

WATCHING THE TONGUE.

Keep a watch on your words, my children,

For words are wonderful things:
They are sweet like the bees' fresh honey—

Like bees they have terrible stings;
They can bless like the warm, glad sunshine,

And brighten the lonely life;
They can cut in the strife of anger—
Yes, cut like a two-edged knife.

Let them pass through your lips unchallenged

If their errand be true and kind—
If they come to support the weary,
To comfort and help the blind;
Should a bitter, revengeful spirit
Prompt the words, let them be unsaid;

They may flash through the mind like lightning,
Or fall on the heart like lead.

Keep them back, if they're cold and cruel,

Under bar and lock and seal;
The wounds they make, my children,
Are always slow to heal.
May Christ guard your lips, and ever,
From the time of your early youth,
May the words that you daily utter
Be the words of beautiful truth!

THE OWL AND THE BOY.

I am a barn owl, and so far as chickens are concerned, I never meddle with them. In fact, if a good fat pullet should come to me and ask to be eaten, I should bow my thanks and send her away. The fact that I am a barn owl and not a hooting woods owl ought to be known to every farmer's son, but some of them are too stupid to learn natural history.

Such a one came into the barn where I was stopping the other day. I had entered the place the night before and caught four fat mice and a big rat. After devouring them, I flew up to a roost on a big beam and went to sleep. When night came again, I was to go for more rats and mice, and if left alone for a week or so, I would clean the barn of vermin and make the farmer rejoice.

I was sound asleep and having a pleasant dream when the barn doors banged open and a boy about fifteen years old banged in. He went kicking things about and whistling as he kicked, and by-and-bye he happened to look up and saw me.

"Gee-whiz, but there's an owl!" he shouted at the top of his voice.

"Well, what of it?" I asked, as I looked down at him.

"But I've got to have your life!"

"Why?"

"Because you are a bird—because you are an owl."

"But I am a barn owl and live on rats and mice."

"That makes no difference," he said, and went on hunting for missiles to throw at me.

He did throw at me a couple of times, and then, as he was stooping over the third time, I flew for him and alighted on his head. I gave him a couple of sharp digs with my claws, and then fastened them into his cap and flew out of the door and away to another barn. I heard him shouting and calling, but I did not look back. I have his cap yet, and if I could write as well as some of the boys and girls that read this page, I should put the following advertisement in the papers:

"If the stupid boy that didn't know the difference between a barn owl and a chicken stealer will read up on natural history and beg my pardon besides, his cap will be left at his father's kitchen door the first dark night after this."

LEARNING TO SEE.

"I saw a blind man to-day going about begging. I'm glad I'm not blind. Aren't you, Uncle Jesse?"

"How do you know you are not blind?" asked his uncle.

"Cause I can see," replied Willie, laughing.

"Are you sure?"

"Deed I am," was the confident answer.

"I am certainly glad to hear it, for most people are a little blind."

"Most people? Why, I have seen only a few."

"There are different kind of blindness. Ones boy can't see the use of going to school and learning; another boy can't see why he must obey his father and mother; another cannot see that it is very wrong to lie and steal. So there are many who are blind to other things."

"I didn't mean that kind of blindness."

"That is the very worst sort. There are many people whose sight have been taken away who have learned to see themselves as sinners, and have come to Jesus and asked forgiveness. There are thousands of others whose eyes are good who do not see that they need a Saviour; and that is the worst kind of blindness."

"How are we to learn to see our sins?" asked Willie soberly.

"That is one of the very things that Jesus came to teach us. If we ask him to open our eyes, so that we can see our sins and weaknesses; and try real hard to obey Him, we shall learn to see more and more clearly."

"I'm going to ask the Lord to open my eyes, so that I can see everything that is good and everything that is bad."

"If you once learn to see all that, then your eyes will be indeed opened."

SLEEP, OH, SLEEP.

(By Ruth Hall Johnston.)

The baby birds nest in the tall elm tree,

The baby rabbits low in the wheat,

The baby fish in the wide blue sea,

But thou in thy mother's arms, my sweet,

So sleep—oh, sleep!

Oh, the soft wind sways the tall elm tree,

The soft wind ruffles the waving wheat,

The soft wind billows the wide blue sea,

But thy mother's arms rock thee, my sweet,

So sleep—oh, sleep!

God's love shields the nest in the tall elm tree,

God's love shields the home in the wheat,

And the little fish in the wide blue sea,

And thou in thy mother's arms, my sweet,

So sleep—oh, sleep!

WHAT WE CAN.

Who was that French boy that made his servant wake him every morning with the cry, "Rise, Monsieur le Comte, you have great things to do to-day!" The world has forgotten his name, and it is probable that he never did any great thing in it, but we may be sure that the call drove him every day to do many little good things for which the world was better and happier then, and which, no doubt, are working in it like heaven for good to this day.

Why should not each one of us waken every morning remembering that though the new day may give us no chance for splendid achievement—no line to carry to a sinking ship—no word to speak which shall uplift a nation—there will be plenty of chances in it before night to give to our neighbors fun, courage, or strength? We cannot, perhaps, write a poem like Keat's "Nightingale"; we cannot discover radium; but we can fill our windows with flowers to bid a cheerful good-morning to passers-by.

The old Puritan doctrine that piety meant self-torture and gloom is dying out among us. People of all sects are finding out that our Father has given us a beautiful home, and that he wishes us to rejoice in it and in him, and to help our neighbors to rejoice with us. Even Isaac Watts, far back in his

gloomy day, insisted that "Religion never was designed to make our pleasures less."

"But," argues some girl who has neither beauty, health, nor social position to give her influence, "what can I do to make the world better and happier?"

A woman living a few years ago in a miserable little village planted in front of her house a flower garden. When her neighbors crowded round to admire it she persuaded them to go and do likewise. She gave them seeds, she helped them to dig and weed, she kept up the work until they achieved success and were able to send flowers to the county fair. The poor-spirited women in other villages became wise in seeds and bulbs instead of scandalous gossip. The men, for shame, cleaned and drained the streets. The little woman is dead and forgotten, but her work will be a help to many generations.

An Elton boy, Quintin Hoge, appalled by the misery of mighty, dreadful London, got a barrel and a board, a couple of candles and some old books, and started a school at night, under London bridge. He had two wharf-rats as his first scholars. When he died, hundreds of thousands of poor men put a black band on their arms. They had been trained in the many polytechnic schools which had grown out of the barrel and boards—not only in Great Britain but in her colonies as well.

In short, we may be sure, when we waken each morning, that God has filled our hands with good seeds, which if we plant them will go on yielding fruit throughout the ages.

Whoever you are—wise or foolish, rich or poor—God sent you into his world, as he has sent every other human being, to help the men and women in it, to make them better and happier. If you don't do that, no matter what your powers may be, you are mere lumber, a worthless bit of the world's furniture. A Stradivarius, if it hangs dusty and dumb upon the wall, is not of as much real value as a kitchen poker which is used. Before you in your journey wait hundreds of human beings with whom you must have relations, whom you must either urge on or hinder on their way. It is your business to use your money, or beauty, or wit, or skill or whatever good thing God has given you, for their help. Why not begin every morning with the French boy's thought: "I have great things to do to-day."—Rebecca Harding Davis in St. Nicholas.

George Cruikshank's pencil gave a second life to the shadow scene in "Oliver Twist," where Noah Claypole, hidden behind a dark angle of the river-wall, listens to poor Nancy's confession to Rose Maylie and Mr. Brownlow. The presence of the spy meant death to Nancy, and vague fears assail her.

"I'll swear I saw 'coffin' written in every page of the book in large black letters—aye, and they carried one close to me, in the streets to-night."

"There is nothing unusual in that," said the gentleman. "They have passed me often."

"Real ones," rejoined the girl. "This was not."

Our fears are sometimes, as George Eliot says, "the big, ugly shadows of something very little and harmless," but it requires real courage and a firm consciousness of innocence to turn upon the shadowers, as Gurnah, "Ivanhoe," turned upon the outlawed "clerk of St. Nicholas," felling the stoutest with his good staff and wishing them all "a safer and an honest trade."—LORNA.

TO HELP OUT.

When there is a small allowance of fruit on hand and sponge cake and whipped cream are to be had cut the cake into slices, turn the fruit over it and surmount the whole with whipped cream. Strawberries and pineapple slices or mixed are delectable in this way.