

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

The Duties of Youth.

1. It is the duty of youth to think of God as the Creator, and the giver of every joy that we possess. v. 1.
2. It is the duty of youth to make the wise use of opportunities, so that life may not prove a failure. v. 1, 2.
3. It is the duty of youth to prepare for old age with its trials, and for death with its realities. v. 3-7.
4. It is the duty of youth to estimate life at its true value, and to seek for the highest wisdom. v. 8, 9.
5. It is the duty of youth to receive and profit by the words of wisdom. v. 10, 11.
6. It is the duty of youth to fear God and keep his commandments, as the highest purpose in life. v. 13.
7. It is the duty of youth to prepare for the judgment, which will bring to light every secret thing. v. 14.

ENGLISH TEACHER'S NOTES.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

THE chief royal adornment of the Sandwich Islands is a cloak made entirely of the bright, gold-coloured feathers of a bird. Only two of these feathers, which are exceedingly small, can be procured from one bird, and to make the royal robe some thousands are required, involving many years' labour. A long time ago, when the sovereign of Hawaii was in possession of two or three of these royal robes, one of them was bestowed by him upon an English traveller, as a mark of esteem and affection, and the greatest which could be given. The gift was, in fact, a priceless one. But when brought home to England, this emblem of sovereignty, this royal adornment, was made no account of, and after the lapse of years it became a plaything for children, worn out and spoiled. One cannot help regretting that an object so gorgeous and so unique (I believe there is but one of the kind remaining) should have been thus diverted from its original destiny, put to trifling uses, and worn out by neglect.

And, doubtless, we have most of us known some article, less splendid and rare than the Hawaiian robe of feathers, put, nevertheless, to a use immensely below its value, its capacity, and its original destiny. And it is a pity. For if a thing must be used up and worn out, it would be better to turn it to the best account and employ it in the most profitable way.

But what has this to do with our passage for to-day? In that passage we read of an article which has been "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psa. 139. 14), but which will in time wear out and perish. Of this perish-

ing we have the most graphic description, and although it may be a naturally mournful subject for the young to consider, yet the imagery with which it is clothed can hardly fail to make it interesting.

There is first the picture of an eclipse coming over the bright face of nature (verse 2), no fair clearing of the sky after the storm, no shining out of the cheery sunlight, no stars to illumine the dark midnight sky. Then (verses 3-5) the picture of a desolate home: the walls crumbling, the support threatening to give way; no sound of the "grinding" to supply food for the household; the windows unused; no faces showing themselves through the lattice; no sound of music enlivening the once festive scene; the doors shut, and none passing in or out of the once hospitable dwelling. And the solitary inhabitant of the house, is he wrapped in peaceful slumber? No! "He shall rise up at the voice of the bird;" he tastes neither the active joys of waking, nor the sweet repose of sleeping hours. Even the sense of desire is gone from the benumbed soul. Yet another series of pictures follows. Verse 6. There is the lamp which lights the apartment, suspended by its silver cord; but the cord snaps, the golden bowl is shattered, and the precious oil lost. There is the pitcher placed below the fountain, with the living water flowing into it, but a sudden blow has broken it, the water is spilled, and the pitcher lies there a useless, dead thing. And our last picture is of mourners, with rent garments and dust on their heads, as in Eastern lands, going about the street.

Now, what does all this mean? It is a picture of old age and of death—of old age which comes to so many, and of death which threatens all until Christ comes again. This body of ours, like a stately house, this life of ours, like a fair spring day, has within itself the elements of decay. Solomon "in all his glory" was but as the flowers of the field, to-day living, to-morrow withered. And he knew this and felt it. But he knew and felt also that his body, as the workmanship of God, his mind, as given by God, had a high and royal destination. While it lasted he must make the best use of it. He tried various uses for it, and in this book of Ecclesiastes he has given us his experience. In the last lesson we saw his experience of pleasure. In pleasure, even of an ennobling kind, he found no satisfaction; he had not discovered the true end for which he was created. But he found it out at last, and lays it upon the reader as his parting charge to be true to this high destiny: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.... Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."

The mind and body of man are destined