

The Family.

WHAT THE TRAVELLER SAID AT SUNSET.

The shadows grow and deepen around me; I feel the dew fall on the air; The music of the deepening thicket I hear thro' the night call to prayer.

The evening wind is sad with farewells; The loving hands unclasp from mine; Alas! I go to meet the darkness Across an awful boundary line.

As from the lighted hearth behind me I pass with slow, reluctant feet, What wails me in the land of strangeness? What face shall smile, what voice shall greet?

What space shall awe, what brightness blind me? What thunder roll of music stain? What vast processions sweep before me Of shapes unknown beneath the sun?

I shrink from unaccustomed glory, I dread the myriad-voiced strain; Give me the unforgetten faces, And let my lost ones speak again.

He will not chide my mortal yearning, Who is our Brother and our Friend, In whose full life divine and human The heavenly and the earthly blend.

Mine be the joy of soul-communion, The sense of spiritual strength renewed, The reverence for the pure and holy, The dear delight of doing good.

No fitting ear is mine to listen An endless anthem's rise and fall, No curious eye is mine to measure The pearl gates and the Jasper wall.

For love must needs be more than knowledge; What matter if I never know Why Aldelaran's star is reddily, Or colder Sirius white as snow?

Forgive my human words, O Father! I go Thy larger truth to prove; Thy mercy shall transmute my longing I seek but love, and Thou art Love!

I go to find my lost and mourned for, Safe in Thy sheltering goodness still, And all that hope and faith foreshadow Made perfect in Thy holy will! —Whittier.

WHAT SHALL CHILDREN READ?

It is not my province to discriminate between the various writers for children at the present time. To give a complete catalogue of useful books for children would be quite impossible; to give a partial list, or endeavour to point out what is worthy and what unworthy, would be little better. No course of reading laid down by one person ever suits another, and the published "lists of best books," with their solemn platitudes in the way of advice, are generally interesting only in their reflection of the writer's personality.

I would not choose too absolutely for a child save in his earliest years, but would rather surround him with the best and worthiest books, and let him choose for himself, for there are elective affinities and antipathies here that need not be disregarded,—that are, indeed, certain indications of latent powers, and trustworthy guides to the child's unfolding possibilities.

"Books can only be profoundly influential as they unite themselves with decisive tendencies." Provide the right conditions for mental growth, and then let the child do the growing. If we dictate too absolutely, we envelop instead of develop his mind, and weaken his own power of choice. On the other hand, we do not wish his reading to be partial or one-sided, as it may be without intelligent oversight.

I was telling bedtime stories the other night to a proper, wise, dull little girl of ten years. When I had successfully introduced a mother-cat and kittens to her attention, I plunged into what I thought a graphic and perfectly natural conversation between them, when she cut me short with the observation that she disliked stories in which animals talked, because they were not true! I was rebuked, and tried again with better success, had it not been for an unlucky figure of speech concerning a blossoming locust-tree, that bent its green boughs and laughed in the summer sunshine, because its flowers were fragrant and lovely, and the world so green and beautiful. This she thought, on sober second thought, a trifle silly, as trees never did laugh! Now, that exasperating little scrap of humanity (she is abnormal, to be sure) ought to be locked up and fed upon fairy tales until she was able to catch a faint glimpse of "the light that never was on sea or shore." Poor blind, deaf little person, predestined, perhaps, to be the mother of a lot of other blind, deaf little persons some day—how I should like to develop her imagination!

Whatever children read, let us see that it be good of its kind, and that they get variety, so that no integral want of human nature shall be neglected—so that neither imagination, memory, nor reflection shall be starved. I own it is difficult to help them in their choice, when most of us have not learned to choose wisely for ourselves. A discriminating taste in literature is not to be gained without effort, and our constant reading of the little books spoils our appetite for the great ones.

Style is a matter of some moment. Mothers sometimes forget that children cannot read slipshod, awkward, redundant prose, and sing-song, rapid verse, for ten or twelve years, and then take kindly to the best things afterward. Long before a child is conscious of such a thing as purity, delicacy, directness, or strength of style, he has been acted upon unconsciously, so that when the period of conscious choice comes he is either attracted or repelled by

what is good, according to his training. Children are fond of vivacity and color, and love a bit of word painting or graceful nonsense; but there are people who strive for this, and miss, after all, the true warmth and geniality that is most desirable for little people, and, apropos of nonsense, we remember Leigh Hunt, who says that there are two kinds of nonsense, one resulting from a superabundance of ideas, the other from a want of them. Style in the hands of some writers is like war-paint to the savage—of no perceptible value unless it is laid on thick. Our tiny little ones begin too often on cheap and tawdry stories in one or two syllables, where pictures in primary colors try their best to atone for lack of matter. Then they enter on a prolonged series of children's books, some of them written by people who have neither the intelligence nor the literary skill to write for a more critical audience; on the same basis of reasoning which puts the young and inexperienced teachers into the lowest grades, where the mind ought to be formed, and assigns to the more practiced educator the simpler task of informing the already partially formed (or deformed) mind.

There has never been such conscientious, intelligent, and purposeful work done for children as in the last ten years, and if an overwhelming flood of trash has been poured into our laps along with the better things, we must accept the inevitable. The legends, myths and fables of the world, as well as its history and romance, are being brought within reach of young readers by writers of wide knowledge and trained skill.

Knowing then, as we do, the dangers and obstacles in the way, and realizing the innumerable inspirations which the best thought gives to us, can we not so direct the reading of our children that our older boys and girls shall not be so exclusively modern in their tastes, so that they may be inclined to take a little less Salus, a little more Shakespeare, temper their devotion to The Duchess by small doses of Dickens or Dan'e, forsake Rhoda Broughton for a dip into Thackeray, and use Hawthorne as a safe and agreeable antidote to Haggard? We need not despair of the child who does not care to read, for books are not the only means of culture, but they are a very great means when the mind is really stimulated by them and not simply padded with them.

Mr. Frederic Harrison says:—"Books are no more education than laws are virtue. Of all men perhaps the book lover needs most to be reminded that man's business here is to know for the sake of living, not to live for the sake of knowing."

But a child who has no taste for reading, who is utterly incapable of losing himself in a printed page, quite unable to forget his childish griefs,

"And plunge, Soul forward, bounding into a book's profound, Impassioned for its beauty and salt of truth,"—such a child is to be pitied as missing one of the chief joys of life. Such a child has no dear old book-friendships to look back upon. He has no sweet associations with certain musty covers and time-worn pages; no sacred memories of quiet moments when a new love of goodness, a new throb of generosity, a new sense of humanity were born in the ardent young soul; born when we had turned the last page of some well-thumbed volume and pressed our tear-stained childish cheek against the window-pane, when it was growing dusk without, and a dear mother's voice called us from our shelter to "put the book down, dear, and come to tea." For, to speak in better words than my own—"It is the books we read before middle life that do most to mould our characters and influence our lives; and this not only because our natures are then plastic and our opinions flexible, but also because, to produce lasting impression, it is necessary to give a great author time and meditation. The books that are with us in the leisure of youth, that we love for a time not only with the enthusiasm, but with something of the exclusiveness, of a first love, are those that enter as factors forever in our mental life."—Cosmopolitan.

SLEEP AS A MEDICINE.

A PHYSICIAN says that the cry for rest has always been louder than the cry for food. Not that it is more important, but it is often harder to obtain. The best rest comes from sound sleep. Of two men or women, otherwise equal, the one who sleeps the best will be the most healthy and efficient. Sleep will do much to cure irritability of temper, peevishness and uneasiness. It will restore vigour to an overworked brain. It will build up and make strong a weak body. It will cure a headache. It will cure a broken spirit. It will cure a sorrow. Indeed, we may make a long list of nervous and other maladies that sleep will cure. The cure of sleeplessness requires a clean, good bed, sufficient exercise to promote weariness, pleasant occupation, good air, and not too warm a room; a clear conscience, and avoidance of stimulants and narcotics. For those who are overworked, haggard, nervous, who pass sleepless nights, we commend the adoption of such habits as will secure sleep, otherwise life will be short, and what there is of it sadly imperfect.—Philadelphia Presbyterian.

OPPORTUNITIES.

"RAIN! Rain! Rain! Will it never stop?" said Belle Harris impatiently. "I promised papa I would visit for him this afternoon. It is the day Grandma Burton looks for him, and therefore two sick people on the list." Belle turned from the window with a discontented pucker in her pretty forehead. Though she would not put it in a positive thought, down in her heart she felt that if the Lord wanted people to work for Him, He ought to send respectable weather. She had not yet learned how all things really work for good to those who are the King's own children, so she wandered restlessly around the house, not able to settle herself to anything, since her own plans were disturbed. Upstairs she found her mother in her room, her head tied up in camphor, while she tried to do some mending.

"I hate darning and patching," remarked Belle, ungraciously, "but I won't see you do it with one of your sick headaches. Now lie down and I will get some soda, and then bathe your head in hot water, and make the room dark so you can sleep." "Thank you, dear. I knew you expected to call for papa, and I forgot there was no good umbrella here, so I didn't speak about my head. Never mind the mending, but if you will attend to the baby when he wakes up, and see that the children do not go out in the rain, I will be much obliged. Pay Millie and give her something for her husband to eat when she gets through. Oh, yes, there is a poor young girl who is to bring some sewing home. Pay her and do her good if you can, though she is a perfect icicle. Remember, dear, we do not always have to seek for the Master's work. He often brings it to us."

Belle understood her mother, in fact they understood each other, and Mrs. Harris knew Belle's disappointment was because of her eagerness to do the Master's work. The daughter kissed her mother after she had done every possible thing for her comfort, and slipped down stairs softly. Here she found her little brothers quarreling over a knife. After settling that dispute, she said:

"Boys, I am going to mend by the sitting-room fire. Now there is a large pile of illustrated papers papa gave me, in the hall closet. I want you to cut out the pictures for me, and we can make one or two beautiful scrap-books. While we are all working, I'll tell you an exciting story of some boys being lost in a great forest. I remember it's in one of those papers, and you will find the pictures."

The boys were so delighted with this proposition, that Belle had hard work to quiet them.

"When mamma won't let us wade or sail our boats when it rains, it's awful in the house," said Ernest.

An hour was spent very happily, when the door-bell announced a visitor. Belle found a pale, sad-looking girl at the door.

"I don't care to come in," she said stiffly. "I am very wet. Here is the work your mother ordered."

"Oh, you must come in," said Belle, with a pleasant little laugh. "We have a fire in the sitting-room because it is so damp. Now, boys, you may stop up the sink in the kitchen and sail your boats awhile there. Don't bother Millie or make a fuss, and I will give you a little surprise after awhile."

"Mamma has a bad headache, so you will please excuse her," Belle said, as soon as the boys were gone. "She left me the money for the sewing I despise to sew, but mamma says I must learn when I get through school. Do you like it?"

"No," replied Miss White, sharply. "I hate it, and I want to go to school so I can teach, but nothing ever happens that I want."

The tone was so bitter Belle was almost frightened, but her tender heart was touched. She went over to the sofa where the young girl was sitting, and put her arm around her and kissed her. Miss White's stern face relaxed and the tears rushed from her eyes.

"Perhaps it will make you feel better to cry, dear," said Belle, softly. "I know from your face and black dress you've had trouble, but let me be your friend, won't you? I hope you know Jesus is your best friend. I have no sorrows, but I could not bear my little disappointments and be happy if it were not for Him."

"You are a queer girl, but the sweetest I ever saw. I know nothing of that friend you speak of. He is nothing to me," answered Miss White. "If God does anything for me it is to send trouble. He has taken my only friend, my mother. My father is not worth the name. We have just moved here, but you'll soon know what a miserable drunkard he is. I would leave him, but I have a little brother who is a cripple. He won't give up father, so I have to support him, too."

"Oh, how much you have to bear, and how much ashamed you make me feel for thinking I had troubles! But we must hope for better things. Papa has been able to save more than one fallen man, and we must pray for your father. Oh, you must find Jesus; you need him so much," said Belle earnestly.

"I think Eddie is a Christian at heart," said Miss White in a hesitating way. "Mother was, but I've never tried to pray since she died."

"Will you begin to try now?" asked Belle. "I will pray for you every day. No one is in the study across the hall. I wish papa were here, but we can pray the best we know how."

If any one had told proud Cora White when she entered that house that she would kneel and pray before she left she would have laughed at the idea. But in spite of herself she followed Belle into the quiet room, and even knelt beside her, saying to herself, "It will please the little thing, and won't hurt me."

It was a simple prayer that Belle made, but it was as if she were really speaking to a friend by her side. Cora White had never heard any one plead with God for her. Belle had never done so for any one before. When she finished, the girl beside her was crying softly. Then after a moment's hesitation she murmured: "Oh, be my friend, too, Jesus! I need you so much. Do take away these wicked, rebellious thoughts. Save me, Jesus!"

When the girls rose from their knees Belle's face was radiant, and Cora's had lost its stubborn look.

"I am not sure that my prayer was answered," she said, "but I will try and keep on until Jesus is to me what He seems to be to you."

"Here is my Daily Food," said Belle, taking the little book out of her pocket. "I will get another, and we will learn the same verse every day. I'd begin reading the Psalms and the Gospel of John first, and when papa comes he will help me to select some helpful books for you to read."

"May I send a bouquet to your brother?" she asked timidly, seeing Miss White's independent look when she referred to the books. "We lend everybody books, you know."

"I have much to overcome," said Cora humbly. "We were once well off, and I am poor and proud. Yes, send Eddie anything you like, and thank you."

The baby cried at this moment, and Belle brought him in, fresh and rosy from his nap, for her new friend to admire. Miss White started off with some flowers and a box of strawberries for Eddie, and she did not feel any foolish wounded pride, but looked back with a bright face at the young girl standing by the window with the pretty baby.

While baby was taking his bread and milk by the kitchen stove, Belle made paste for the boys to begin their scrap book. She noticed then that Millie was not singing camp meeting songs as usual.

"It's tooth ache that puts a damper on my 'ligion to day, honey," said the good old colored woman.

"I'll soon clear that," and in a few moments Belle had a piece of cotton with heating medicine in the tooth.

"Oh, it's better already! It's mighty trying to have the tooth-ache all day and sit up with your old man all night."

Then Millie related all about her husband's many ailments and all about Sallie's husband and baby, and Belle listened pleasantly to the tiresome story, got Millie something for her husband's supper, and sent her home humming "Happy Day" with a glad heart. The boys were allowed to set the table, and baby Paul was tied up in his high chair while Belle made some of her father's favourite biscuits for supper. The boys were rejoiced by each being allowed a piece of dough to mould into any shape they chose, and marvellous were the transformations until birds were decided on.

When Mrs. Harris came down, she said her headache was about gone.

"What, my daughter, the mending all done! You did Ernest's jacket well. And you've made cream biscuits for tea? They'll be nice with our fresh strawberries. I see Miss White has brought her work."

Just then the minister came from the evening train.

"Well, Belle, I took your umbrella, and you weren't able to go out into the storm to do pastoral work," he said as he kissed his daughter.

"No, papa; I feared it would be a wasted day, but—"

"She told us a boss story, and let us cut pictures and make dough animals. It's splendid a rainy day, when sister's here," interrupted Ernest.

"She got medicine for Millie's tooth-ache, and let her tell all her troubles," said Harry.

"She did my mending and took care of the baby and gave me a nap that cured my headache," added Mrs. Harris. "I'm sure she did as much good as if she had been visiting sick people and hunting up Sunday-school scholars. Oh, yes, she had a call! Tell us about that. I never could get near Miss White."

Belle told the story simply and humbly of the poor girl's trouble and her determination to lead a better life.

"Oh, papa, you will make her father a special work, won't you?"

"Yes, my dear child, and you take Cora for your next work. It's only hand-to-hand conflict that counts much—every man conquering his man. I want you young Christians to learn to have some special person or persons to work on as your own interest. See, while God is giving a rain that will be a blessing to the farmers, He did not forget to send your opportunity, though without Miss White the day would not have been lost. Remember, you can sweep a room so as to make 'that and the action fine.'"

"Yes, and when God has higher work

for us, and we are tied at home, he sends us our task. That comforts Mrs. Harris.—Zion's Herald.

SECRETS AND GIRLS.

SECRETS are things many girls delight in. Experience has shown that the fewer secrets and mysteries girls have, the safer and more comfortable they feel. No girl should agree to keep a secret that she will have to withhold from her mother. If it is important and necessary that it should not be communicated to a third party, then she had better refuse to hear it at all. A great deal of unhappiness and misery has been done through small secrets, leading on from one wrong to another, until a web of deceit has been woven so complete and intricate that it is nearly impossible to get disentangled from it. Your mothers, dear girls, are the wisest and best confidants you can have. Their love, you may be sure, will guide and counsel you aright, and although you make many mistakes and blunders, you can never go very far astray if you tell your mother everything. A girl whose first thought is that mother mustn't know of this, is standing on very unsafe ground. Hide nothing from your mothers. If you do wrong, go to them and own it, don't wait for some one else to tell them, and thus shake their confidence and trust in you. Concealment and deceit should never be tolerated in your intercourse and association with other girls; shun those who take pleasure in them, and seek the companionship of those with whom there need be no mysteries.—Catholic Standard.

REVERENCE.

A SENSE of solemnity should accompany the disposition to pray; otherwise, one is in danger of making requests of God, as if He were an earthly and familiar friend, of whose indulgent attention there is no question. This assumption of familiarity with the Divine Being indicates a painful lack of reverence. Robert Hall once referred to the mistake of those who speak of the King of kings, "as though He were a next door neighbour, from a pretence of love." It is worse than a mistake to speak of God thus; and it is dangerously impious to speak to Him, in the form of prayer, in such a manner.—Interior.

The Children's Corner.

THE NAUGHTY FAIRIES.

There are two of three naughty fairies Who look in our pretty house; They are as sly as the wily foxes, And one is as still as a mouse; And one can growl and mutter, And one has a chain on her feet; These naughty and mischievous fairies Whom you may have happened to meet.

The still-as-a-mouse one whispers, When a bit of work must be done; "O! just let it go till to-morrow, And take to day for fun!" And the mutter-and-growl one pricks you Till you pucker your face in a scowl, Or whimper and fret in a corner, Or stand on the floor and howl.

But the worst of the three bad fairies Is the one with the chain on her feet, And the strangest thing is her fancy For a child who is gay and sweet. She makes her forget an errand, And loiter when she should haste, And make a precious hour She causes the child to waste.

Should you happen to see these fairies, Please pass them proudly by, With lips set close and firmly, And a flash in your steadfast eye; For three very naughty people These little fairies be, Who mean, wherever they're hiding, No good to you and me. —Harris's Young People.

TOMMY'S DREAM.

TOMMY had been at the school treat, away out from the dirty, crowded, hot streets in which he lived, into the beautiful, green, fresh country.

And Tommy had enjoyed the treat; but I am afraid that many of the butterflies and other insects, and some of the birds, too, had cause to grieve that Tommy and his mates had been there to a treat—it was none for them. A great part of the day Tommy had spent in what he thought good fun. He had chased beautiful butterflies, but when he caught them he could do little with them. They were a source of amusement to him for a short time, and then he would let them flutter away with spoil and broken wings. He had tried to capture the large bees which he saw flying about; but as he laid hold of one it stung him, so, thinking himself badly used, he let go. Then he had frightened many of the birds by throwing stones at them—only fortunately he aimed badly, and never hit his mark! And when he and some of his companions, wandering through the green fields, had come across a large, scaly beetle, he had seized it, and in spite of its struggles had put it in his pocket.

And now Tommy was back from the treat and in bed. He had not long fallen asleep when he seemed to be again in the fields in which he had played all day. But all the butterflies, and bees, and beetles, and birds seemed to have changed places with him in point of size; for they appeared as large as boys, and he as small as a beetle, and Tommy was terribly frightened.

"Oh," he thought, "I must hide under the sticks, or those great creatures will catch me! Oh, dear, I wish I were home!" for Tommy was frightened.

So he hid quickly under some small sticks until all the butterflies and other things should go away; but it was no use. Soon he felt the sticks lifted, and heard something scream out, he did not know what the thing was at first, for he dared not look up.

"Oh, oh! come and look, here's such a funny thing! Four legs! and it only walks on two of them! and such a funny head!"

Then Tommy felt himself snatched up and pinched; and screaming and struggling, he looked up at the thing that held him. It was a beetle, of gigantic size it seemed to him.

"Oh!" screamed the beetle again, "come and look what I have caught. Such a funny thing, whatever it is?"

"What have you got?" asked the butterfly, about one hundred times Tommy's size, flying up.

"Why, look here! I don't know what it is."

"Oh!" said the butterfly, "it's only a boy. They're common enough. If you didn't live so much under the ground you'd know a boy when you see him. That's only a little one, but I've seen big ones, and I've good cause to remember them, too; they've chased me often enough."

The butterfly spoke very fiercely for such a gentle creature, and Tommy trembled.

"A boy!" shrieked the beetle—"a boy! I know something about them, only I didn't know this was one. Ugh! you little brute"—shaking Tommy—"you're a boy, are you? I'll pinch you."

And the beetle did, and Tommy screamed and kicked; but the beetle held him tightly.

"What's on here?" asked a passing bee. "What have you got?"

"Oh, only a boy," said the butterfly, "and we're only going to pinch him to see him kick."

"Oh, oh!" screamed Tommy, "you cowards! you wouldn't dare to do it if I were not so small," but the insects took no notice of his cries.

"Here, hand him over to me," said the bee; "I owe boys a grudge, let me sting him."

"Wait a bit," answered the beetle, "let's have some fun with him first. You'll kill him if you sting him."

"Not I. Besides, boys can't feel."

"They can! they can!" shrieked Tommy; but no heed was paid to his words.

Just as the bee was about to sting its shrieking victim, a linnet (to Tommy it seemed the size of an eagle) flew up. The butterfly flitted away sharply, and the bee suddenly became impressed with the necessity of going also, and went. Only the beetle remained, holding Tommy tightly still, for the beetle knew that its scaly coat would protect it against the linnet. But the bee and the butterfly had not such protection.

"What have you got?" asked the linnet.

"A boy. I owe boys a grudge, so I'm pinching him," and the beetle squeezed Tommy again, and again he squeaked.

"Will you give him to me? I'd like to take him somewhere," said the linnet.

So the beetle dropped Tommy, who was now quite sore, and the linnet lifted him in his beak.

Dreams are very funny things. The linnet seemed to be suddenly in the room of a house, and Tommy saw it was his own bedroom.

"What's the matter?" squeaked a funny voice. It was Tommy's white mouse speaking; for Tommy kept a white mouse.

"Why," said the linnet, and it seemed quite friendly with the white mouse, "I've caught a boy. What shall I do with him?"

"A boy? Let me look," said the white mouse, and added fiercely, "why, it's Tommy!"

"Yes, please Mr. Mouse," said Tommy, "it's me. You know me, don't you?"

Tommy was afraid of the white mouse, it seemed.

"Know you?" screamed the mouse, "I've good reason to know you! Yes! and now I'll make you know me." "Please, Mr. Mouse," began Tommy; but the white mouse interrupted him.

"Know you? You're the boy that fastened me in a cage without any food, and I was hungry. Worse, worse! I was thirsty, and all my water was dried up. My cage has been left unclean for weeks. Know you? Yes! and now you shall know me!"

The white mouse rushed fiercely at Tommy.

But suddenly Tommy awoke, and he was lying in bed, and of his natural size.

"Dear me," he murmured, "what an awful dream I've had! I declare I'll never hurt anything ever again. And when I get up I'll feed my white mouse. I forgot him yesterday."

For Tommy had been so full of the treat the day before that the white mouse had been neglected. In fact, Tommy often neglected it.

Then he dressed and went to the cage to attend to the little creature. But the little mouse was dead.

"Oh, dear," cried Tommy, "I must have forgotten it for two days! I'll never be so cruel again to anything!"

And he kept his word.—English Band of Mercy.