

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWSRULES FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR
PARENTS.

"Simple Rules of Health and Courtesy for Those at Schools" is the good, full mouthful of a name imposed on a little pamphlet prepared by Dr. Helen MacMurphy and Principal Auden, of Upper Canada College, and issued under the seal of the Ontario Educational Association. The rules are numerous, but necessary, and most of them might be observed with profit by those not at school. For example, "Get up early. Do not lie in bed after you are awake," is a good, little old rule for all healthy people to observe. It is not likely that the school children to whom the advice is tendered will read the pamphlet. Their parents should read it, and try to enforce its recommendations. Incidentally they are apt to get some useful information for themselves.

Bathing and Studying.

The advice that there should be a daily cold water bath is a good one, for cold water hardens the skin, strengthens the nerves and prevents chills. It is to be feared that the cold morning tub is not such a prominent feature of the average Canadian's daily routine as it should be. In the Old Country, a normal, healthy person takes a cold bath as regularly as his breakfast. Here we take it as regularly as our hot cross buns. Advice against studying for two hours after a heavy meal is timely; but is somewhat discounted by another rule, that pronounces against a heavy supper. If the heavy meal is to be eaten at all, then, it will be taken about 12.30; but as most of the children are back in school at 1.30, there must follow an hour before they can safely study. There seems nothing for it but to abandon the heavy meal altogether; or else rise about 6 a.m., and stow it away then.

The Necessary Sleep.

"Go to bed early enough to make sure that you will wake up rested in the morning" is sensible advice. It should be no longer possible for a sluggish youth to defend his late appearance at the breakfast table on the ground that a "man who doesn't go to bed until midnight can't be expected to get up before 7." The sixteen-year-old boy or girl should have 9 hours' sleep in summer and an extra half hour in winter, while children between 7 and 12 should sleep 11 hours each night. An evil practice is the reading of exciting stories before going to bed. It is also improper to sleep on the back, which produces dreams, or on the left side, which is not beneficial to the heart. Sleep on the right side. Of particular value at the present time is the advice about underclothing. May 24, or June 1, is about the right time to change from heavy flannels. Thus will be fulfilled the precept of the old philosopher who said, "Stick to your flannels until they stick to you."

Benefits of Deep Breathing.

When sitting down do not cross the legs, or lean the head on the hand, the objection being that these postures interfere with circulation in one case, and with the symmetrical growth and strength of the neck in the other. One of the best paragraphs in the pamphlet is as follows:—"A great deal to good can be done by your lungs, your circulation, and your heart by frequently, when you are in good air, breathing as slowly and deeply as you can for a limited time. You should be able to inhale and exhale air steadily for about one minute." Two hours' exercise a day in the open air is also recommended; and boys and girls generally would be greatly benefitted if they were not loaded down with home work to such an extent that they may find it difficult to spare the time for exercise. Having found that time, it

would be then necessary to find the playgrounds.

A Chapter on Courtesy.

The chapter on courtesy sounds as an echo from the east, as courtesy is not taught in the average schoolroom, probably for lack of time. It seems out of date to be courteous. What is demanded is precocious smartness; while true boyish courtesy and innocence are felt to be effeminate faults. The polite boy is set down as a prig, and one not to be considered in any sense as "one of the guys." The pamphlet concludes with these reflections: "Everybody is meant to be happy, and the only way to have happiness is to make it. No matter what we lose, we have enough or can find enough to make ourselves happy. Few people really appreciate what they have. And to be happy and cheerful is one of the great courtesies of life. Play the game of life bravely, and no matter how it goes with you, remember that while the winner's smile is easily worn, you are more sure that you are a real person, if you can lose and feel just as cheerful, courteous and generous as when you win."

THE MANSE AND THE MINISTER.

Rev. Dr. George Lawson, of Selkirk.

Nearly fifty years ago there was published by Oliphant's, of Edinburgh, a belated volume, a copy of which came into my possession recently on the dispersal of a venerable minister's library. I looked at the book curiously, for I had never heard of either it or its subject. And my ignorance, as is not unusual, had caused me to miss, until that fortunate moment, a very good thing. It was the life of Dr. George Lawson, Secession minister at Selkirk, who "fourished" between the years 1749 and 1820. But, strange to say, the biography was not written until the year 1861—forty-one years after the subject of it died, an old man. So that the book really deals with Scottish life and character from the middle to the close of the eighteenth century.

The memoir runs to four hundred and eighty pages, large octavo, and is written in that leisurely and copious way which marked the literary and sermonic deliverances of Scottish divines half a century ago. It was but fitting, after waiting and hesitating for forty-one years, that the writer of the biography should take his time in the production of this his book. Notwithstanding a deep underlying note of seriousness—as befits the subject—the book has not a little of Boswellian flavor in it, and is altogether a quaint mixture of robust piety, Scotch cocksureness, and pawky humor.

The numerous anecdotes are especially good, and afford delightful glimpses of Scotch middle-class and rural life in those times. From the nature of the subject the stories naturally gravitate round the manse and the parish, the minister and his people. Kirk life in Scotland has always been more closely allied with the life of the people than has been the case in England.

The Rev. George Lawson, famous for nearly fifty years as the minister of Selkirk Secession church and Professor of Theology in the Secession Institute, was the son of a small farmer. As a boy he was shy, awkward, and absent-minded—the last quality distinguished him and leading to numerous odd episodes throughout his long career.

Wishing to have the lad prepared for college and the kirk, his parents took him to their minister for advice and assistance. This minister was a notable man in the bleak countryside where the Lawsons lived, a stalwart pioneer in the young Secession church,

and, though of arbitrary and impatient temper, highly respected for his character and ability. He heard what the fond parents had to say, but, hastily mistaking the lad's awkwardness for dullness and lack of parts, he rudely burst out on the father:

"I tell thee, man, he has no mother-wit. If a man wants lair he may get that; and if he wants riches he may get them; and even if he wants grace he may get it; but if a man want common sense, I tell thee, man, he will never get that."

The fiery divine, however, soon altered his opinion of young Lawson.

A sly anecdote, by the way, is told of this country pastor and his manservant. They had frequent bickerings. At last the man determined to leave his place, and told his employer so.

"Hoot, toot, said the minister, 'what's making you think of that?'"

"Deed, sir," was the reply, "to tell you the even down truth, your temper is so bad I cannot bear it any longer."

"Fie, man," replied the minister. "I am sure ye ken that it's no sooner on that it's off again."

"Weel a wat," responded the man, "that's true; but then the evil is that it's nae sooner off than it's on again."

There was a long-winded elder in this gentleman's church who had an overweening conceit of his "gifts." One day he attended a farmhouse funeral. The company assembled in the barn to partake of refreshments before starting on the long walk to the kirk-yard, and the elder was asked to offer the thanksgiving prayer. Such a grand opportunity was not to be lightly used! He started with the fall of Adam, and went steadily down from one great Bible doctrine to another till patience was exhausted. Significant looks passed between the mourners. One by one they deserted the barn, and the funeral procession started for the distant kirk-yard. When the elder came to the close of his prayer and opened his eyes, he found himself alone, and going to the door discovered that the procession was fully a mile on its way. The historian unnecessarily adds, "His conceited soul was somewhat chafed."

George Lawson's capacity being at length duly acknowledged, he was placed under the tuition of a young student of divinity, who, after the thrifty Scottish fashion, employed his vacations in teaching. This gentleman was in after years well known as the Rev. John Johnstone, minister of Ecclefechan, and the tutor of Thomas Carlyle. He was, we read, "one of the most accomplished of men, and one of the best specimens of a Christian minister." Of him Thomas Carlyle is said to have declared, "I have seen many duly capped and equipped bishops and other episcopal dignitaries; but I have never seen one who more beautifully combined in himself the Christian and the Christian gentleman than did Mr. Johnstone."

After the requisite course at Edinburgh University and the Theological Hall, George Lawson was duly ordained as minister of the Secession, or Burgh kirk, at Selkirk, in the year 1771 at the early age of twenty-one, and at the munificent salary of £70 a year. And there the modest, shy, gentle, and wonderfully learned man began the fifty years' ministry which, in a quiet, unobtrusive, but very effective way, was to have such a great and lasting influence on the church life of Scotland.

A Marvelous Memory.

His predecessor had been a man of remarkable gifts as a popular and eloquent preacher. In that way Lawson was never distinguished, for, though his reputation as a preacher was always considerable, he depended more on his wide theological learning, his unique acquaintance with the