

# YOUTH'S COMPANION.

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## TEMPTATION.

Perhaps some of my young readers, when looking upon this cut, will ask what it is. You see in the reeds and around the trunk of a tree a large snake with his mouth open; and just before him an innocent little bird. This is a rattle-snake charming a robin. It is said that this snake will fix its eyes intently on a bird or squirrel, and the poor little animals, thus charmed, have no power to move away, but keep drawing nearer and nearer the serpent, and at last enter into his mouth, which has all the time been open to receive them, and are instantly devoured. You would say then, if you should see a little bird in this situation, that it was in danger, and you would try to save it.

Now, children, you are in danger, not of being bitten by a snake, but by sin. You have wicked hearts—you love to sin; and the Bible tells you about the "old serpent the devil," which tries to have you sin that you may be destroyed. He would make wicked children more wicked. He tempts you to sin. This is the reason the Saviour tells us to pray that we may be delivered from temptation. He has many ways to tempt you to sin. He fills the mind with wicked thoughts, the heart with sinful feelings. He tempts to lie, to steal, to swear and to kill. Perhaps you are playing with other children, and one boy swears; you hear it, and do the same; then you are tempted and overcome. You are walking along in the road and you come to a neighbor's apple tree; the boy with you takes an apple and gives you one; and then you are tempted. If you take it and eat it, you have yielded to temptation, and the serpent has charmed you, and caught you. He is pleased that he can overcome you.

I know a good lad who was sent to Sabbath School, and as he was walking along in the road, another boy, dirty and ragged, came up with him, and asked him where he was going. "I am going to the Sabbath School," said John. "Oh, I wouldn't," said the Sabbath breaker, "come, go with me." He then began to tell him where he was going, and what a good time he should have. In this way he tried to charm him. But John continued to move on towards the school-room, holding fast the testament under his arm. When they came up opposite the house, the boy stopped whilst John turned to the door. "Come," said he, "won't you go?" "No," said John with firmness as he stepped into the door. John went into his school and was safe; and away ran the other boy to his wicked sports, and to join his companions in sin. When John said No to the temptation, he resisted, and had no more trouble. The Bible says "resist the devil and he will flee from you." Ever since John said "no," he has not been troubled with such temptations as he was before, and he has found it

easy to resist them when they have come. He means to keep out of the serpent's mouth. I see him every Sabbath in his school. I think he means to seek the kingdom of heaven.

Now reader, as you look upon that serpent and see his mouth open to destroy, will you remember you are in danger, and can never be safe until you become "Christians and enter Christ's kingdom." Then you can say "no," to every sinful thought, feeling, word, companion and way which leads down to hell. When I see the disobedient child, the Sabbath breaker, the profane swearer, I am afraid they will be charmed by sin until they are destroyed. This is the reason why your pious parents and teachers feel so deeply for you. They point you to the Sabbath Schools, to the place of worship, to the Saviour, and to heaven. If you would do all you could to save the little robin from the poison bite of the rattlesnake, these friends will do much more to deliver you from the destroyer of souls. For you are of more value than many sparrows. Never stop to listen to the voice of the tempter. Say "no," to every sin.—*S. S. Treasury.*

## NARRATIVE.

### FRUITS OF PERSEVERANCE.

"Mother!" said William, a little boy of between five and six years of age, "it is in vain for me to try any more, I never can make the figure three."

So saying, he threw his slate down on his mother's lap, and looked up in her face, with an expression of countenance, in which mortification and impatience of temper were plainly to be seen, mixed with hopeless sorrow.

His mother gently but firmly insisted, that he should take his slate and attempt still longer to copy the figures which she had set him. "Remember my dear boy," she said, "you had to try a long time yesterday, before you could make the figure two, but you did at last succeed. Now if you do not in like manner overcome your present difficulty, you must give up all hope of learning to cipher, and must remain an ignorant child.

"Mother," replied the little boy, "I have tried as hard as I can, but see, my slate is full of bad, ugly figures, that all look the wrong way. I don't believe any body else ever was so stupid. I am sure you had not such a plague in learning to cipher. Your pencil seems to slip along so nicely and never goes the wrong way. If you will only make my three for me, I'll try to do the rest of my figures, for as to making this one, it is useless for me to strive any more."

"And do you expect to cipher in this manner all your life? By and by you will go to school, and when you grow older, if I live, I hope to send you to college. Now do you wish or expect me, to go along with you always, to make your figure three for you?"

"Oh no, mother!" said William, smiling through the tears which his troublesome task had forced into his eyes, "that would be very silly indeed, and all my masters would laugh at me."

"Well then, my dear, the difficulty must be overcome, you know, sooner or later—take your slate again and earnestly set yourself to the task for ten minutes longer—a half hour will then be completed, and if by that time you have not succeeded, you may wait until school time to morrow. I do not recollect having had as much

trouble in forming my figures as you have found, but it is not at all unlikely that I had to toil a great while with them also, for many years have passed since I was thus employed, and the recollection of these early sorrows has faded away under those of later years."

The little boy was encouraged, and once more busily occupied himself with his slate and pencil, but when his half hour was over he had only succeeded in making a crooked and ill shapen three.

Next day however, he resumed his task with better success, for he actually made so very decent, respectable figures of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6. His little countenance looked very bright and he felt very happy when his mother smiled upon him and kissed him.

"You have, my son," she said, "learned a lesson which I hope you may never forget, namely, that "perseverance conquers difficulties," not only in human learning, but also in overcoming sinful tempers. Was there not, my dear, a good deal of naughty feeling in your heart during part of the half hour you spent in school the other morning in your unpleasant task."

"Yes, mamma, indeed there was," said the little boy, who though naturally possessing a very quick temper, was ever ready to own his faults and ask forgiveness for them. "I had some very naughty thoughts come into my heart that morning. I was ashamed and angry at myself for being so dull, and I felt almost sorry to see that my little cousin could learn to make in a few minutes, what I could not in half an hour."

"You then found my son, that you had an evil and corrupt nature, for pride and envy are very sinful, and if not overcome by the grace of God, will lead to most grievous sins. But as you said your prayers the next day, I heard you beg God to help you to resist naughty tempers when you went into the school room, and teach you to be more attentive and diligent. Do you think you were helped?"

"Yes, mother," said the little boy with much earnestness. "I think I was, for before I thought I should make my troublesome three, I felt more willing to go on trying, and did not mind near as much the girls smiling at my ugly humpbacked figures. Do you not think, mother, that God will help us in our studies as well as in other things, if we ask him to do so?"

"Certainly, my dear," replied his mother, "if our motives in doing so, are pure. If we pray that he will help us to learn, because we wish to be admired for our quickness—or merely for the love of learning—or because it may be useful to us in this world, I think we have no right to expect him to hear our prayer. But if we wish to be made useful to our fellow creatures for Christ's sake, I think we have great reason to hope he will listen to our petitions and grant them. I hope, my dear child, that you will ever feel that all the strength we can obtain either for working with our minds, souls or bodies, is entirely derived from that great Being who created us, and gave us all the talents we possess."

William found many more difficulties as he went on in his studies. After he had learned to make all his figures, his mother set him simple sums in addition, and it was many days before he could count up even a short line. He did not however, give up his task because there were trials to be endured. When he became somewhat out of heart, his kind mother would gently remind him, where he was to look for strength,

and she would by way of encouragement, bid him "*remember the figure three.*"

When a year had passed, this little boy could cipher so nicely in addition, that he was advanced to subtraction, and afterwards to multiplication. In all his troubles he tried to follow his dear mother's advice, unless his sinful temper gained the victory over him, but when leaning on his own strength he was generally made sooner or later to feel, that it was perfect weakness.

One day after he had studied a new portion of his multiplication table very hard, and found himself still imperfect in his knowledge of it, he became very much depressed, and the tears would, in spite of his efforts to check them, roll down his cheek. At length he said to his mother, who was sitting by, and watching his struggles with great interest, "Dear mother, do you think I shall ever be able to learn algebra, and to draw those squares and circles that my cousin Richard does at College, if I am so dull in getting this table? Do other little boys, find it as difficult as I do?"

"All young persons, my son," replied his mother, "have found it very trying to their patience, I believe. Your cousin labored hard with it, and I well remember my joy when my own dear mother after many trials, at last found I had mastered it. It by no means follows, because you are not remarkably quick in acquiring knowledge, that you must give up the hope of becoming a good mathematical scholar at some future day. I have read of a gentleman who became so eminent a mathematician as to be made professor of that science in one of the great English Universities, and was called the best scholar of his time, who when a little boy of your age, was so dull and indolent in his studies, that his good father was accustomed to mourn over him in bitterness of heart, and was more than once heard to say, that if God saw fit to remove one of his children he trusted it might be Isaac, which was the name of this boy, since he feared he would never be of much use or comfort to any one."

"What are mathematics, mother?" enquired William.

"Algebra and geometry are mathematical studies, my dear, and so is arithmetic the introduction to the science. Those studies which you have seen your cousin engaged in, are not more difficult for him to master, I imagine, than is the multiplication table to you who are a little boy. You have by many efforts learned to make the figure 3—the same perseverance will enable you, I hope, some day to comprehend problems and theorems in geometry."

"Oh! mother I hope I shall, for I do want to be a learned man when I grow up," exclaimed William, eagerly.

"I should certainly like to see you, my son," said his mother, "becoming a useful and well informed man; but there is something which I am far, far more anxious for you to possess than such knowledge, excellent as that is."

"I know what you mean, mamma. You would rather I should be a Christian, than rich, or learned either," replied William. "And so would I if I could only have one of these things. I have thought so, mother, ever since you talked to me about "the one thing needful," which you said I must seek to gain, even if I lost every thing else."

His mother then told him she must leave him, to attend to something which needed her presence. Before doing so, she urged him to make a fresh effort to learn his accustomed task, and William, encouraged by his mother's assurance that she thought him not dull or stupid, but merely wanting in quickness—and remembering that the little boy whom his father thought dull, became eminent as a scholar, set himself industriously to work, and when called to recite, was able to repeat his lesson very perfectly.