished from external influence or assistance—so that the apostle says, 'He that hath the Son hath life.' It is inscrutable though not unintelligible. We cannot fully comprehend it, but may know it by experience. It is increasingly revealed to every faithful disciple. 'Of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.'

How many there are in this world whose lives are an utter failure to carry out what God has designed them to do, simply from neglect to grasp and utilize trivial opportunities. An eminent writer has said of such, 'In the great enthusiasm of what they might do somewhere else, and in other circumstances and surroundings, they are continually crying, 'Give us place to stand and we will move the world,' while they ignore the true philosophy of a man's life and action—stand where you are and move the

world.' Opportunity is inexhaustible both in the secular and spiritual life; it lies about us everywhere, in the home, in the church, in the workshop, in the school. Canon Farrar has most truly said, 'A life spent in brushing clothes and washing crockery and sweeping floors—a life which the proud of the earth would have treated at the dust under their feet; a life spent at the clerk's desk, a life spent in the narrow shop, a life spent in the laborer's hut, may yet be a life so ennobled by God's love and mercy that for the sake of it a king might gladly yield his crown.'

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### Two Showers of Plums.

Six years ago there fell on the Dejeunet farm in an old field four miles from town about a barrel of small green plums supposed to be the Southern hog plum. They are to be found growing hereabouts, but were dropped there during a wet and stormy period, such as we have had for ten days past. People came miles to see the wonder, but it had about dropped out of memory, when on last Friday night during a like spell about one-half bushel more fell in exactly the same spot. The remarkable part is that nowhere else were plums found on either occasion.—Hawesville (Ky.) Clarion.

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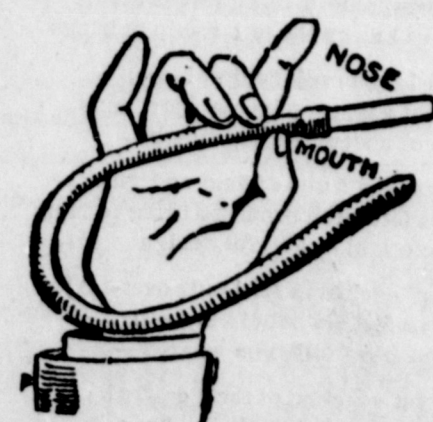
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### Friends in Death.

The last few weeks have been trying ones for the birds, even the hardiest. A Brewer man reports a pathetic sight that came under his observation. Noticing, partly covered by a drift, the corpse of a frozen dove he went to it, when to his surprise he found under each outspread wing an English sparrow, both frozen dead. Lewiston (Me.) Journal.

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