

tions of many gather round the *Fairchild Family*. The happy and thoroughly English home there revealed—the quiet pictures of rural English scenery and of the pleasant town of Leasing—the evenings in the Primrose Meadow, and the stories of Mrs. Toward and little Marten, and the fair Henric, who was trained to love God among the valleys of the Waldenses, and full of genial goodness and active fancy.

The last fault alleged against Mrs. Sherwood also attaches to the well-known and beautifully-written tales by the authoress of *Amy Herbert*. Of all the graceful stories from the pen of this lady, *Amy Herbert* appears to have the most admirers. Nor is it strange that so amiable a picture of childhood should make itself a favourite with all who take any pleasure in the contemplation of youth and innocence. Its truthfulness also, in the delineation of childish character imparts to it the charm of reality; not truthfulness merely of general outlines, but a close fidelity to nature in the nicer details of word and manner. But *Amy Herbert* fails to realize the beau ideal of a child's book. It offers a delightful employment for leisure time for older persons; full of interesting and instructive hints on the best way of training the unformed character, of pruning its evil tendencies, and of fostering into ripe maturity its budding traits of goodness; but in youthful hands there would be cause for apprehension, lest it should encourage a precocious and unhealthy spirit of self-consciousness.

The principle of addressing the faculty of reasoning, as yet very imperfectly developed in children, to the undue neglect of their affections and imagination, is an offence of frequent occurrence, and apt to obtrude itself even into works of considerable merit.

From reasons already stated, it may be inferred, that an indirect mode of teaching is to be preferred for children—we mean the embodiment of abstract truth into narrative. Such a mode of writing wins its way more easily into the understanding—quickens the attention—inspires the feeling—is retained more lastingly—gives more exercise to the imagination. Nature significantly points in this direction, by the eager appetite for pictures and stories which she has implanted in children. In reading Æsop's *Fables* children often omit the "moral." But it does not follow, therefore, that they lose the point of the story. Their sympathies are enlisted on the right side; and the readiness of childhood to identify itself with the personages in the story seldom fails to make the suitable application. The lesson conveyed penetrates deeper into their nature by being received thus unconsciously; it becomes an integral part of their character by absorption—it acts more efficaciously than it would, if administered like a dose of medicine, a dry sermon after an entertaining narrative. The quiet and gradual operation of air, and diet, and exercise, is always preferable to artificial remedies. In the way of exercise, it is well known that the alternate tension and relaxation of the various muscles in a game—cricket for example, or tennis—while the mind is too much engaged in the amusement to be conscious of the exercise, is more conducive to health than a periodical walk taken deliberately for health's sake. The analogy is obvious. Ballad poetry is invariably the kind of poetry that commends itself to the infancy and youth of a people; it appeals to their senses; it supplies them with living realities, not impossible ideas; it ministers to their desire of adventure and romance. Example is better than precept, especially for children. Besides the advantages to which we have alluded, as attendant to such a mode of teaching, it must be allowed, even by the sternest utilitarian, to be no small gain—in a world so full of inevitable unhappiness—to substitute what is pleasurable for a comparatively painful process; especially in the treatment of that part of human life which seems intended by God to be a season of enjoyment while it lasts, whatever troubles may be awaiting its mature manhood.

The allegorical style has not been altogether neglected even in this utilitarian land. In the sense of *unpoetic*, the propriety of the epithet has been disproved by facts. Practical and inexcitable the English undoubtedly are; less capable of perceiving ideal principles than their German cousins; slower sensibility than their susceptible neighbours in France: but the best poetry is the offspring of strong and profound, not transitory passion, and speaks in the language of the senses rather than in philosophic generalizations. Accordingly there has been a goodly growth of poetry, especially of a dramatic character, both in the Northern and Southern divisions of the island. Even the allegorical vein—if less bountiful of its treasure here than in Germany, less wildly or fancifully picturesque, less spiritual, more broad and homely—has not proved altogether unproductive in England. John Bunyan is a very old instance. Many generations have experienced the influence of his vivid descriptions, couched in racy and genuine language. It would be the sign of an evil day, if ever the marvellous dreamings of the self-taught genius of Elstow should be laid on the shelf by common consent as an antiquarian curiosity. Inspired by earnest convictions and an intense devotion, they penetrate the heart; they bring a message of life and death; and they will be heard with sympathetic interest by distant generations. As a work for children, indeed, the *Pilgrim's Progress* is not faultless. The meaning of the allegory is sometimes too thinly veiled, and forces itself so prominently forward as to interfere with the appearance of reality in the story.

Persons of every religious school—even such as disapprove of the ecclesiastical tendency of Mr. Adam's *Tales*—must agree that few recent works are more admirable than his *Distant Hills*, and other allegories,—viewed as beautiful works of art, adapted for the child-mind. The gentle and persuasive tone of such indirect exhortation to holiness, finds an entrance into every heart. The quiet and peaceful, yet not gloomy stillness which pervades his stories; and the lovely images summoned before the eye, transport the reader for a time out of the ceaseless turmoil of this vicious and anxious world; and soothe him with happy thoughts of a better state. *Apathos*, and other stories by Bishop Wilberforce, are well-known and beautiful specimens of this class.

*The Four Seasons* has been for some time before the English readers in a translation. *Undine*—the exquisitely fantastic *Undine*—is quite naturalized in the public favour. *Sintram*, another of the "four seasons," is strikingly beautiful in a different way; it claims kinred with "howling winter." *Aslanza's Knight* is perhaps the best after "Sintram," as an allegory. It represents the triumph of a pure and valiant faith, constant through many trials over the temptations of the things that are seen. A delicate tinge of symbolic meaning may be detected in all the tales of this author, by those who take the trouble to look for it. But, even without a distinct perception of this, his noble spirit of chivalrous heroism and spotless purity, *sans peur et sans reproche*, cannot but exercise an influence for good, however unconsciously, on the character of the reader. Tales, like his, are most in unison with the imaginative temperament of youth, and most likely to encourage its high and generous aspirations.

Hans Andersen, with his Danish legends, is inimitable in his quaint and grotesque way, especially in tales like *The Ugly Duckling*. As regards our own island, it must be confessed in passing, that almost all the standard books for children have come from the south side of the Tweed. But if Scotland has not produced much literature peculiarly intended and fitted for the young, at least she has given birth to her favourite poet; who revels in the legendary lore of his romantic fatherland with an enjoyment like their own; and whose vivid imagination makes history attractive and easily remembered, even for the least studious amongst them. *The Tales of a Grandfather* is a model of historic narrative for boys.

*Charlton School, or the Cherry Stones* has been already mentioned. It is a very good sample of a different kind of story from most of those last referred to. It is not always allegorical. The scene of it is a school. The description of the ways of boys which it contains is so true to nature—it is so full of a general appreciation of their bright and engaging qualities—that it must be pronounced one of the best books for children in that kind. *Hope on, Hope ever!* by Mrs. Howitt, is a remarkable story, with a good moral. *Ministering Children* contains some beautiful passages, and illustrates in how many ways children may be happy in doing good. But we have already expressed our own preference for allegorical stories—or, at all events, for stories in which the actors are farther removed from the position of the reader, as less likely to promote an undue self-consciousness in children. Whatever difference of opinion may exist on this point, however, one rule may safely be affirmed, applicable alike to all instruction, direct or suggestive, literal or metaphorical. And this is, that it should be of a positive and not of a negative character. It should dwell rather on the attractions of what is right, than on the deformity of what is wrong; it should aim at developing the good tendencies, not solely or principally at checking and eradicating the bad. For the mind assimilates itself to what it contemplates, in the same way as one human face acquires the expression of another most familiar to it. It has been noticed in the most successful preachers, that they seldom conclude a discourse with thoughts of sin and sorrow. The former part of the sermon may have abounded with the most harrowing revelations of sin and threatenings of judgment, but the last words dispense consolation, and heal the wounds, and leave the blessing of mercy and forgiveness.

"Brother, let thy sorrows cease—  
Sinful sister, part in peace!"

And so it should be for all; most especially for the young. In this respect, as in others that have been mentioned, the taste of those that write for them, or otherwise instruct them, would be much lightened, it would be half done to hand if they would work with Nature, and use her kindly aid; if they would build on the foundations that she has laid; if they would incite, invite, encourage, rather than deter and restrain. Good and evil cannot exist together. The surest way, as well as the pleasantest, is to prevent the latter by the former. Once lost, the blissful inexperience of evil cannot be regained. Like the bloom of a rose or the down of a peach, it perishes if rudely handled. Some retain it longer. Happy the few who never forfeit it entirely! For it does not imply any unfitness to meet the dangers of active life—it does not require the retirement of the cloister. There is in goodness an instinctive abhorrence of moral evil, a sense of its insidious approaches in the most guileless heart, which is the best shield against temptation.

Evil is so ubiquitous, that there is only too great a facility for ob-