

Sister Belle's Corner.

(For the Little Folks who read this Paper).

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,—Do you like to hear sermons? I remember my dear father (who has now been in heaven for nearly fourteen years) used to preach a sermon to the children in his congregation every month. Those sermons and texts were remembered by the little folks far better than his other sermons every Sunday. During the past month a missionary sermon for children came into my hands. I enjoyed it so much myself, that when our Ottawa Mission Band held an entertainment, and asked me to talk a little at it, I told them about the sermon. Perhaps our Corner cannot be better filled this month than by my telling you of it in as easy words as I can.

The text was in Jeremiah, 7th chapter, 18th verse: "The children gather wood." If you read the whole of this verse it will bring up a picture in your minds. A cit or village in far off Judea, hundreds of years ago. The people living in it were not heathen. They were God's chosen people and knew all about His wonderful love for them. They had heard from their fathers and mothers of all the way God had led the Jews or Israelites for hundreds of years before. But these people had stopped worshipping God and were giving their gifts and prayers to other things; so they were idolatrous, though not heathen. Dear boys and girls, if we in our hearts love any person or thing better than we do the God who made us, we, too, have an idol to cast out. It was harvest time in Judea. These people wanted to have a great feast and give thanks for their corn and fruit and oil. So the children gathered wood, the fathers kindled the fires, the mothers kneaded the dough to make cakes. And at night this feast was held to honor the moon, or, as they called her, the queen of heaven, and they spread out the cakes, pouring out wine as a drink offering, while men and women, boys and girls kneeled down to worship the moon instead of the great God who had made and sent it on its mission. How sad their sin in so doing made the God who loved them so much. He told them that they had left the fountain of living waters and had made themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that could hold no water.

But what has all this to do with our Mission Bands? The four words I want you to think of are these: "The children gather wood." It was not enough for the fathers and mothers to do this work. Bright eyes were watching, quick hands and eager feet were ready to help, and the boys and girls gathered wood for the fires their fathers built. Just so in heaven lands to-day, the very youngest children are taken to the temples and made to join in worshipping idols. For well people know that the children now will soon be the men and women of the world, taking the places of all who are living to-day. Are there no missionary sticks of wood for our boys and girls to gather? The fields of love, of sympathy, of prayer and of earnest effort are full of them. Now for some reasons why our children should gather this wood. Because we are soldiers of Christ as much as older people. A soldier's duty is to obey orders, and our own great Captain says to us: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature"; and until every person God has made, white or black, young or old, has heard about Jesus and His love, our work is not finished.

2nd. Because Satan and the world are trying to get the children's work. Our text is one example of this. Then look how every gang of robbers has its little boy to creep in at windows and holes where a man could not go. See the beggars on the streets with the little children, who are taught to lie and steal or to pick people's pockets. In almost every work of the world children find their places. What would a store be without its errand boys? or a telegraph office without its faithful carriers? or a regiment without its drummers? The girls generally find their work at home, and many a mother would be far more tired than she is when night comes, if it were not for the loving ways her little girls find to help her. Even my two-year-old Fanny can rock her baby brother's cradle, and run little messages about the house to save my steps. And is the world to have all the work the children can do, and Jesus, their Saviour who made them

and loves them more than their father and mother possibly can, to have no little hands or feet to carry His message, no little hearts loving Him in return and seeking ways to help?

3rd. Because the children are needed in the work of saving the world. God often does great things by little instruments. The whole world is watered by drops of water. The great shores are made up of grains of sand. If God wants a new island to grow in one of His mighty oceans, He does not get men to go with their teams of horses, or even the mighty steam engine to build it up. But it is built by millions of tiny insects, so small you could not see them unless with a microscope. One winter's night, not long ago, a ship was in the sea near a fishing village. In the storm she struck the rocks and was going down to the bottom. Then the lifeboat was filled with her crew and passengers, and they pulled for the shore. But not more than a dozen yards from land they stuck fast on a sand-bar. They knew the wind and angry waves would soon break their boat to pieces. So they shouted for help. Then they flung a strong rope to the waiting people on shore. The men, brave, strong fellows they were, too, took hold of the rope and pulled with all their might, but the boat did not stir. So the women said, "Let us help you pull," and they took hold of the rope, but still all in vain. Then the children's help was needed. Boys and girls caught hold of the rope, and when there was no more room to hold on it they caught hold of their fathers' coats and their mother's dresses. Then a long pull, a strong pull and a pull altogether, and the lifeboat shot over the sand-bar and came safely to land. The added strength of the children did this work. So in our Mission Bands. But, boys and girls, be like the wise men who came from the far East to see the Christ-child. They first fell down and worshipped Him and then offered their gifts. So first give yourself to Jesus, then give your loving service all your life.

SISTER BELLE.

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