

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

TURNING POINTS IN LIFE.

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide, In the strife of truth and falsehood, for the good or evil side."

NO one who has read biography with carefulness has failed to see certain little things, especially in the lives of great men, which have turned them away from ignorance or idleness or error, to a life distinguished for its intelligence and earnestness. Sometimes the turning point is early in life. It is said of Voltaire that at the age of five years he committed to memory an infidel poem, and was never after that able to free himself from its pernicious influence.

William Wilberforce, when a child, was placed under the training of a pious aunt, and although much was done in his early manhood to erase the impressions received from his aunt, his whole life was moulded and coloured by that training.

Hume was quite young when he took the wrong side in a debate, and embraced and defended through life the position taken at that time.

Scott, the commentator, in a despairing mood read a hymn of Dr. Watts on the All-seeing God, and was turned from his idleness to a life of usefulness.

The rebuke of a teacher and the taunt of a school-mate aroused Clarke, the distinguished divine, who up to that time was very slow in attaining knowledge.

The turning point in Doddridge's life was when Clarke took him under his care. The first year he made great progress in study, and soon developed into a man of learning and influence.

Aaron Burr sought spiritual advice in a revival at college, but his counsellor told him that the work was not genuine. His anxieties were dissipated, and from that time his downward career has been dated.

Robert Moffat, the distinguished missionary, as he read a placard announcing a missionary meeting, was let to devote his life to the benefit of the heathen.

Thus it is that character and years of usefulness often depend on one little event or circumstance.

A LITTLE GIRL'S TRUST.

"PLEASE, mamma, let Annie go to school with me," said Jennie Gordon, one brisk October morning.

"Will you take good care of her?" asked Mrs. Gordon.

"Of course I will. Come, pet, and have your pretty boots on."

Annie, a dimpled three-year-old, jumped up and down at these words, clapped her baby hands, laughed, and finally threw her arms around Jennie's neck, and nearly strangled her.

"Me do cool," she said, "me wead in bid book."

Before long the children were ready, and hand-in-hand they went out into the bright sunny day. Annie had a little red book in her hand, and as she went along the grassy path by the side of the road, she laughed aloud and hugged the book to her bosom.

The schoolhouse was nearly a mile from the children's home, and they started early that they might have time to rest along the shady way. And there were lovely places to rest. In one spot stood a great chestnut-tree, its branches stretching across the dusty road; farther on, a tall hickory made a tempting shade; and all around gorgeous autumn flowers caught the golden

sunshine. The children ran on joyously till they came to the chestnut-tree, and there they stopped and began rustling in the dry leaves for nuts. They found a few prickly burrs, and put them in their basket, and just as they were starting again, they saw through a hole in the rough stone wall a ragged and wicked-looking man coming through the woods that bordered the road. Jennie, the eldest of the children, was so badly frightened that she could not take a step. She sank down on the ground, and began to call, "Mamma, mamma!" in a pitiful voice. But little Annie, who was scarcely old enough to know much about danger, remembered the lessons her mother had taught her about the loving God who sees us always, and putting her arms around her sister, said, "Don't ky. Dod will tate tare oe us. I ask Him." Then she knelt down and said her little evening prayer.

The poor tramp on the other side of the wall saw the lovely scene—the sweet child with tiny hands put meekly up, the sweet lips murmuring words to an unseen Father. His heart was touched to its depths. He fell upon his knees and prayed silently.

Little Annie looked up and a bright smile flashed over her face.

"Oh, he dood man, sister," she said, "he knows Dod," and hand-in-hand the little ones went on their way.

That was the turning-point in the life of the reckless, law-breaking man. He sought the God of the little trusting child, and in after years many said of him, "He is a good man for he knows God."

PROTECTIVE INFLUENCE.

SOME months after a young man's conversion he chanced to meet one of his former dissolute companions, who seemed overjoyed to see him, and asked him to go with him to a neighbouring bar-room. But the young man refused, saying:

"I have a Friend with me."

"I don't see any one with you."

"You can't see Him, but He is here."

"Bring Him in with you."

"No: He never goes into bar-rooms."

"Then let Him wait outside."

"No, no," was the final answer. "My friend is Jesus Christ, and if I go in with you He'll not wait."

Noble answer was this! And, like his Lord, the Christian young man was delivered by it from the power of evil.

Remember, this best Friend "will not wait" outside of places of sin.

Who can take His place if He leaves you?

USEFULNESS.

THAT the children may better understand what we mean by usefulness, we give them the following story just as it occurred:

A gentleman was asked to address some children, and, taking out his watch, he asked them what it was for.

"To keep time," answered the children.

"Well, suppose it won't keep time, and it can't be made to keep time, what is it good for?"

"It is good for nothing," they replied.

He then took out a lead pencil, and asked what it was for.

"It is to mark with," was the answer.

"But suppose the lead is out, and it won't mark, what is it good for?"

"It is good for nothing."

He then took out a pocket-knife, and asked what was its use.

"To whittle with," said some. "To cut with," said others.

"Suppose that it has no blade, then what is it good for?"

"Good for nothing," they all cried.

"Then a watch, a pencil, or a knife is good for nothing unless it can do the thing for which it was made!"

"Yes, sir," the children all answered.

"Well, children, what is a boy or girl made for?"

They hesitated; didn't know exactly what to say. Then he put the question:

"What is the chief end of man?"

This they answered at once, "To glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever."

"Well done," said the gentleman; "that is right. Now, then, if a boy or girl does not do what he or she was made for, and glorify God, what is he or she good for?"

And the children all answered at the top of their voices, without seeming to think how it would sound:

"Good for nothing."

That was it exactly. But if this be so, there must be a great many boys and girls, and grown-up people, too, who are just good for nothing. We trust that none of our boys or girls will ever be of that number.

"I WON'T."

THE other day a little boy burst out crying in school, and he cried as if his heart would break. Did another boy hurt him? No. Was his spelling lesson too hard? No. What were those tears for? His teacher called him to her side, and asked Freddy what the matter was. "I want to go home. O, do let me go," sobbed Freddy. "What for, my dear child?" asked the teacher in her own kind way. "O," said Freddy, "I said 'I won't' to my mother before school, and I want to go home and tell her how sorry I am, and ask her to forgive me."

They were penitent tears, then, the best tears a child could shed. But then, you must remember:

'Tis not enough to say
We're sorry and repent,
And still go on from day to day
Just as we always went.

Repentance is to leave
The sins we loved before,
And show that we in earnest grieve
By doing so no more.

Yes, no more. I hope Freddy had no more "I won't's" for his mother.

FARM-HOUSE PETS IN JAPAN.

THE Japanese people are very fond of pets. It is very rare to find a house entirely destitute of some favourite animal, from the costly *chin* (King Charles spaniel) to the bob-tailed cat that purrs near the tea-kettle on the *hibachi*, or fire-box. Canary birds are quite common, and in place of something more rare, tiny bantam fowls are caressed and petted. Even a "rain-frog" or tree-toad, has been made a child's darling, while the little water-turtles with fringed tails are prized as rare objects of delight.

In the country the boys of the family catch by trap or pit the wild animals on the hills, and tame them. Hares are the most common creatures caught, and in a little box of pine wood, with an open front of bamboo cane, the little pet finds a home. It soon learns to run about the house, and stand on its hind legs to nibble bits of radish or lumps of boiled rice from the children's hands.