

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

THE PICNIC ON THE COMMON.

ONE Sunday afternoon, when Lena was going home from the church with the weather-cock on its steeple, she met Hattie Robbins going home from the old meeting-house on the hill.

"O, Hattie!" said Lena, giving a little jump off both her feet, and letting go her mamma's hand: "my papa came up from 'Mantic last night, and he brought Pearly a picture-book, and me a little 'stension table and a little new camp-chair; and Miss Emma Ames has given me the sweetest little Red-riding-hood dolly, and—"

"And to-morrow you must come over and make Lena a visit, and play with the new toys," said Lena's grandpa, who was the minister at the white church, as he took hold of his little granddaughter's chubby hand, and led her along between him and her grandmother to the parsonage, where she, and her papa and mamma, and brother and Pearly, were visiting.

"I'm 'specting company to-morrow," said Lena, as her mother was taking off her hat, after they arrived at their home.

But just then it began to rain, and it kept up all night and all day Monday, and all Tuesday forenoon. Lena got pretty tired of staying in the house. She set her extension table over and over with her little China tea-set, making it large and small, and inviting company to dinner and tea. And she folded up her camp-chair, and played make journeys on foot to the White Mountains, going through the kitchen, up the back stairs to the study, down the front stairs, through the hall, parlour, and dining-room, unfolding her chair and sitting down to rest in each room. And she played that the dog Jack was a wolf that ate up Red-riding-hood when she was going to see her grandmother, and Pearly showed her pictures in his new book. But for all she was so busy she was very glad on Tuesday afternoon when her grandpa called from the garden,—

"You can come out, Lena; the clouds have broken away, showing two little glimpses of blue sky, about as big as a doll's bed-quilt, up over the church spire."

Lena ran down the gravel walk, and climbing up on the front gate, she called in a voice as clear as a robin's note,—

"Hattie! Hattie! you and George come over now, and we'll have a picnic. I've got some little tookies that grandma let me bake this morning, and you stop and ask Helen Brown to come wif you; and if you go in the road all the way round the common, you won't get wet in the grass."

Pretty soon the children came with their dollies. Hattie said, "I don't know as 'twill be much of a picnic. I've got two baked apples, and that's all I've got."

"Oh, well!" said Helen; "never mind, we can all taste of the apples, and I've got a whole lot of popped corn in my basket, and that's splendid to carry to picnics."

Just as her guests arrived, Lena went out to a large flat rock on the common with her

table, and Pearly brought out the new chair. Then they both ran back for the cookies and the dolls, and that time the old cat, Wonder, and the little kitty, Daisy, came with them.

The children looked at the new things with great delight. The table was of black-walnut, and was made just like your mamma's table in your dining-room.

"Oh, dear me!" said Helen, "I need a 'stension table drestly with my large family and all my comp'ny; I s'wrequently have to put two tables together."

"Yes," said Lena, "they are very 'venient. When there ain't anybody to eat but me and my husband we have it like this,—just a little round stand, you see; but when comp'ny comes we make it larger, so:" and Pearly pulled it out, and put in extra leaves, and made it as large as he could for the picnic. Then he folded and unfolded the chair, and they all admired it, and little Georgie smelt of the roses on the camp-chair cushion, and said, "They look as if you could pick them." Then they took turns in sitting down to try it; and Lena told them to lean back and fold their arms, and see how "wested" they felt after their walk. Then they placed the chair at the head of the table, and put Wonder in it with the dolls all around her, and she sat as still and looked as dignified as any lady, and seemed rather ashamed of Daisy, who would frisk around, and who, Lena said, "didn't play comp'ny worth a snap."

Just as they had got the table all ready and were going to begin to eat, Lena jumped up and said very fast, as she always talks: "I'm going to 'vite Mrs. Curtis, 'cause she's blind and she can't see, and she loves little children, and she hain't got any at her house, and she and I are neighbours, cause we like each other, and I 'sume she's tired of staying at home all these rainy days; and she 'vited me to her picnic and it was splendid," and away Lena skipped.

It was only a few steps, but while she was gone, Helen and Hattie and George thought they would find some flowers so that they could tell Mrs. Curtis there were flowers on the table, and Pearly went into the parsonage for a chair for her to sit in; and when they all got back, Daisy was on the table, and was eating the last of the little cookies. Lena said she was "kinder 'shamed, after she had 'vited Mrs. Curtis, not to have anything she could eat, for she had custard-pie at her picnic and it was 'drestful good." But Hattie said she should have both the baked apples; so she ate them, and said they were nice, and the children ate little Helen's popped corn, and they were having a lovely time, when all at once it began to rain as hard as it could pour, and Lena's grandpa ran with an umbrella for Mrs. Curtis, and Uncle Lester carried in the chairs, and Pearly the wonderful table; and the little girls took their dollies in their aprons and scampered for home; and Wonder walked demurely, close to Mrs. Curtis, as much as to say, "We are the old ladies, and should have the rheumatism if we took cold." But Daisy frisked around and got as wet as her little mistress, but, unlike her, didn't have to have her clothes changed; and when Lena

came down stairs in her clean dress, she found Daisy nice and dry, all curled up fast asleep on the little extension table. "We chilrens have done some good to-day," said Lena, wisely; "we've made Mrs. Curtis laugh; and she was looking drestful sorry when I went after her."—*A. A. P. in S. S. Times.*

FIVE MINUTES.

LITTLE can be said, much may be done, in five minutes. In five minutes you may fire a city, scuttle a ship or ruin a soul. The error of a moment makes the sorrow of a life. Get that thought well into your hearts, and my work is done in a minute, instead of five.

Many a young man in a moment of weakness, or of strong temptation, has wrought a ruin that a lifetime, though a thousand years, can never rebuild. One crime, one sin, one error, one neglect of duty, and the deed is done, perhaps forever.

In a moment of hunger, Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage; millions of boys sell their's for less. A breach of trust, an act of dishonesty, a profane word, and the soul is defiled with a stain that cannot wash away.

Tempted to sin, remember that in five minutes you may destroy your good name, fill your soul with undying remorse, and bring, with sorrow, your father's gray hairs to the grave. But if you can do so much evil, so you may do a mighty sum of good in five minutes.

You may decide to live for usefulness and honour. Everything hangs on that choice, and it may be made in five minutes as well as in five years.

Take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves; take care of the minutes and the hours are safe. I made a little book in this way: in the breakfast room were pen, and ink, and paper, and if, when the hour for breakfast came, all was not ready, I wrote a few words or lines, as time allowed. The book was finished, and it had been published scarcely a week before I heard it had saved a soul: it has saved many since. It did not cost me one minute that would have been used for anything else. It was the five minutes before breakfast that made the book that saved the souls.

Seneca taught that "time is the only treasure of which it is a virtue to be covetous."

Never waste five minutes of your own time, never rob others by compelling them to wait for you.

Five minutes in the morning, and five minutes in the evening, will make you the master of a new language in two or three years. Before you are of middle age you may speak all the modern tongues, if you will but improve the spare minutes of the years now flying by.

Time once past can never be recalled. Gold lost may be found. Fortune wasted may be regained. Health gone, returns with medicine and care. But time lost, is lost forever. Minutes are more than jewels: they are "the stuff that life is made of;" they are diamond stepping-stones to wisdom, usefulness and wealth; the ladder to heaven.