

Our Young Folks.

FEET.

A plump little foot, as white as the snow,
Belonging to rollocking, frolicsome Joe,
In a little red sock, with a hole in the toe,
And a hole in the heel as well.

A trim little foot, in a trim little shoe,
Belonging to sixteen-year-old Miss Sue,
And looking as if it knew just what to do,
And do it in a way that would tell.

A very large foot in homely array,
Belonging to Peter, who follows the dray,
So big that it sometimes is in its own way,
And moves with the speed of a snail.

Ah! a very big thing is the human foot.
In dainty made shoe, or in clumsy boot,
So 'tis well there are various tastes to suit,
And that fashion can't always prevail.

The plump little foot, a beautiful sight,
And the trim little foot, so taper and light,
And the very large foot, though much of a fright,
Are travelling all the same road.

And it matters but little how small or how great,
So they never grow weary of paths that are straight,
And at last walk in at the golden gate
Of the city whose Builder is God.

AMUSEMENT.

Amusement is not an end, but a means—a means of refreshing the mind and replenishing the strength of the body. When it begins to be the principal thing for which one lives, or when, in pursuing it, the mental powers are enfeebled, and the bodily health impaired, it falls under just condemnation.

Amusements that consume the hours which ought to be sacred to sleep are, therefore, censurable.

Amusements that call us away from work which we are bound to do are pernicious, just to the extent to which they cause us to be neglectful or unfaithful.

Amusements that rouse or stimulate morbid appetites, or that cause us to be restless or discontented, are always to be avoided.

Any indulgence in amusement which has a tendency to weaken our respect for the great interests of character, or to loosen our hold on the eternal verities of the spiritual realm is so far an injury to us.

THE MIRACLE.

One day in Spring the boy Solomon was sitting in his father's garden, and looking at the ground in deep thought. Then Nathan, his teacher, came up to him and said: "Of what are you thinking so earnestly under the palm-trees?"

The boy raised his head and answered: "Nathan, I wish I might see a miracle."

The prophet smiled and said: "That is a wish which I also had in my younger days."

"And was it granted you?" asked the prince eagerly.

"A man of God," Nathan began, "came to me carrying a pomegranate seed in his hand. 'See,' said he, 'what will come from this seed.' Thereupon he made a hollow in the ground with his finger, laid the seed in it, and covered it. When he lifted his hand again, the earth opened, and I saw two little leaves come out. But scarcely had I seen them, when they shut up together, and became a round stalk, enclosed in bark, and the stalk became visibly higher and thicker. Then said the man of God to me: 'Give attention!' and while I looked seven branches spread out from the stock, like the seven arms on the candlestick of the altar. I was amazed, but the man of God nodded, and bade me be still and observe. 'See,' said he, 'soon new creations will begin!'

"Then he took some water in the hollow of his hand from the little brook which was flowing by, and sprinkled the branches three times, when behold! they hung full of green leaves, which surrounded us with a cool shade mingled with lovely odours. 'Whence come these sweet smells to the reviving shade?' I exclaimed.

"Do you not see," said the man of God, "the purple blossoms as they shoot from the green leaves and hang down in clusters?"

I was about to speak, but a gentle wind moved in the leaves, and strewed the blossoms all around us, as when the snow floats down from the clouds. Scarcely had the blossoms fallen, when there hung between the leaves the red pomegranates, like the almonds on Aaron's rod. Then the man of God left me in deep astonishment.

Here Nathan paused. "Where is he?" asked Solomon eagerly. "What is the name of the Godly man? Does he still live?" But Nathan replied: "Son of David, I have told you an allegory." When Solomon heard these words, he was much disappointed, and said: "How could you deceive me so?" But Nathan went on: "I have not deceived you, son of Jesse. See, you may look at all of which I have told you, in reality, in your father's garden. Does not the very same take place on every pomegranate tree and other trees?" "Yes," said Solomon "but unobserved and in longer time." Then answered Nathan: "Is it therefore less a divine work because it goes on in silence and unnoticed? I should think it was therefore the more divine." "First know Nature," he continued, "and her works! Then you will easily believe in a greater, and not long after wonders at the hand of men."

MEXICAN CHILDREN.

In Mexico, a group of lads from seven to twelve, will meet, and each boy will decorously lift his hat and salutations of extreme courtesy will be exchanged, and then comes the boyish chatter the fun and the laughter, the same as anywhere. Boys here treat their elders with respect. An old man or woman is not the butt of the youth of Mexico; rather, for the old people are reserved the shadiest seats under the trees in the park. A Mexican boy or girl on entering a room walks around among the company shaking hands with all, and on leaving the room does the same. Urbanity is taught in the public schools as arithmetic is at home. There is no one jostled on the street; the best seats in the horse-car are promptly given up to the ladies, who never fail gracefully to acknowledge the favour. I have never seen a Mexican gentleman fail to give his seat to a woman, whether she was richly or poorly dressed.

CROMWELL'S MOTHER.

Little of Cromwell's father is known: much of the mother is learned through the son. She is described as "a woman with the glorious faculty of self help. Ready for the demands of fortune in its extreme adverse time: of spirit and energy equal to her mildness and patience, and unchangingly simple in her tastes."

Left a widow with a number of small children dependent upon her, she carried on her husband's business successfully, educating her children and exercising over them a discipline which judiciously combined restraint and liberty. From his mother the Lord Protector inherited the patience, candour and simplicity which so conspicuously distinguished him. From her teaching, he acquired the courage, persistency and decision which triumphed on the fields of Naseby and Dunbar, and gained him the supremacy in every contest. Cromwell was proud to install his mother, the widow of a Huntingdon brewer, in Whitehall, the home of the English kings. But amid her magnificent surroundings she retained her natural simplicity, rejecting all personal pomp, and imploring a quiet burial in a humble country churchyard. A short time before her death, she blessed her son in these words: "May the Lord cause His face to shine upon thee, and comfort thee, and enable thee to do great things for His glory, and to be a relief unto His people. My dear son, I leave my heart with thee. A good night!"

THE BLIND BOY'S PICTURE.

Once there lived a little boy who was blind from his birth. In vain he sighed to see flowers and birds, about which his mother often talked. But it was always night to him. Once he had a lovely dream. He saw an angel float into the room, step to his bedside and say:—

"I have a beautiful picture-book here, which I show to good children in the night when they sleep. Would you like to see it?"

"Ah, dear Angel," said the boy weeping, "You are wrong. I am a poor blind boy and cannot see; not even your beautiful pictures."

The angel dried the boy's eyes and said: "You can surely see them, as well as you can see me. That is just why I go to blind children, so that they may view in dreams what they cannot elsewhere see." He then sat by the bed, opened a large, very lovely book, and showed the boy the pictures.

With what joy did the lad see what was spread before him! Flowers and birds and everything were much more beautiful than he had ever thought. And the kind angel told him the sweetest stories. But when they had finished half the book, he arose and said:—

"Now I must go back to heaven, for it will soon be dawn. I shall come again to-morrow night, and you shall see the rest of the pictures." With these words he disappeared, and to the blind boy it was night again.

When his mother came to him the next day he told her of the angel and the lovely book. But she said in a sad voice: "You are ill, my poor boy, and must remain in bed to-day." The poor child was satisfied, for he was very tired. Still as a mouse he lay, and smiled often as he thought of the angel's visit, while he rejoiced at the coming evening.

At night time the angel came again, but the mother, who watched at the bedside, could not see him, nor did she hear the stories told; but she listened anxiously to the short breaths of the boy.

When the child had seen the last picture he begged: "Ah, dear Angel, come soon back again and show me more of your lovely pictures. Have you only one picture book?"

"I have many others," replied the angel, "much more beautiful, and I will be glad to show them all. But they are in heaven and I cannot bring them down to earth. If you will come to me you can see them."

"I would very much like to," the boy replied, "but I must first ask my mother and tell her where I am going. Come to-morrow night and fetch me."

The angel promised. When the boy awoke he begged his mother to let him go to heaven, so that he might see all the angel's beautiful pictures. The mother wept and wished him not to leave her, but he begged so long that she finally consented. When it was night the angel came for the third time, and seemed much more beautiful and friendly than before. He kissed the child's eyes and said, "Gaze at your mother and take leave of her!"

The blind boy looked around, recognized his mother whom he had never seen, and gave her a friendly smile. Then the angel clasped him and flew aloft with him to the dawn, toward the rising sun.

CHILDREN OF SOUTH AFRICA.

Dr. Livingstone tells us that the children of South Africa have merry times, especially in the cool of the evening. In one of their games a little girl is carried on the shoulders of two others. She sits with outstretched arms, as they walk about with her, and all the rest clap their hands, and, stopping before the door of each hut, sing pretty airs, some beating time, and others making a curious humming sound between the songs.

The girls also skip rope and play at housekeeping and cooking, in imitation of the work of their mothers.

The boys play war with small shields and bows and arrows, or build little cattle pens for the cattle, which they form of clay. Livingstone's looking-glass was ever a source of entertainment to them. They often borrowed it, and the remarks they made were very entertaining to Livingstone as he was apparently engaged in reading and not hearing them. "Is that me?" "What a big mouth I have!" "My ears are as big as pumpkin leaves." "I would have been pretty, but am spoiled by these high cheek-bones." All this while laughing heartily at their own jokes.

While they seem thus conscious of their own defects, they have no great admiration for the beauty of white people, though one woman remarked, "They are not so ugly after all if they only had toes!" She evidently thought that the shoe was the foot itself, and was only convinced of her mistake when she saw the covering removed.

GAMES IN INDIA.

They have a ball-game there which is amusing and fascinating to watch. The ball is hardly so large as one of our footballs. The players are not permitted to touch it with their hands, but must strike it with their bare feet and legs. The object of the game seems to be to keep the ball constantly in the air. It is really marvellous the way those fellows kick at the descending ball. If it falls behind them, up goes a heel like that of a kicking horse. At one side a blow of the ankle gives the necessary impetus. Many a time I have watched one of these games outside of a village, and hugely enjoyed the extraordinary sight of these bare-footed fellows kicking in every direction as if there was no such thing as joints in the human frame.

Perhaps the average young American would be more surprised and interested in the Hindu method of shooting marbles than in anything else I could mention. Instead of shooting from the knuckles and on bended knee, the young Hindu remains standing and uses his index finger as a sort of spring-gun or catapult. With the thumb and forefinger of one hand he holds the marble in front of the forefinger tip on the other hand, pulls the finger back as if it were a spring, takes aim at the marble on the ground, and lets go. The little street urchins become very skilful in shooting, and could show the American boys "a thing or two," very likely.

THINGS EVERY BOY SHOULD KNOW.

A word for you boys—a most practical, sensible word—we quote from an exchange. Perhaps you are bemoaning the hard lot that keeps you from school this fall. Cheer up! According to this writer's standard you have plenty of chances to be one of the world's giants, after all, or, better, one of God's giants.

"I believe," says a writer, "in schools where boys can learn trades. Peter the Great left his throne and went to learn how to build a ship, and he learned from stem to stern from hull to mast; and that was the beginning of his greatness."

"I knew a young man who was poor and smart. A friend sent him to a good school, where he stayed two years and came back a mining engineer and a bridge-builder. Last year he planned and built a cotton-factory, and is getting a large salary."

"How many college boys can tell what kind of timber will bear the heaviest burden, or why you take white oak for one part of a waggon and ash for another, and what timber will last longest under water and what out of water?"

"How many know sandstone from limestone, or iron from manganese? How many know how to cut a rafter or brace without a pattern? How many know which turns the faster—the top of the wheel or the bottom—as the waggon moves along the ground? How many know how steel is made or how a snake can climb a tree? How many know that a horse gets up before and a cow behind, and the cow eats grass from her and the horse to him? How many know that a surveyor's mark on a tree never gets any higher from the ground, or what tree bears fruit without bloom?"

"There is a power of comfort in knowledge, but a boy is not going to get it unless he wants it badly. And that is the trouble with most college boys. They do not want it; they are too busy, and have not got time. There is more hope of a dull boy who wants knowledge than of a genius, who generally knows it all without study. These close observers are the world's benefactors."