

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

A SERMON FOR LITTLE PEOPLE.

"Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure and whether it be right."—Prov. xx. 11.

It is a great thing to be a child! Many men would like to go back to their childhood, and live again the days and years which have passed away. Out of boys and girls men and women are made. And men and women are the most important things upon the earth. Each one is accountable to God for what he thinks, believes, says and does. Beginning once to live our real lifetime continues for ever.

Pluck off a little bud from your mother's rose-bush. Cut it into pieces with your pen-knife. Put it under your microscope. Do you see the scores of tiny red leaves, and how tightly they are pressed together? Your papa couldn't pack them so nicely if he were to put them under his letterpress for many days. But if you had left the bud on the plant a few days longer it would have burst open into a most beautiful and fragrant rose.

A bright-eyed, sunny-faced, happy-hearted school-boy, tripping along the way with his book-bag thrown across his shoulder, will soon be a strong, able-bodied man, doing business. He may be building houses, or selling goods, or making shoes, or farming land. He is now like the rose bud, packed full of possible things; after a while he will be like the open flower.

But there is something else to be thought of besides growing up into manhood and womanhood. There is something greater than getting larger eyes and hands and feet. That something we call "character." By that we mean the kind of men and women they will be. This forming of character begins when we are young.

It is this that makes childhood such an interesting and beautiful thing. Much depends upon very little things, for very great things, grow out of very little things. So it is that "even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure and whether it be right." Every thing tells upon the after-life.

There is a barn upon the Allegheny Mountains so built that the rain which falls upon it separates in such a manner that that which falls upon one side of the roof runs into a little stream which flows into the Susquehanna, and thence into the Chesapeake Bay, and on into the Atlantic Ocean; that which falls on the other side is carried into the Allegheny River, thence into the Ohio, and onward to the Gulf of Mexico. The point where the water divides is very small. But how different the course of these waters! So it happens with people. A very little thing changes the channel of their lives. Much depends upon the kind of tempers we have. If we are sour and ill-tempered no one will love us. If we are kind and cheerful we shall have friends wherever we go. Much depends upon the way in which we improve our school-days. Much depends upon the kind of comrades we have, much upon the kind of habits we form. If we would have the right kind of a life, we must watch the little things.

We must see how one little thing affects another thing, how one little act takes in many others.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH.

The church bells for service are ringing,
The parents gone forth on their way,
And here on the door-step are sitting
Three golden-haired children at play.

The darlings, untiring and restless,
Are still for the service too small;
But yet they would fain be as pious
As parents and uncles and all.

So each from a hymn-book is singing—
'Tis held upside down, it is true;
Their sweet roguish voices are ringing
As if every number they knew.

But what they are singing they know not:
Each sings in a different tone.
Sing on, little children: your voices
Will reach to the Heavenly Throne;

For yonder your angels are standing,
Who sing to the Father of all:
He loves best the sound of his praises
From children, though ever so small.

Sing on! How the birds in the garden
Are vying with you in your song,
As hopping among the young branches,
They twitter on all the day long?

Sing on! For in faith ye are singing,
And that is enough in God's sight:
A heart like the dove's, pure and guileless,
Wings early to heaven its flight.

Sing! We elders sing also;
We read, and the words understand;
Yet oft, too, alas! we are holding
Our books upside down in the hand.

Sing ever! We sing, as is fitting,
From notes written carefully down;
But ah! from the strife of the brethren
How often has harmony flown!

Sing on! From our lofty cathedrals
What melodies glorious we hear!
What are they?—a sweet childish lisping,
A breath in the Mighty One's ear.

WITHOUT BALLAST.

One Monday the "Escambia," a British iron steamer loaded with wheat, weighed anchor, and started down the bay of San Francisco. The pilot left her when about five miles outside the Golden Gate. Looking back from his pilot-boat a short time after, he saw the vessel stop, drift into the trough of the sea, careen to port, both bulwarks going under water, and then suddenly capsize and sink!

What was the cause of this sad catastrophe? A want of ballast. She came into port from China, a few weeks before, with a thousand emigrants on board. But she had in her hold immense tanks for what is called water ballast. Those tanks were full, and she battled successfully with wind and waves. But the captain, wishing to carry all the wheat he could between decks, neglected to fill those tanks. He thought the cargo would steady the ship. But it made it top heavy, and the first rough sea capsized it.

Here, then, was a vessel tight and strong, with powerful engines, with a cargo worth \$100,000, foundering as soon as she left the harbour, taking down with her a crew of forty-five men, because the captain failed to have her properly ballasted. The moment she began to lurch, the wheat all tumbled

over to the lower side, and down into the sea she went.

How this wreck of the "Escambia" repeats the trite lesson that so many have tried to teach, and that they who need it most are so slow to learn. Young men starting out in life want to carry as little ballast as possible. They are enterprising, ambitious. They are anxious to go fast and take as much cargo as they can. Old-fashioned principles are regarded as dead weight. It does not pay to keep them, and they are thrown overboard. Good home habits are abandoned in order to be popular with the gay and wordly. The Bible is not read, the Lord's Day is not observed, prayer is neglected, and lo! some day, when all the sails are spread, a sudden temptation comes that wrecks the character and the life.

BE A HEART'S-EASE.

God is just as much pleased to see children play, if they play like Christians, as He is to see grown people work like Christians. When we become Christians we should move out of Grumble Alley into Thanksgiving Street. It is of no use to try to be happy with the leprosy of sin in our hearts, for then the whispers of conscience, remembrances of wrongdoing and thoughts about God will trouble us.

The only way to be happy is to be good. But we can be happier still by doing good. Don't think you must wait until you grow up in order to do good every way. Do all the good you can to all the people you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, and as long as ever you can. If you begin to be a Christian in boyhood and girlhood, you will have a much longer time to do good and be happy in than if you wait until you are men and women. Don't wait, then, until you are grown up, but begin to be good and do good now.

A story is told of a king who went into his garden, one morning, and found everything withering and dying. He asked an oak that stood near the gate what the trouble was. He found that it was sick of life, and determined to die, because it was not tall and beautiful like the pine. The pine was out of all heart, because it couldn't bear grapes like the vine. The vine was going to throw its life away because it could not stand erect and have as fine fruit as the pomegranate, and so on throughout the garden. Coming to a heart's-ease, he found its bright little face lifted as full of cheerfulness as ever.

Said the king: "Well, heart's-ease, I am glad to find one brave little flower in this general discouragement and dying. You don't seem one bit disheartened."

"No, your majesty, I know I am of small account; but I concluded you wanted a heart's-ease when you planted me. If you had wanted an oak, or a pine, or a vine or pomegranate, you would have set one out. So I am bound to be the best heart's-ease that ever I can."

If you can not do as much good as men and women can for God, and for the people, will you not, boys and girls, each of you, in your homes, in school, in the church, everywhere, by seeking to be good, and do good, be just the best little heart's-ease you can.