THE CREAM OF THE NEW BOOKS.

The Happy Boy: By Bjørnson.

Those who have appreciated the rare charms of "Arne" and "The Fisher Maiden" will be prepared to welcome "The Happy Boy," by Bjørnson, just published by Sever, Francis & Co., (with portrait frontispiece of H. H. G.) for sale by Claxton, Reusen & Haffelfinger.)

"The Happy Boy" is a young Norway peasant, to whom the world seems a pastoral Arcadia, until he is suddenly roused to his position in it by finding obstacles in the way of his love for a girl above him in station. There is a priceless episode, the story of the schoolmaster, told with Bjørnson's most exquisite subtlety. Everywhere there are the shadowy, frostlike, lacelike, inimitable pictures of Norway scenery, and the finest touches of character. We extract a childish scene, but an invaluable one, of a Confirmation held in a village parsonage in Norway, among the people of eccentric demi-monde:

THE CONFIRMATION OF OSYVIND.

Half a year after, in the following autumn (Confirmation had been postponed until then), the children who had been preparing for the ceremony were sitting in the servants' room in the parsonage, awaiting their examination: among them Osyvind Halsen and Marit Hedebraus. Marit had lost some time from the minister, who had given her a beautiful book and a long conversation; she was laughing and talking with her friends on all sides, and cast a cheerful round among the boys. Marit was now a full-grown girl, gay and unconstrained in her manners; and the boys as well as the girls knew that the richest fellow in the parish, John Hallen, was courting her; she might indeed be happy, as she sat there. Even by the door stood some girls and boys, who had not been accepted: they were crying, while Marit and her friends, the happiest, mocked them; was a little boy in his father's boots and his mother's Sunday kerchief.

"Go, dear, do what I said," sobbed he: "I don't dare to go home again."

Those who had not yet been called up, were seized with a powerful feeling of sympathy; there was a general silence. Anxiety clouded both thread and eyes; they could not see distinctly, nor could they swallow, of which there was a constant necessity.

One sat and reckoned over how much he knew; and, although some hours before he had known it, he was afraid he knew everything, he now ascertained, with the same degree of certainty, that he knew nothing, or at least, he read from the book.

Another made out a catalogue of his sins, from as far back as he could remember, up to the time he was sitting here; and he did not think he was at all too wicked for the Lord Almighty to him to be set aside.

A third sat and sought to gather omens from everything about him: if the clock, which was just going to strike, did not strike before he got to twenty, then he would pass; if the one he heard in the entry turned out to be the stubby Lars, then he would pass; if the big minister which was trudging about in the room reached the bottom of the pane, then he would pass. The last and decisive omen should be whether he got the right foot twisted round the left; and this was quite impossible for him.

A fourth felt convinced in his own mind, that if he were only questioned about Joseph in Bible history, and Barnum in the Catechism, or about Saul, or on the Domestic Duties, or about Jesus, or on the Commandments, or about—he shall not enumerate, lest he be called up.

A fifth had conceived a particular affection for the Sermon on the Mount: he had dreamt about the Sermon on the Mount; he was sure he would be questioned on the Sermon on the Mount; and he gabbled over to himself the Sermon on the Mount: he had to open and look to read over the Sermon on the Mount, when he was called upto be questioned on the great and small Tropics.

The sixth thought of the minister, who was only a little man, and he hoped he either so will; he thought, too, of the schoolmaster who had such a little face, and of God, who was still a tender mercy, and had helped many before, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph; and then he thought how little he, his mother, and sisters were sitting at some praying for him, which certainly was helpful.

The seventh sat and renounced all he had thought of becoming in this world. Once he had thought of getting it as far as king, once to general or minister; now that time was gone by, he thought he would content of coming here, he had thought of going to sea, and becoming captain, perhaps pirate, and gaining various riches in trade: now he gave up all this, riches, then the pirate, then the captain, man, he thought of sailor, at the utmost boatswain; yes, it was even possible that he would not go to sea at all, but find some occupation on his father's farm.

The eighth felt more confident of his case, and felt not quite certain, for certain the event was not certain. He thought of the clothes in which he was to be confirmed, what they should be and for if he were not accepted; but if he got through, he was going to town to get a cloth coat, pantaloons and a waistcoat, and at Christmas, to the entry of all the boys, and amazement of all the girls.

The ninth reckoned in another way; he made out a little account-book with the Lord, in which he was on one side and Jesus Christ, he shall let me pass; and on the other side, as "Credit," then I will never tell any more lies, never slander, go to church regularly, let the girls alone, and give up swearing.

But the tenth felt sure of that if Ole Hansen had been accepted last year, it was more than injustice if they did not take him this year. He had always conducted himself well, and was besides of better family.

By his side sat the eleventh, who was meditating the most fearful plans of vengeance in case of being set aside, either to burn down the schoolhouse, or to run away from the parish, and return as the avenging judge of the whole district, the school commission, the magnanimously allow mercy to usurp the place of justice. As a beginning, he would get a situation in the house of the minister of the neighboring parish, and next year stand Number One before, and the minister and the whole parish would be astonished.

But the tenth had by himself under the clock, with both hands in his pockets, and looked mournfully over the assembly. No one here knew what a heavy heart he had to what a responsibility he stood. At home, there was one who knew; for he was engaged. A large, long-legged spider crawled across the floor, and approached his foot; he generally trod on the dispositing insect; but to-day he lifted his foot tenderly, that it might go on its road. In a place. His eyes were directed in prayer, his eyes said constantly that all men were good, his hands made a humble movement out of his pockets as if he would, to strike the spider, if he could only overgrowth through this darkness, crushed, eye, he would take care to grow out again on the other side, chew tobacco, and announce his engagement.

Down on a low footstool, with his legs up under him, the restless thirteenth was sitting; his small, lacelike eyes darted to and from three times in a second; and through his small, stubbed beak whirled in modley confusion the whole school, from the first, from the mightiest hope to the most crushing doubt, from the humblest resolutions to the most strictive plans of vengeance against the whole parish; and in the mean time he had eaten up all the loose flesh on his right thumb, and was now occupied with his nails, sending great pieces across the floor.

Osyvind sat over by the window; he had been up, and answered everything which was asked him; but the minister had left out anything, for the schoolmaster either. For more than half a year he had thought of what they would both say, when they found out how hard he had been working; and now he felt such disappointed as well as mortified. There sat Marit, who, for far less exertion, had received both encouragements and rewards; it was hard to stand high in her opinion, he had worked; and now she knew, and perhaps he had told to attain with so much self-denial. Her laughter and joking burned into his soul; the freedom with which she moved about pained him deeply. He had carefully avoided speaking to her since that evening, years should pass, he thought; but the sight of her sitting, there, so happy and superior, weighed him to the ground, and all his proud resolutions dropped like wet leaves.

He endeavored, however, gradually to shake off these feelings. All depended on whether he got Number One that day and the day before expected. The schoolmaster generally remained a little later with the minister, to arrange the children's marks, and deliver some last exhortation, and told them the result; it was not the final decision, but only what he and the minister had agreed on for the present. The conversation in the room became livelier, after every one who was examined had been accepted, but now the ambitious ones began to divide themselves off from the happy ones. The latter felt, as soon as they found some one to go with, to communicate their success to their parents, or stood waiting for others, who were not yet ready; the former, on the contrary, grew more and more quiet, and their eyes were anxiously fixed on the door.

At length, the children had all finished; the last had come down, and the schoolmaster was talking with the minister. Osyvind looked around; Marit, she was as happy as before, but still remained sitting, either for some one else or for her own promise, he did not know which.

Her beautiful Marit had grown! Her dazzling complexion was like none he had ever seen before; her face was a little round up; her mouth, half-smiling. Her eyes were half closed, unless she looked directly at some one; and then her glance always seemed unexpectedly tender, when it did come, and as if she herself would shut the eyes of everything else; at this moment she smiled a little. Her hair was rather dark than light; but it was heavy, and came forward on both sides, which, taken together with her half-shut eyes, gave a hidden expression to her face, or at least, made it seem so. One could not be quite sure whom she was looking for, when she was distinguished, or, more exactly what she was thinking of when she happened to turn round and speak to anybody: for she seemed to take hold again directly what she gave. Under all that, John Hallen must be hidden, thought Osyvind, but he was looking at her.

Now the schoolmaster came. All left their places and stormed about him:—

"What number have I?"—And I?"—And I?"—

"Hush! you great, over-grown boys; no disturbance here. Be quiet now, and you shall hear, children." He looked slowly round:

"You are number 2," said he to the first with blue eyes, who was looking beseechingly at him; and the boy danced out of the circle.

"You are number 3," he rapped a nod-head, black little fellow, who was pulling his coat.

"You are number 5; you, number 8," &c. He caught sight of Marit: "You are number 1 of the girls." She turned scarlet over her face and neck, but tried to smile. "You, number 12, have been lazy, you must come and great mischief-maker. You, number 11; we could not expect to have it better, little boy. You, number 15, must stand out, and come to the last examination, or it will turn out badly for you!"

Osyvind could not hear it any longer; number 1 had certainly not been mentioned; but he had been standing the whole time, so that the schoolmaster would see him.

"Schoolmaster!" He did not hear. "Schoolmaster." Three times he had to repeat it, before he was heard. At last, the schoolmaster looked at him:—

"Number 9 or 10, don't remember exactly which," said he, and turned round to another:

"Who is number 1 then?" asked Hans, who was Osyvind's best friend.

"I had no idea, indeed," said the schoolmaster, rapping him over the hand with a rod of steel.

"Who is it, then?" asked several. "Who is it? yes: who is it?"

"That he will know who gets the number," answered the schoolmaster, severely; he would not have gone so far with it. "Go home now quietly, children: be thankful to God, and repeace your parents' hearts." Thank your old grandmother, if you would have been nicely left in the lurch if it hadn't been for him!"

They thanked him, laughed, and departed merrily; for now, thought they were going home to their parents, they all felt happy. Only one was left, who could not go home; neither thought, and who, after he had found them, sat down, as if he were going to begin sobbing again. The schoolmaster went over to him:—

"Now, Osyvind, are you not going with the others?"

He did not answer.

"Why do you open your books?"

"I was going to see what I had answered wrong to-day."

"Do you think you have answered anything wrong?"

Then Osyvind looked at him. Tears filled his eyes; he still continued looking at him, while they coursed down his cheeks, one by one, and he did not say a word. The schoolmaster sat down in front of him:—

"Are you not glad that it all happily over?"

His lips trembled, but he did not answer.

"Your mother and father will be very glad," said the schoolmaster, looking at him.

Osyvind struggled anything to speak. At length, he replied, in a low voice, hesitating he spoke:—

"Is it—true, I—am a workman's son—that I stand number 9 or 10?"

"Probably that is the reason," answered the schoolmaster.

"Then it does no good for me to work," said he, sorrily; and all his dreams vanished away. Suddenly he raised his head, lifted his right hand, and bringing it down on the table with all his might, burst into violent sobs.

The schoolmaster let him lie there and weep long as he would. It lasted a long time; but the schoolmaster waited until the sobs grew more childlike. Then taking his hand in both hands, he raised it up and gazed into the tear-stained face:—

"Do you think it is God who has been with you now?" said he, drawing the boy up to him.

Osyvind still sobbed, but less violently. The tears flowing more slowly; both he and mother look at him who asked, no answer.

"Do you think it is God who has been with you now?" said he, drawing the boy up to him.

"Yes, he whispered; and his lips trembled.

"You still love me, Osyvind?"

"Yes!" and he looked up for the first time. "Then I will tell you how I love you, and how you put down; for I love you so much, Osyvind!"

The other looked at him, winked several times, and the tears coursed rapidly down.

"You are not angry with me for that?"

"No!" he looked up full in his face, and then burst out crying.

"My dear child, I will stay by you as long as I live."

He waited for him until he had collected his books and was ready, and said he would accompany him home. They walked slowly along; at first, Osyvind was still silent, struggling with himself.

"Yes; now we shall think of accomplishing what we have long planned," said the schoolmaster; and running after shadows and numbers. What do you say to the Seminary?"

"Do you think I should like that much?"

"You mean the Agricultural School?"

"Yes."

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Lexington, from Pittsburgh, from Mobile; he Savinah had an occasion to waste his time in talking about from city to city and from house to house. Here in one place were all the valuable books, and he had only to make his selection, and give the order to his "man." Did his stock run out, he knew where to send for more; and thus this firm speedily became one of the largest, and it is now beyond doubt by far the most extensive lobbying house in the world.

Eighteen or twenty years ago, it was a subject of wonder to see the piles of vast boxes of Harper's Publications, but I have no means of ascertaining, while other establishments were congratulating him. So far back as 1854, the freight shipments reached the number of 1,068 large boxes, while in 1868 they amounted to 10,000 boxes, an increase of 870 over the previous year, and this year, now at its close, records an advance far beyond the former experience of other years. That there is no exaggeration in this description will be evident by the fact that these large shipments take over twenty States of the Union every day.

Of course these enormous sales include all that is disposed of in the publishing department, the ordinary bookselling, home and foreign, as well as stationery. In the matter of publishing this firm has issued nearly two hundred new volumes during the year, while the business of the greatest works goes steadily on. Of these large works your readers may have some idea from the example Harper's, in ten royal 8vo volumes, with atlas, be mentioned, the publication of which has cost the outlay of $100,000. Lippincott's "Pronouncing Gazetteer" alone cost $50,000; Webster's recently, and in fifteen years, 8vo; and besides these are living's works, several encyclopedias, the Illustrated Bible, forty-four and twenty-two volumes each; Thackeray's works, twenty-two volumes, together with the Illustrated Bible, Shakspeare, and Bibles of almost gorgeous size and beauty (at a cost of over $100,000).

A new work now on hand, on Universal Biography, by Dr. J. Thomas, will absorb at least $50,000, and the long-expected volumes of Allibone's "Dictionary of Authors" will require more than this sum. Visiting the Harper's walk through the cellars of this home among the stereotype plates is one of the most interesting sights in the connection with modern literature. Here is a little pile of wooden boxes, which, it is said, cost $40,000 to work, costing $20,000. And this? Well, that is so and so, costing $10,000. And this? Well, that is so and so, not work that cost $25,000, and so the tale goes on until more than $500,000 worth of plates are represented. No wonder grows how such sums can be laid, how any house can stand such an outlay, how any house can stand such an outlay, how any house can stand such an outlay, how any house can be made, and how decided is the evidence of every upon every day of the year, and how decided is the evidence of every upon every day of the year, and how decided is the evidence of every upon every day of the year