

"Take back the money this instant, for it has no doubt got into the bread by some mistake."

Francesca carried it back; but the benevolent gentleman declined to receive it.

"No, no," said he; "it was no mistake. I had the money baked in the smallest loaf simply as a reward for you, my good child. Always continue thus contented, peaceable and unassuming. The person who prefers to remain contented with the smallest loaf, rather than quarrel for the larger one, will find throughout life blessings in this course of action still more valuable than the money which was baked in your loaf of bread."—*The Morning Star*.

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GOD'S CALL TO CHILDREN.

God's call may come to children; he may and does speak to those who are in life's fresh morning. It is not by the sound of thunder that God speaks as he did in Sinai. It is not by voice that you can hear as in the days when he was revealing himself to man, but in the still small voice of conscience, in the silent and often unheeded breathing of his Holy Spirit in your hearts when you lie awake and wonder and dream and think and pray. God may be turning your minds to do something which you have never done before. It may be to seek after Christ who is very near, to take your stand before others as a Christian, to give your life to some special service. O, be attentive to every call of God and be very obedient. When I was a boy I used to spend a great many hours in the woods. And when I was walking fast over the rustling dead leaves and dry sticks, I couldn't hear the beautiful music of the woods. But when I sat down

quietly on some great log and listened, there came first a hush in all the forests and then I could hear far and near the voices of birds and the hum of insects and the sad musical sighing of the gentle winds in the highest tree tops. And so sometimes we are so busy and noisy, and tramp through the days of our pilgrimage so fast, that we hear not the voice of God. But if you will only pause once in awhile and listen and look into this great wonder-book, our souls, and into the other and greater wonder-book, the Bible, and thus get ready for the call of God in the quieting of our minds, it will come to us. The Lord says, "Be still, and know that I am God."

Beginning a Christian life early is God's way for us. There is nothing unnatural about it. It doesn't mean that these children are to be little saints, free from all faults, perfect in word and in action. It means that they are to be healthy, active, happy boys and girls, young men and women, learning and unlearning, making mistakes and yet making progress, growing more and more into God's favour. It is said several times of the child Samuel, it is said of John the Baptist the child, and of the child Jesus, that they grew. "Why of course they did," you say. But the Bible teaches by it that we do not become mature and perfect at once. "To become religious," it has been wisely said, "does not make a prodigy of a boy or girl. It is not a hot-bed process." The Bible in the beautiful picture of Samuel's childhood describes a boy who was like a little tree, but one planted in the courts of God where it grew into beauty and power. God grant that you all may love his house and his service. How much more light you have than came to Samuel! He lived amid the shadows of a dark time and Christ was not seen by him except afar off. Will you follow that light which led wise men of old to the feet of Jesus?

SOLDIER AND THISTLE.

LITTLE Minnie, in her eagerness after flowers, had wounded her hand on the sharp prickly thistle. This made her cry with pain at first and pout with vexation afterward.

"I do wish there was no such thing as a thistle in the world," she said pettishly.

"And yet the Scottish nation think so much of it they engrave it on the national arms," said her mother.

"It is the last flower that I should pick out," said Minnie. I am sure they might

have found a great many nicer ones, even among the weeds."

"But the thistle did them such good service once," said her mother, "they learned to esteem it very highly. One time the Danes invaded Scotland, and they prepared to make a night attack on a sleeping garrison. So they crept along barefooted as still as possible until they were almost on the spot. Just at that moment a barefooted soldier stepped on a great thistle, and the hurt made him utter a sharp, shrill cry of pain. The sound awoke the sleepers, and each man sprang to his arms. They fought with great bravery, and the invaders were driven back with much loss.

"Well I never suspected that so small a thing could save a nation," said Minnie thoughtfully.—*Baptist Weekly*.

A BOY'S VALENTINE.

I MIGHT begin "The rose is red"
(Though that is not so very new)
Or this the boys all think is good:
"If you love me as I love you."

But—seems to me—a valentine.

Is nicer when you do not say
The same old things that everyone
Keep saying in the same old way.

And I asked Jane the other night
What grown-up people write about?
She would not answer me at first
But laughed till I began to pout.

That stopped her for she saw I meant
The question (and she will not tease.)
"Why love," she said, "and shining eyes
A kiss, soft hair—just what they please."

It can't be hard, if that is all,
So I'll begin by saying this
"To my dear lady beautiful
I send a valentine and kiss.

"The valentine because she has
The loveliest hair and gentlest eyes
The kiss because I love her more
Than any one beneath the skies;

"Because she is the kindest, best
The sweetest lady ever known
And every year I'll say the same,
The very same to her alone!"

There! Now it's finished. Who will do
I've thought of one and then another
Who is there like it? Why of course,
I'll send it right away to mother!