

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

BOYS' RIGHTS.

I wonder now if anyone
In this broad land has heard,
In favour of down-trodden boys,
One solitary word?
We hear enough of "woman's rights,"
And "rights of working-men,"
Of "equal rights" and "nation's rights,"
But pray just tell us when
Boys' rights were ever spoken of?
Why, we've become so used
To being snubbed by every one,
And slighted and abused;
That when one is polite to us,
We open wide our eyes,
And stretch them in astonishment
'To nearly twice their size!

Boys seldom dare to ask their friends
To venture in the house;
It don't come natural at all
To creep round like a mouse.
And if we should forget ourselves,
And make a little noise,
Then ma or auntie sure would say,
"Oh, my! those dreadful boys!"
The girls bang on the piano
In peace, but if the boys
Attempt a tune with fife or drum,
It's "Stop that horrid noise!"
"That horrid noise!" just think of it!
When sister never fails,
To make a noise three times as bad
With everlasting "scales."

Insulted thus, we lose no time
In beating a retreat;
So off we go to romp and tear,
And scamper in the street.
No wonder that so many boys
Such wicked men become,
'Twere better far to let them have
Their games and plays at home.
Perhaps that text the teacher quotes
Sometimes—"Train up a child"—
Means only train the little girls,
And let the boys run wild.
But patience, and the time shall come
When we will all be men;
And when it does, I rather think,
Wrongs will be righted then.

THE RAVEN.

BY REV. JAMES HASTIE, LINDSAY.

"Consider the ravens."—Luke xii. 24.

Have you ever noticed how much the Bible has to say about ravens? So often does it speak of them that were I to read to you all the passages and explain, I would need to speak twice as long as I allow myself. I will, then, only refer to a few of the most remarkable passages, leaving you to find the others and read them in private.

The first time the Bible speaks of ravens is at the time of the flood. So important to the world did God deem these birds to be that He told Noah to take some into the ark, to keep alive till the deluge was ended, and he did.

Noah found them very useful. He wanted to learn how much dry land had appeared; and so when the ark had rested on the top of Mount Ararat forty days he opened a window and set a raven free, and it never came back, for it found plenty of carrion or dead animals to live on, and so by the raven not returning Noah knew that the waters had largely dried off. It was to Noah as good as a telegraphic despatch from all parts of the earth announcing dry land again.

The second service rendered by ravens I want to tell you of is so wonderful that, scarce able to believe it, you will exclaim, "Is it really true?" and the service is so kind that many of you on hearing it will say, "I wish I had a raven for a pet."

Long, long ago there lived a prophet among a very wicked people.

His business was to preach God's law and condemn evil-doers.

For this he was hated everywhere, and had to flee for his life into the wilderness. No food could he get, for no one lived there, nor could he gather it from the ground or trees. Die he must of starvation, it would seem.

But wonderful how God can rescue His own out of difficulties!

In some way or other not known to us, He put it into the heads of ravens to carry to Elijah (for that was the prophet's name) bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening for a long time—some think a whole year.

That is what we call a miracle; but a miracle more than usually wonderful when we think how fond ravens are of flesh, and yet, instead of eating it themselves, they brought it to Elijah. (See 1 Kings xvii.)

Now I will tell you something very dreadful in the olden time, and the ravens had something to do with it.

In Palestine and elsewhere in the East, it was customary to let very bad people lie unburied when they died.

Those who had broken away from home and would not obey their parents; those who had become outlaws and had plunged into all sorts of crime; those people when they died were not given decent burial, as is done with us, but they were thrown into some lonely spot to be devoured by wild animals and birds. Ravens have a strange fancy for the eyes of dead bodies, and these they first go at. And so referring to this Solomon has among his proverbs this awful passage: "The eye that mocketh at his father and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out."—Proverbs xxx. 17.

"Take care, take care," as if the raven said, "If you live and die in wickedness I will punish and disgrace you."

My last reference to ravens in Scripture is a very pleasing one, namely, that God speaks of them to illustrate the tender care He takes of all His creatures.

Most birds and animals are remarkable for their kindness to their young, nor will they leave them till they are amply able to do for themselves.

But the raven seems to be an exception to this general rule. Early, very early, the old ones drive their young from the nest to shift for themselves, and if they don't get out promptly the old ones will oust them over, to fly or die just as they may.

Now, when thus cast off, those little fledglings need some kind care and protection, and where do they find it?

They find it in God, the friend, maker and preserver of all.

Read Job xxxviii. 41: "Who provideth for the raven his food? When his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat."

Read Psalm cxlvii. 9: "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry."

Then our text. "Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn, and God feedeth them. how much more are ye better than the fowls?"

Bright words these, and cheery for your every hour of trial and want. Trust God and He will not fail you. Cast your care upon Him, for He careth for you.

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him"

BAMBOOS.

There is no tree known on earth which subserves so many purposes as the bamboo. The Indian obtains from it a part of his food, many of his household utensils, and a wood at once lighter and capable of bearing greater strains than heavier timber of the same size. Besides, in expeditions in the tropics, under the rays of a vertical sun, bamboo trunks have more than once been used as barrels, in which a water, much purer than could be preserved in vessels of any other kind, is kept fresh for the crew. Upon the west coast of South America, and in the large islands of Asia, bamboos furnish all the materials for the construction of houses at once pleasant, substantial, and preferable to those of stone, which the frequently recurring earthquakes bring down upon the heads of the lodgers.

The softest of the bamboos is the *Sammot*. In the tracts where it grows in the greatest perfection it sometimes rises to the height of one hundred feet, with a stem only eighteen inches in diameter at the base. The wood itself is not more than an inch in thickness. The fact that the bamboo is hollow has made it eminently useful for a variety of purposes, it serves as a measure for liquids, and if fitted with a lid and bottom, trunks and barrels are made of it. Small boats even are made of the largest trunks by strengthening them with strips of other wood where needed.

In one day they attain the height of several feet, and with the microscope their development can be easily watched. But the most remarkable feature about the bamboo is their blossoming. With all this marvellous rapidity of growth they bloom only twice in a century, the flower appearing at the end of fifty years. Like other grasses, they die after having borne seed.

HERE is a story of a little girl, three years old, who was charged with breaking a flower from its stem. She said: "No, I didn't break it." Still, the older person argued that she must have done it, for no one else had been in the room; but she said: "'Deed, 'deed I didn't." Thinking to make her confess, the older said: "Now, Ada, I see a story in your eye." Her reply was, "Well, that's one I told the other day, for I didn't break the flower." And it was found that she didn't.

We call the Chinese heathen, and yet they have some customs that would do credit to a Christian people. On every New Year's morning, each man and boy, from the Emperor to the lowest peasant, pays a visit to his mother. He carries her a present, varying in value according to his station, thanks her for all she has done for him, and asks a continuance of her favour for another year. They are taught to believe that mothers have an influence for good over their sons all through life.