

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

HOW THE RABBIT FOUND A FRIEND.

Our little rabbit was very lonely—
Every day he used to say:
"Dear I oh, dear! if I had only
Another rabbit to help me play."

Up and down the yard he rambled,
Into each corner he peeped with care—
Over the bushes he climbed and scrambled—
Alas! there wasn't a rabbit there!

Now upon the fence were cats in plenty,
Black ones, white ones, yellow and gray,
Often you might have counted twenty,
Prowling about by night or day.

So then our rabbit, whose name was Bunny,
Made friends with a quiet, kind old cat,
And every morning, and this was funny,
They seemed to be having a good long chat.

Side by side, there we watched them sitting,
Bunny and Puss, in the pleasantest way—
Cats on the fence might be clawing and spitting,
These little friends were peaceful and gay.

And every day when the sun is shining
Out in our yard we see the pair—
Bunny against his cat reclining,
Puss too happy for bones to care.

So now our rabbit is never lonely,
Now if you listened, you'd hear him say:
"I'd rather have a nice cat, than only
A stupid rabbit, to help me play."

GOD WILLING TO FORGIVE.

WHEN people do wrong—old or young—they sometimes grieve themselves, sometimes they grieve their friends, sometimes their enemies, but whomsoever they grieve or do not grieve, they always grieve God. God is always sorry when people do wrong. People used to think that God had no tender feelings, that He was strong and could be angry, but was never pained or grieved. The poor heathen used to make gods as they called them, which had neither power nor feeling, out of wood or stone. They gave them eyes, but the eyes saw not; ears, but the ears could not hear; and hands, but they were quite useless, they could not handle. Of course *such* gods had no feelings, though it would appear that the people who ignorantly worshipped them did not always think so; for I have read that they once severely punished one of them. Flowers and trees and crops were all dying for want of rain, and there would soon be no food for the people or for their cattle. So they prayed to a wooden god for rain, again and again. But no rain came. So then they dragged it out of its temple and gave it a sound thrashing. But, of course, it cared no more for their thrashings than it had cared for their prayers.

But the true God sees and hears and feels, just as Jesus did. It makes a great difference to him whether we are happy or miserable, whether we are good or naughty. When we are happy, He is glad; but when we are naughty and miserable, He is very, very sorry. Then He is as Jesus was when He wept over Jerusalem. God does not weep, for He is a spirit. But God is truly grieved in his heart, as Jesus was, and this He is because He loves us.

Then what are we to do when we have grieved God? When you have done wrong and grieved a friend, what do you do? for God, whether He is pleased or grieved, is always your friend. If you are really sorry for what you have done, and wish you had not done it, you go to your friend and say all this, and kiss, or shake hands, and are friends. Something like that we have to do with God

when we have wronged and grieved Him. When the prodigal was sorry, his father fell upon his neck and kissed him, and they were friends again. This is the Gospel of Jesus: "If we confess our sins God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

But people did not always know this. Before Jesus came into our world and taught us so, sinning people used to think that God, as children would say, would "pay them out" for grieving Him if they did not give him something to "make it up and get Him to be friends again"! A very earnest man once asked, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?" Thousands of rams and rivers of oil! What a present for one man to give! But that was not all he asked. Listen to this. "Shall I give my first-born for my transgressions? the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Which means,—Shall I sacrifice my little child to please God? Shall I kill the pet of my home to get Him to "be friends" again? How very dreadful! And there were people who did really kill their little children because they had offended God, and they thought that to do so was the only way to get Him to forgive them. Even the children of Israel once did so. "They sacrificed their sons and their daughters (106th Psalm) and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and their daughters whom they sacrificed unto the idols." But we need not go so far away as the land where these people lived. Even in our own country, perhaps where we are now living, near to this very house, some child was once sacrificed to please God. I am glad we live in these Christian days, and not in the days when the Druids lived. For in those days, when they wanted God to help them in a battle or to send them rain, or to stay some dreadful plague from which men or cattle were dying, they would go to the house of some person whose son, perhaps, was the dearest boy in the whole district. Then they would drag him away to their temple to kill him, the heart-broken father and mother following and weeping and wildly pleading and struggling; but all their cries and efforts would fail to save their boy. They would beg to die in his place if the priests would let them, just as your mamma and papa would do if it had been one of you who had been chosen. But, no, that cannot be. It must be a child that is slain, the most beloved child. So they bring the little fellow to the temple, strip him and bind him, and then with their sacred knife, amid his own shrieks and the agony of his helpless friends, they kill him. And all this, as they thought, to please God, to get Him to forgive their sins and "be friends" again.

All this was done in England before Jesus sent the good news of the Gospel that God forgives all who are truly sorry for what they have done. Have we deceived, have we taken what we should not, have we told an untruth? God is grieved. Have we been selfish, or unkind, or disobedient? God is grieved. But the moment we are sorry He is glad again. He is more quickly glad than He was grieved, for He delights to pardon, but He does not delight to be angry. Yes, God does *delight* to pardon. All the blissful

people in heaven, when they were living on earth, delighted God by asking Him to forgive them. Again and again they did wrong and were sorry, and again and again they delighted God by seeking His mercy. That multitude that John saw, which no man can number, were once all wrongdoers; but they repented of their wrong, and confessed it, and were forgiven—tenderly, freely, joyfully forgiven.

OBEDIENCE.

"CHARLOTTE, you must not go on the ice. It is not safe. You know papa said so, and I should think Tom would be ashamed of himself to go when it is forbidden." "Please come home," pleaded May Norris. "Nonsense, May; I am only going to take a little slide, and Tom said perhaps he would let me try his skates. I shan't be gone long," answered Charlotte, shaking off May's hand, and starting on a run for the opposite bank of the pond. She reached the middle in safety, when oh, the ice bent, cracked, and Charlotte sank in the freezing water! Fortunately Tom was near, and at last succeeded in rescuing his sister, as the water was not very deep. And Charlotte lay motionless on the ice while he ran for help. The child was delicate and soon rheumatic fever in one of its worst forms set in, and poor Charlotte lay for weeks between life and death. It was months before she was able to leave her bed, and when she did so, she had learned a lesson never to be forgotten. With her head bowed on the foot of her little bed she prayed to God for strength to keep her resolutions.

And God gave it. In after life there were always two passages in her Bible which were marked. They were the Fifth Commandment, and "Children obey your parents in the Lord, for that is right."

BEGIN AT THE BOTTOM.—An elevated purpose is a good and ennobling thing, but we cannot begin at the top of it. We must work up to it by the often difficult path of daily duty—daily duty always carefully performed.

ALWAYS speak with politeness and deference to your parents and friends. Some children are polite and civil everywhere else except at home, but there they are coarse and rude. Shameful! Nothing sits so gracefully upon children, nothing makes them so lovely, as an habitual respect and dutiful deportment towards their friends and superiors. It makes the plainest face beautiful, and gives to every common action a nameless, but peculiar charm.

IN far away Turkey in Asia, in a city upon the shore of the Black Sea, live a missionary father and mother, and their boys and girls. A little baby boy came into the family some time ago, and his sister, five years old, was heard praying thus to God for her new brother:—"O Lord, bless the boy you have sent on to us. We are very thankful for him. O Lord, make him big and strong, and a nice, good man." If all the little brothers and sisters pray for each other every day, there will not often be any need of reminding them of the Bible text:—"Little children, love one another," for they will love each other too well to be unkind, either in work or play.