

Our Young Folks.

PLENTY OF TIME.

Plenty of time—plenty of time!
O what a foolish and treacherous chime!
With so much to see, and so much to be taught,
And the battle with evil each day to be fought;
With wonders above us, beneath, and around,
Which sages are seeking to mark and expound;
With work to be done in our fast passing prime,
Can ever there be for us "plenty of time"?

Our schooling at most lasts a few score of years,
Spent in sunshine and shadow, in smiles or in tears;
While none are quite equal, however they be classed,
And judgments too often are faultily passed.
'Tis but eternity past and its future to stand
Like a child sea-surrounded on one speck of land,
There to work out the duties that make life sublime,
Oh, surely there can not be "plenty of time"!

THE MISTAKES OF A SMALL BOY.

A boy would not be worth much if he never made mistakes, and was never told of them. There is hope for a boy in proportion to the number of mistakes he makes and afterwards corrects.

One of the most common mistakes of a boy is in what he wants. He is apt to want most the things he hasn't, and one of the things a small boy hasn't, and hankers after most of all, is size. O, how he does pine for size! He waits and counts days, and scratches the wall with pencil marks, and stretches himself up trying to catch up with his big brother. And all the time he may be more of a man than his big brother, if only he would put the right kind of measure in place of the foot rule.

You have heard of the Irishman who went to market to buy the most for his money, and finding that turnips were so much cheaper than potatoes, bought four bushels of turnips instead of two of potatoes. But he was very much surprised to learn that the turnips were seventy-five per cent. water, and that he might have bought a package he could have carried in his vest pocket that would have contained the same amount of nutriment as his four bushels of turnips.

This was a case where size was deceiving, and that is the way the small boy is often taken in. It's not the size of man's fist, or the breadth of his shoulders, or the height of his stove-pipe hat that counts. I have seen a seven-foot bully do a thing so mean and unmanly that a seven-year-old boy ought to blush for it. And I have seen a boy pass along after him and pick the whining dog up that he had lamed by a kick, and treat it with such pity and tenderness that, if we still lived in the days of chivalry (and we do in more ways than one), that boy would have been knighted and spurred and received the applause and smile of fair ladies and noble men and his king, and the hulking giant would have been given to some magician to be changed into a flea or a potato-bug, or some petty, noxious insect. If a boy would only hanker after the things that ought to go with size, and let size take care of itself, he would make no mistakes.

Another thing the small boy is apt to overrate is physical strength. He is always bragging about what he can do, and the strongest boy in a crowd is sure to have things pretty much his own way. The whole world used to be boys once in that respect. The man who could strike the hardest blow, ride the fastest, jump the farthest and use his arms and legs the best was the best man; now it is the man who can use his head the best. It is the man who has the best heart. The Indian said when he first heard a pistol fired and saw the deadly effect: "He heap little, heap loud, heap go quick and hit hard." A boy who is little need not be loud, but if he can "go quick" and hit the mark clean through in doing his duty, he is manlier than some who wear men's clothing. It is not the exhibition of strength, but intelligent and judicious use of strength, that makes great. The horse has more strength than the man, but the man, with his less strength and his superior mind, makes the horse go as he pleases, and subdues the wildest and most ferocious beast.

Don't ache for size; don't ache for strength. Don't lie awake nights thinking how to get either. Let those things take care of themselves, and be just the kindest, most truthful, patient, industrious, happiest boy you can, and get all the love you can from others, and give all the love you can to them, and men will one day say of you. "What a power he is," and maybe you couldn't lift a five-pound dumbbell. But all I say will be true nevertheless.

PRESERVED SUNSHINE.

"Well," said Nellie Ray, as she threw herself upon the lounge beside Aunt Ellen, "I am very tired, but I have had the loveliest afternoon."

"What have you been doing?" asked her aunt, as she stroked the rippling masses of golden hair lovingly.

"I have been carrying around a little 'preserved sunshine.'"

"What can you mean?" was the wondering reply.

"I saw a very pretty incident in a child's paper the other day. A little girl had been watching her mother preserve fruit, and when she went out to play in the field she came running in with her hands full of buttercups. 'See, mamma,'

she cried, 'I have some preserves, too, preserved sunshine. I think God preserved it so.'

"Well, the child's words set me to thinking, and I said to myself what a lovely thing it would be if every one went to work to preserve sunshine and carry it around. How much brightness might be shed into dark places, and I determined to do what I could this afternoon.

"The first place I went to was old Miss Vane's, for I knew few darker places than her beautiful home, and few sadder ones than her luxurious chamber, where she sits shaded by screens from every breath of God's pure air, suffering from all the maladies that come from the want of it. She began to tell me all she had to bear, but I told her that I had come to talk, not to listen, and in a little while I had her laughing heartily; and before I left she promised me to take a drive to-morrow, if the day is fair. I really felt sure that I left a little sunshine there."

"I am sure of it, too, my darling. You have done more than her doctors have been able to do, if you have now that promise. Well, where did you go next?"

"To Mrs. Barr's. You know her children have been sick, and she has been kept from the outside world so long. I thought she would be interested in hearing all about the fair she worked so hard for, and she was. When I rose to go she said: 'My child, your visit has been a charity; I did so need a little change of thought.' Her face was really quite bright and interested.

"On my way home I met Kate Wellman. She looked sad and discouraged. I asked what was wrong, and she told me that she was making up her mind to give up her Sabbath school class of boys. 'I do not seem able to control them,' she said, 'and I think that some one else may do them more good.'

"Why, Kate," I replied, 'only the other day the superintendent told me how much he depended upon you. 'The Sabbath school-room is like a different place,' he said, 'since Miss Wellman took that class of bad boys.'

"I wish you could have seen the look that sprang into her eyes, Aunt Ellen, and the lovely smile that parted her lips. I felt glad that I was able to send the sunshine in."

"You may well be," said her aunt. "The knowledge that her work of love has been appreciated will add a new interest to it."

"As I stood on our doorstep, there suddenly came up before me the face of a young girl who is in the same Bible class with me. She is a very respectable girl; but the family is poor, and the father is intemperate, and gives them a great deal of trouble; as she does not live far away, I concluded to go and see her. I am so glad that I did, for she seemed to so appreciate the visit. The tears came into her eyes as I bade her good-bye. 'O,' she said, 'you who have so many helpful, loving friends around you, cannot even understand the loneliness and desolation of my life.'

"Then, almost before I knew it, words sprang to my lips from God's treasury of sunshine, and I whispered softly, 'When you feel in this way, think of the blessed promise, "I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee."'

"A bright look shone through the tears that stood on her lashes, and she said, tremulously, 'It is a blessed promise; I thank you for reminding me of it. If He will hold my hand, even the darkness will become light.' O, Aunt Ellen, I am so glad that I went to see her."

"And I am glad, too," said her aunt, fondly. "You certainly have left a line of sunshine behind you this afternoon, and if some of the rest of us, in the midst of the many activities of our lives, would make it one of our duties to preserve sunshine, it would be a most valuable addition to our list of household necessities, and a most welcome one as a gift to our friends. For too many this world is but a sorrowful place, and dark days crowd out the brightness in even the happiest lives."

ADVICE TO PROTHERS AND SISTERS.

A considerate brother will never let his sister feel that cruelest of innocent ignominies, the sense of dependence, writes Octave Thanet.

A considerate sister will make herself so useful that her sister-in-law, to say nothing of her brother, will find her presence a blessing.

Under our present dispensation of domestic service a woman in the household who can, on an emergency, guide either the kitchen or the nursery, is a true blessing to many an overburdened housekeeper and mother.

To the sister in a sister or a brother's home next to consideration comes discretion.

Since words is thrall and thought is free,
Keep well the tongue, I counsel thee.

Discretion, it may be urged, departs from the subject of manners and encroaches on that of morals, to which this humble exhorter pretends no gift of light, but is it ever polite to be foolish or to tell tales out of school?

I repeat with confidence, therefore, brothers and sisters should be discreet, and very often keep their wisest opinions to themselves.

But in nothing would I seem to imply that we must need put ourselves in a strait-jacket or even a dress coat of etiquette for all our most intimate relations. What hardship can be more irksome than to have no hours of relaxation? Where shall we wear our slippers if not at our own firesides? But though we may wear our slippers, polite people do not go barefoot, even at their own firesides.

Neither do our manners need to go barefoot, even to our brothers and sisters.

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

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THE APOSTLES PERSECUTED.

GOLDEN TEXT.—We ought to obey God rather than man.—Acts v. 29.

INTRODUCTORY.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ was attracting the attention of the people of Jerusalem and the surrounding country. The Church was steadily increasing in numbers and in usefulness. The hostility of the Jewish rulers was known, but it produced but little effect in lessening the interest of the people in the great truths the apostles were courageously proclaiming. The heroism of the Christians in holding fast their profession of faith in spite of the declared opposition of the religious leaders of the people, the consistency with which the converts maintained their principles, the witness of the Holy Spirit, the dread visitation that overtook the deceit and hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira, deeply impressed the minds of the common people. All this was displeasing to the official mind, and the religious authorities felt compelled to again interfere and prevent if possible the public preaching of the Gospel. They ordered the arrest of the apostles. Their order was complied with, but during the night an angel appeared, opened the prison doors and commanded the apostles to continue their public preaching of the Gospel to the people. The rulers were distressed and became more enraged against the apostles when next morning they learned that they were at their post, preaching Christ and Him crucified. Their arrest was again ordered, and a second time it was their experience to appear before the Sanhedrim.

I. Second Appearance of the Apostles before the Sanhedrim.—The previous evening the rulers had ordered the apprehension of the apostles, and had resolved on their trial in the morning. When they were met, instead of the accused appearing before them, a messenger came to inform them that the prison was found empty and the apostles engaged as usual in teaching the people in the Temple courts. The captain of the Temple was at once despatched to bring the Christian teachers before the rulers. He was careful that no violence should be exercised towards them, as the popular sentiment was such that the officers might be roughly handled. "for they feared the people lest they should have been stoned." The apostles were then brought before the council, and the high priest, who presided, no doubt in stern and severe tones, said: "Did not we straightly charge you that ye should not teach in this name? and behold ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." From these words of the high priest it is clear what was the great subject of the apostolic preaching. They taught "in this name," that is, the name of Jesus. So plain had been their preaching that friend and foe alike understood its meaning. The rulers, chiefly of the Sadducean sect, distinctly understood that if the apostles' doctrine was true their own theories were false. Jesus Christ crucified, raised from the dead, and exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high, disproved their contention that there was no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit. They realized that if the apostles' doctrine was true, they had in condemning Jesus incurred the deepest guilt, for they charge the apostles with intending "to bring this man's blood upon us."

II. The Apostles' Defence.—These Christian confessors when arraigned before the tribunals of men, were not anxious about themselves. They were not concerned for personal consequences. Their object in every instance was to vindicate the truth it was their mission to proclaim and defend. Peter as spokesman for the rest did not dispute the fact that they had been warned to preach no more in the name of Jesus, and that they had declined to comply. He stated that they were subject to a higher authority, "We ought to obey God rather than man." Then with courageous directness he proceeds to charge these rulers with the guilt of Christ's crucifixion. They had killed Jesus, but instead of frustrating His work they unconsciously had promoted it. God had raised Him up to the highest rank and had appointed Him a Prince and a Saviour for the remission of sins. The apostles avow their thorough identity with the cause for which they were arraigned. They were witnesses of these things. They had higher and more infallible testimony. They had also the witness of "the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey Him." Peter's defence, instead of convincing the members of the council, stung them to the quick. "They were cut to the heart and to counsel to slay them," thus they were ready to add to their guilt in the condemnation of Jesus by killing His faithful witnesses.

III. Gamaliel's Address.—Gamaliel was one of the most distinguished Jewish teachers of his time. He was held in great reverence by the people. The fame of his learning and sanctity was spread abroad by his numerous pupils. He was not animated by the same fierce resentment against the apostles that marked the Sadducees. He was a Pharisee and therefore not a disbeliever in the doctrine of the resurrection. He did not belong to the most bigoted school of Pharisees, but was more gentle and tolerant than many of them. That there might be more freedom of discussion, and lest the accused apostles might take too much encouragement from his words, he commanded that the apostles should retire before he expressed his opinion of them and the movement with which they were identified. His address is an example of that worldly wisdom that affects to regard religious truth from the outside. He did not admit that what the apostles taught was God's truth, but there was a possibility that it might be. He did not embrace it, but he did not like to incur the responsibility of opposing it. On the supposition that the cause of Christ was like one of the many insurrectionary movements that had been undertaken to deliver the Jewish people from the Roman yoke, he instanced the cases of Theudas and Judas of Galilee, who with their followers had perished miserably. He earnestly commends to the council a do-nothing policy. He concludes by telling them "If this counsel or this work be of men it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." His personal influence and his speech must have had great weight, for even the fiercest of the Sadducees could not gainsay his counsel. They agreed with him. The apostles were again brought in and were beaten with scourges, and again commanded not to speak in the name of Jesus, and were then allowed to depart. These faithful witnesses for Christ were neither disheartened nor discouraged by the treatment they had received. They rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name."

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

The truth of God cannot be repressed by men, however powerful and influential they may be. It is unconquerable and in the end will be triumphant.

The religious authorities among the Jews were the fiercest enemies of the true religion.

The apostles were resolved to obey God at all hazards, and they feared not what men could do. The rulers were afraid of the people. The apostles were men of heroic courage; the rulers were influenced by moral cowardice.

Under all circumstances the apostles were faithful in their testimony to Christ. They feared not the face of man.

There is a great difference between the counsels of worldly wisdom and obedience to the truth of God.