

## The Little Shoes.

ONE night on the verge of ruin,  
As I hurried from the tap,  
I beheld the landlord's baby  
Sitting on its mother's lap.  
"Look here, dear father," said the mother,  
Holding forth the little feet,  
"Look, we've got new shoes for darling!  
Don't you think them nice and neat?"

You may judge the thing was simple,  
Disbelieve me if you choose;  
But, my friends, no fist e'er struck me  
Such a blow as these small shoes.  
And they forced my brain to reason;  
"What right," said I, standing there,  
"Have I to clothe another's children,  
And to let my own go bare?"

It was in the depth of winter;  
Bitter was the night and wild:  
And outside the flaring gin-shop  
Stood my starving wife and child.  
Out I went and clutched my baby,  
Saw its feet so cold and blue:  
Fathers! if the small shoe smote me,  
What did those poor bare feet do?

Quick I thrust them in my bosom!  
Oh, they were so icy chill!  
And their coldness, like a dagger,  
Pierced me. I can feel it still.

Of money I had but a trifle,  
Just enough to serve my steed;  
It bought shoes for little baby;  
And a single loaf of bread.  
The loaf served us all the Sunday,  
And I went to work next day;  
Since that time I've been teetotal.  
That is all I've got to say.

—Selected.

## The Teens.

A TALK WITH BOYS AND GIRLS.

WHAT do you think is the most important time of life? Boys will probably answer, "When we go to business, or to college." Girls will say, "When we go into society or get married." But I think it is when you are going into your teens.

I know that it does not seem so to most people, for boys and girls are more unnoticed at that age than at any other. The baby or the big brother or sister get all the attention, while Master Knee-breeches and Miss Ankle-skirt are crowded into the corner. You are not so interesting just now as you have been, or will be. Your time of blossoms has gone; but your fruit-time has not come.

But the life of Jesus, as told in the Gospels, makes much of this time of life. The only thing that is said about him after his babyhood until he was thirty years of age was: "When he was twelve years old." What he did then is told us because it was a sort of prediction of what he would be and do when he became a man.

The Jews regarded this age as the turning point in life. Until the boy had passed twelve, he was called a child; after that, a man. He must then learn his trade, put on the phylacteries, begin to study the Talmud or holy books, be called to account for breaking any of the laws of worship, take the name of Ben Hattorah, or son of the law, and go up to the great feast at Jerusalem—which was about equivalent to joining the Church. The Jews also said that this was the

age when Moses first refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, when Samuel heard God's call, and when Josiah had his first dream of becoming a great and good king.

Now those old Jews were wise in making so much of the time of going into the teens. A portrait painter once told me that a picture of a child younger than twelve would not be apt to look like him as he became a man; but that one taken after that age would show the settled outline of features which even the wrinkles of old age would not crowd out. Your physician will tell you that about that time the body too gets into its shape. If you are to be spindle-shanked or dumpy, the stretch or the squat will have begun to grow into you. A great writer, who has much to do with educating boys, says: "The latter life of a man is much more like what he was at school than what he was at college."

A Swedish boy, a tough little knot, fell out of a window, and was severely hurt; but, with clinched lips, he kept back the cry of pain. The king, Gustavus Adolphus, who saw him fall, prophesied that that boy would make a man for an emergency. And so he did; for he became the famous General Bauer.

A woman fell off a dock in Italy. She was fat and frightened. No one of a crowd of men dared jump in after her; but a boy struck the water almost as soon as she did, and managed to keep her up until stronger hands got hold of her. Everybody said the boy was very daring, very kind, very quick, but also very reckless, for he might have been drowned. That boy was Garibaldi; and, if you will read his life, you will find that these were just his traits all through—that he was so alert that nobody could tell when he would make an attack with his red-shirted soldiers; so indiscreet sometimes as to make his fellow-patriots wish he was in Guinea, but also so brave and magnanimous that all the world, except tyrants, loved to hear and talk about him.

A boy used to crush the flowers to get their colour, and painted the white side of his father's cottage in the Tyrol with all sorts of pictures, which the mountaineers gaped at as wonderful. He was the great artist Titian.

An old painter watched a little fellow who amused himself making drawings of his pot and brushes, easel and stool, and said: "That boy will beat me one day." So he did; for he was Michael Angelo.

A German boy was reading a blood-and-thunder novel. Right in the midst of it he said to himself: "Now, this will never do. I get too much excited over it. I can't study so well after it. So here goes!" and he flung the book out into the river. He was Fichte, the great German philosopher.

There was a New England boy, who built himself a booth down in the rear of his father's farm, in a swamp, where neither the boys nor the cows would

disturb him. There he read heavy books, like Locke "On the Human Understanding," wrote compositions, watched the balancing of the clouds, revelled in the crash and flash of the storm, and tried to feel the nearness of God who made all things. He was Jonathan Edwards.

After the melted iron is poured into the mould, it is left for a while that it may take shape. But the first few moments are the most important; for then the surface of the great iron globule, which comes into contact with the damp sand of the mould, is cooled, and the shape is set. The time after that serves to harden the metal, not to change its form. Life in this world is the mould in which our souls are shaped for eternity; and the first years after we have begun to think for ourselves, to feel the pressure of right and wrong, to determine duty and indulgence—these first years have more to do with the making of us than all the rest.

Have you been in the Adirondack woods hunting and fishing? If so, you remember that your guide, when he came to the rapids in the stream, did not dash carelessly down it. He stopped the cranky little craft, balanced the boat, got a sure grip on his paddle, then let her drift slowly to the centre of the narrow sluice until the skiff's nose was in the smooth water which shows that there it is deepest. Then, with eye and nerve and muscle all working together, he kept her head on, just so, and you shot down the rock-strewn stream as swiftly and safely as a water-snake. Ask your guide why he was so careful at the beginning, and he will tell you that if he starts the boat right he can keep her right; but the twisting waters would be too much for him if he did not have her safely in hand at the word "Go!"

Boys and girls entering your teens, you are at the head of life's rapids. Your craft is already catching the drift of strong desires, ambitions, passions. You feel them. They almost affright you sometimes. Have no anxiety except to aim at the very centre of what is right, at the purposes which are deepest and purest. Knit the nerves of your strongest resolution. Vow to yourself and to God, who will help you. Then away down life's stream! It will be exhilarating, grand; all true life is. But take care! For your soul's sake, don't drift in among the rocks and whirlpools without the grip.—James M. Ludlow, D.D., in *S. S. Times*.

THE point to be decided—to be decided by the legislatures of these United States; to be decided for all coming posterity, for the world and for eternity—is, shall the sale of ardent spirits, as a drink, be treated in legislation as a virtue or a vice? Shall it be licensed, sanctioned by law, and perpetuated to roll its all-prevailing curses onward interminably, or shall it be treated, as it is in truth, a sin?

## "Follow Copy."

A SHORT time since a lad in a printing office received from his master a list of Scripture questions and answers to be set up and printed. In the progress of the work the lad turned aside and asked the foreman if he should "follow copy"—that is, set it up just as it was written. "Certainly," said the foreman; "why not?" "Because this copy is not like the Bible, and it professes to be the language of that book." "How do you know it is not like the Bible?" "Because I learned some of these verses at a Sunday-school six years ago, and I know that two of them are not like the Bible." "Well, then, do not 'follow copy,' but set them up as they are in the Bible." The lad got the Bible and made it "the copy"—his guide and pattern.

"Follow copy," children, wherever you find it according to the Bible, but do not stir a step when you find it differs. Through all your life make the Bible your one copy. Look to your words, your actions, your practices; see that all are according to the Bible, and you will be right. Take nothing for your rule in daily life but what is like that great unerring and divinely-written copy.—*Children's Messenger*.

## Spare Moments.

A BOY, poorly dressed, came to the door of the principal of a celebrated school, one morning, and asked to see him. The servant eyed his mean clothes, and, thinking he looked more like a beggar than anything else, told him to go round to the kitchen.

"I should like to see Mr.—," said he.

"You want a breakfast, more like."

"Can I see Mr.—?" asked the boy.

"Well, he is in the library; if he must be disturbed, he must."

So she bade him follow. After talking awhile, the principal put aside the volume that he was studying, and took up some Greek books, and began to examine the new comer. Every question he asked the boy was answered readily.

"Upon my word," exclaimed the principal, "You do well. Why, my boy, where did you pick up so much?"

"In my spare moments," answered the boy.

He was a hard-working lad, yet almost fitted for college by simply improving his spare moments. What account can you give of your spare moments?

A LIQUOR-SELLER had a tavern undergoing repairs. One day a boy came running to his mother, crying out: "Mother, mother!" "What is it, my boy?" "Mr. Pool's tavern is finished, mother." "How do you know, my dear?" inquired the mother. "Why, I saw a man come out drunk!" Now that is the legitimate fruit of the dram shop.—*John B. Gough*.