

The Little Gift.

BY MRS. MARTIN.

God's goodness gave a little gift
Unto a child,
That often did its heart uplift,
That oft beguiled
It of its woe;
That lightened labour, sweetened toil,
Gave hope for fear,
For grief's sad tear, gave joy's glad smile;
How it did cheer
That child did know.

It was not any great, grand gift
God gave that child,
But just a beam through a cloud-rift,
When it had faded,
Its heart to cheer,
How that poor timid child had strayed
But for that beam,
That with its daylight beauty made
Life's pathway seem
So bright and clear!

It was the gift of sacred song
God's goodness gave,
To go with that poor child along
Down to the grave,
And cheer its gloom.
Though with no bright obblazing flame
Shone that small light,
Though with no nimbus round a name,
But that child's night
It did illumo.

Perchance some scintillating ray
From that small light
May brighten up some darkened day
And cheer some night
As it did thine,
Poor child! Then Him who gave to thee
That gift, I'll praise,
And bless through all eternity
The wondrous grace
Of love divine.

—S. S. Visitor.

The Truth at All Hazards.

Some time after the beginning of the present century there were living in a busy country town in the North, a pious couple who had an only son. For this son they daily prayed to God. So the foundations of an upright life were laid in the boy's heart, and among these, very especially, a regard for uprightness and truth.

In the course of years the boy's school-days were ended, and also his apprenticeship to a business life in the country town; and as there was no prospect for him there, he came up to England, to one of the great sea-ports, and by and by he got a good position in a merchant's office.

But he was not long in this excellent place before he was put to the test in a very painful way with respect to the lessons he had received about truth.

It was part of the business of that office to have ships coming and going. And it was the rule, when the ship came into port, that its captain sent word to the office that he had arrived, and was now awaiting instructions where to discharge the cargo; and it was the duty of the manager of the office to send back instructions to the captain where and when this was to be done. A few months after this lad from the North came to the office, a ship laden with coal came in, and the usual message from the captain came; but, somehow or other, no answer was sent back to him. The captain waited a week, but still no word came back. Now that was very hard on the captain. Until his ship got free of its cargo, it had to lie idle in the dock; and all who belonged to the ship were kept idle too. So at the end of a week, the captain sent word to the office that his ship has been kept so long waiting for instructions where to discharge its cargo, that it had missed a good offer of a new cargo, and the office would have to pay him for the loss. This payment is called "demurrage."

When the manager of the office got this message from the captain, he was very angry. He sent for the little lad from the North and said to him, "Didn't I send you down to Captain Smith with instructions to discharge his coals?"

The little lad said, "No, sir; I do not remember being sent down."

"O, but I did," answered the manager. "You have forgotten." And there for a time, so far as the office was concerned, the matter was allowed to rest.

But the captain did not intend to let it rest there. He applied for his demurrage. And when that was refused, he took the matter of the office to law. And by and by, his complaint came before the judges in the court of law.

The day before the trial, the manager came to the little lad from the North and said to him, "Mind, I sent you to the dock with those instructions to discharge the coal."

"But, I assure you, I cannot remember your doing so," said the lad.

"O, yes, but I did. You have forgotten." It was a great trouble to the lad. He had never been sent to the dock. He could not say he had been sent; and foresaw that he would have to say before the judges what would certainly offend the manager, and lead to the loss of his excellent place.

On the morning of the trial, he went to the court. The manager came up, and the poor lad tried once more to assure him that he was mistaken, but he would not listen.

"It is all right," he said hastily. "I sent you on such a day, and you have got to bear witness that I did—and see you say it clearly."

In a little while he was called into the witness-box, and almost the first question put to him was whether he remembered the day when Capt. Smith's ship came in. And then this: "You remember during that day being sent by the manager of the office to the dock with a letter for the captain?"

"No, sir."

"Don't you remember taking instructions to Captain Smith to discharge his coals?"

"No, sir."

"Were you not sent by the manager of your office to the coal-ship on that day?"

"I was not, sir."

"Nor next day?"

"No."

The gentleman who put the questions was a barrister. He had been engaged by the manager to win the case for him. But when he heard the little lad's replies, he turned to the judge, and said: "My Lord, I give up this case. My instructions were that this witness would prove that a message to discharge had been sent to Captain Smith, and it is plain no such proof can be got from him."

So the case ended in the captain's favour and against the office in which the little lad had found so excellent a place. He went to his lodgings with sorrowful heart and wrote to his father and mother that he was sure to be dismissed. Then he packed his little trunk to be ready to go home next day; and in the morning, expecting nothing but his dismissal, he went early to the office. The first to come in after him was the master. He stopped for a moment at the little lad's desk and said, "We lost our case yesterday."

"Yes, sir," answered the lad; "and

I am very sorry I had to say what I did." By and by the manager came in; and, after a little time, he was sent for to the master's room. It was a long while before he came out. Then the little lad was sent for. "I am going to be dismissed," he thought to himself. But the master said to him: "I was sorry yesterday, but not with you. You did right to speak the truth; and to mark my approval of what you did, I am going to put you in charge of all the workings and sales of our Glenfardle mine." Then he sent for the manager and told him what he had said, and added, "And the young man will make his reports direct to me."

Six months afterward the manager left the office, and young though he was, the little lad was appointed to his place. And before many years had passed, he was admitted as junior partner in the firm; and he is now at the head of the entire business—the managing partner.

In his case truth was the best. But I want to say that, if things had turned out other than they did, and he had been dismissed, it would still have been the best for him to speak the truth.—*Dr. McLeod, in Sunday Magazine.*

A Bad Character, and How it Follows Us.

SOME years ago, in a farming neighbourhood, a middle-aged man was looking about in search of employment. He called at the house of a respectable farmer and told his errand.

"What is your name?" asked the farmer.

"John Wilson," was the reply.

"John Wilson—the same that lived near here when a boy?"

"The same, sir."

"Then I do not want you."

Poor John, surprised at such a reply, passed on to the house of the next farmer, and there a similar reply was given. And he found no one in the neighbourhood where his earlier years had been spent who was willing to employ him.

Passing on, he soon came in sight of the old school-house. "Ah!" said he, "I understand it now. I was a school-boy three years ago; but what kind of a school-boy? Lazy, disobedient, often in mischief, and once caught in deliberate lying; and though since I have been trying to reform, they all think me the same kind of a man that I was as a boy. O that I had done as I ought to when at school. Then people would have confidence in me now."

So it is, and school-boys and school-girls should remember it, that character follows us, and is remembered, and that those who have known us in our early days will be very apt to look upon us in later years as they did in our youth.

A lazy boy generally makes a lazy man, just as a crooked sapling makes a crooked tree. And so a shiftless, careless, mischievous, untruthful boy is likely to have the same character as he grows up to manhood. And even if he has changed, it is hard to make people believe it; for, as some one has said, if the crack has been mended, people will always be looking where it was.

The great mass of idlers, thieves, paupers, vagabonds, and criminals that fill our penitentiaries and almshouses have come to be what they are from wrong conduct and wrong habits in youth; as, on the other hand, those

who make the great and useful men of the community are those who began right courses in their early days. As the general rule, we expect to see the traits of youth continued into manhood, and confirmed and strengthened rather than weakened by years. And even where the character is really reformed, one suffers for a life-time for the errors and sins of youth; as the father told his son, "You may draw out the nails you have driven, but the holes in the post will remain!"

Let all the young remember it, that character is early formed, and it follows us wherever we go.—*Sol.*

Odds and Ends.

"MAMMA," said a little girl, "I think I've got ammonia." "You must not say ammonia, dear; you must say pneumonia." "But it ain't new, for I think I had it yesterday."

A CHIP of the maternal block: Mamma—"Yes, my child, we shall all know each other in heaven." Edith—"But, mamma, we can make believe we are out when some of them call, can't we?"

PARENT (angrily)—"You have been in the water! You were fishing!" Son—"Yes, ma'am; I was in the water, but I got a boy out who might have been drowned." Parent—"Indeed, who was he?" Son—"Myself."

How little we know of the inner life of our closest friend! While we may imagine that his thoughts are of friendly serenity, he, in thinking may muse: "Strange he does not think of the five dollars he borrowed from me." Ah, human nature, thou art a deceptive rascal. Thou smilest the smile of the sweet herb, and thinkest the thought of quinine.—*Arkansaw Traveller.*

OATHS are vulgar, senseless, offensive, impious; like obscene words, they leave a noisome trail upon the lips, and a stamp of odium upon the soul. They are inexcusable. They gratify no sense, while they outrage taste and dignity.

THERE is a land suit in Germany which was begun in 1604. They must be poor lawyers there not to have gobbled that land four centuries ago.

THE following advertisement, it is said, appeared recently in a French newspaper: "Found—On Sunday last, a lace mitten, embroidered with pearls. If the person who lost it will be kind enough to leave the other one at the office of this paper, she will greatly oblige the person who found the first."

AN Austin man who went fishing recently lost his lunch on the road, and went back to look for it. Meeting a negro who was picking his teeth, he asked, "Did you pick up anything on the road?"—"No, sah, I didn't pick up nuffin—couldn't a dog have found it and eat it up?"

A few days ago in a New York police court a fine of ten dollars for drunkenness was imposed upon Miss Mary Hoyt, a lady of select society and a daughter of a millionaire. She had been arrested for disorderly conduct, creating a disturbance and assaulting the police. The trail of the serpent is everywhere; no social rank is free from the curse; and the law, that fines the already sorely-punished victim, sanctions and protects the horrible business that has wrought her degradation and shame. Such is our boasted licensing system.