

have seen faith transformed to mean doubt, joy gave place to grim despair, and charity take on itself the features of black malevolence, all because of the spell words of scandal, and magic mutterings of gossip. Great crimes work great wrong, and the deeper tragedies of human life spring from the larger passions; but woful and most mournful are the uncatalogued tragedies that issue from gossip and detraction, most mournful the shipwreck often made of noble natures and lovely lives by the bitter winds and dead salt waters of slander. So easy to say, yet so hard to disprove—throwing on the innocent all the burden and the strain of demonstrating their innocence, and punishing them as guilty if unable to pluck out the stings they never see, and to silence words they never hear—gossip and slander are the deadliest, cruelest weapons man has ever forged for his brother's heart.

A MINISTER'S STUDIES.

Luther's maxim was admirable, "Bene orasse est bene studuisse—He studies well who prays well." Prayer is the best point of study; first, in itself, and second, because it guides and regulates all other study. No man can study aright who does not study with prayer. "Not to read or study at all," says Quesnel, "is to tempt God," but to do nothing but study is to forget the ministry; to study only to glory in one's knowledge, is a shameful vanity; to study in search of the means to flatter sinners, is a deplorable prevarication; but to store one's mind with the knowledge proper to the saints by study and by prayer, and to diffuse that knowledge in solid instructions and practical exhortations—this is to be a prudent, zealous, and laborious minister." Add to this the remark of Bishop Wilkins as to the communication of one's studies to others. What is thorough and prayerful will be plain. The greatest learning is to be seen in the greatest plainness. The more clearly we understand anything ourselves, the more clearly we can expound it to others. Studies that are gained in prayer are most useful to ourselves and most edifying to others. Studies gained in prayer, though concerned with the highest mysteries, are always simple and plain.—*The Irish Church Advocate.*

Children's Department.

MY MOTHER.

May God in all his bounty,
Throughout the coming year,
Bestow his gifts with plenty,
On you, my mother dear.

And may each of his blessings
Be richer than the last,
And may each day seem brighter,
More joyous than the past.

And if a thought of sadness
Should cloud your dear sweet face,
May God send light and gladness
To shine there in its place.

AN EXPLANATION OF FAITH.

There was a Sunday school celebration not long ago, and the clergyman made a speech to the children in which he endeavoured to teach the nature of faith. So he told them the following story by way of illustration:—

In the deepening twilight of a summer's evening, a pastor called at the residence of one of his parishioners, and found seated in the doorway a little boy, with hands extended upward, holding a line.

'What are you doing, my little friend?' inquired the minister.

'Flying my kite,' was the prompt reply.

'Flying your kite!' exclaimed the pastor; 'I can see no kite—you can see none.'

'I cannot see it but I know it is there for I feel it pull.'

The children were all deeply interested, and the clergyman continued:

Now a few days after this the mother of this little boy was about to die, and she said to him:

'My son, when I am an angel I will come, if I can, and be with you and shield you from harm, and watch to see that you grow up a good man. Will you try to think sometimes that I am at your side?'

And the little boy said he would.

'Now, my dear children,' said the minister, 'when that blessed angel came back from Heaven and hovered over her child, and placed her hand among the fair golden hair, how did he know that she was there, for he could not see her?'

'Why, he felt her pull, of course' roared the class in unison, with the promptness of absolute certainty.

WHAT A BOY CAN DO.

About 260 years ago a poor lad of 17 was seen travelling to the South of England. He carried over his shoulder, at the end of a stick, all the clothing he had in the world, and had in his pocket an old purse with a few pieces of money, given him by his mother, when, with a throbbing, prayerful heart, she took her leave of him on the road, a short distance from their own cottage.

And who was John? for that was his name. He was the son of poor but pious people, and had six brothers, and five sisters, all of whom had to labor hard for a living. He was a goodly lad, and at 14 was disappointed in getting a place as parish clerk, and with his parents' consent set out to get employment.

At the city of Exeter, where he first went, he met with no success; but as he looked on the beautiful cathedral, and in the booksellers' windows, a strong desire sprung in his mind to become a scholar, and at once he set out for the University of Oxford, some 200 miles off, walking the whole way. At night he sometimes slept in barns, or on the shelter side of a hay-stack, and often met with strange companions. He lived chiefly on bread and water, with occasionally a draught of milk as a luxury.

Arrived at the splendid city of Oxford, his clothing nearly worn out and very dusty, his feet sore, and his spirits depressed, he knew not what to do.

He had heard of Exeter College in Oxford, and there he went, and, to his great delight, was engaged to carry fuel into the kitchen, to clean pans and kettles, and that kind of work.

Here, while scouring his pans, he might often be seen reading a book.

His studious habits attracted the attention of the authorities who admitted him into the College as a poor scholar, providing for all his wants.

He studied hard, and soon was at the head of his class. He rose to great eminence as a scholar, was very successful as a minister of Christ, and many years before his death, which took place when he was 72, he visited his father and mother, who were delighted to see their son not only a great scholar, but a pious Bishop. Such was the history of Dr. John Prideaux, who used to say "If I had been a parish clerk of Ugborough, I should never have been Bishop of Worcester." He left many works as fruits of his industry and learning.

HINDOO CHILDREN.

I remember a very funny incident that happened one day while I was visiting a school in India. This school was near the street, where passers-by could look in, and where we could see all that was going on outside. I was sitting near the door on a stool hearing the little girls recite. Pretty little girls they were too, with their shining black hair braided in tight plaits all over their heads, and spangled with tiny dots of ornaments. While they were noisily reciting, I noticed that quite a crowd of boys had collected at the door, and we were evidently objects of great curiosity to them. They very soon began to be noisy, as boys are apt to be, when a policeman, gorgeously attired in blue coat and scarlet turban, and brandishing a huge bamboo cane, came and dispersed them. They did not "stay dispersed," however, notwithstanding his official grandeur, and as soon as he was quite out of the way, came back, bringing with them three forlorn looking calves, with which they frolicked and played, seeming to enjoy it im-

mensely; and I must say that I was very much amused, too.

The little girls have their games also, and dolls, such funny ones!—not elegant wax affairs like yours, with real hair, blue eyes that will go to sleep, and dainty dresses that will come off. No, they take a bit of cloth, roll it up tightly into a bundle, and put charcoal marks for the eyes, nose and mouth. Not very pretty dolls you see, but they love them, and pet them, and talk to them just as you do, and seem to enjoy them as much, and perhaps more, for they have so few pleasant things in their lives. I tell you these things, dear Canadian boys and girls, to make you feel how near akin you are to these Hindoo children, and yet how vastly different; for this is the bright side of their young lives, the happy innocent part. But if I could show you the other side, show you their unloved baby-hood, their untaught childhood, as they grow up in ignorance and the vilest wickedness, bowing down to their uncouth idols of wood and stone, with no knowledge of Him who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," I am sure you would strive more and more to help to send the knowledge to them— that heavenly knowledge that will make them like you, make them really your brothers and sisters, because you will all be the "children of God."

CHILDREN'S JOY IN GIVING.

An illustration of the truth that children find pleasure in Christian giving, was supplied in a recent incident at a Sunday-school, in Philadelphia.

The lesson of the day was "The Gentiles Received." It showed St. Peter's recognition of the truth that the followers of Jesus have a duty to proclaim the gospel to all, who in every nation are in need of the salvation it offers. During the closing exercises of the hour the superintendent gave an impressive object-lesson, by introducing to the school a veritable Seminole Indian chief, who, through an interpreter, told of the need of the gospel among his people, and appealed for the means to secure its teaching there.

The little ones of Bethany heard the call. It was real to them. The sheet let down from heaven before St. Peter on the house-top did not more vividly teach to him his duty of the hour, than did that swarthy Indian standing before the school, and asking that his people should be helped to the better knowledge of God's truth, impress with a sense of their duty those scholars who, "evidently about the ninth hour of the day," saw and heard him there. And hearing the call the children were ready to heed it. It was not enough for them to vote money for the Indians from the school treasury. They wanted a personal part in giving to the man who stood before them. So, when the school had closed, one and another of the children came to him bringing their cheerful free-will offerings.

One little girl brought up two gilt-edged Bibles, for herself and a companion, and slipped them into the hand of the Chief, that he might carry back with him thus much of the truth of God. Presently a little bright-eyed boy came timidly to the superintendent, and pulling his coat gently, wanted to ask him a question. As the superintendent stooped down to him, the little fellow whispered, doubtfully, "Do you think four cents would do him any good?" "Of course it would," was the prompt reply. Thus encouraged the boy drew the money from his pocket, and carrying it to the Indian chief he quickly cast in all that he had to the Lord's treasury as it stood open there.

Who doubts that the boy found joy in this act of Christian giving? It would have been cruel to forbid him the privilege of his free-will offering. Children love to give in charity. It is only as they grow older and are trained to hoard and withhold that they come to shrink from every call upon them to help the needy, to give as unto the Lord. The happiest children are children who are invited and permitted and encouraged to give. There will be no children to whom this Christmas season is so glad and joyous, as those who have a share in giving as well as in receiving.

—A man can no more make himself a Christian, than an egg can of itself hatch chickens.