

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

GRANTED WISHES.

Two little girls let loose from school
Queried what each would be;
One said, "I'd be a queen and rule,"
And one, "The world I'd see."

The years went on. Again they met
And queried what had been;
"A poor man's wife am I, and yet,"
Said one, "I am a queen."

"My realm a happy household is,
My king a husband true;
I rule by loving services,
How has it been with you?"

She answered, "Still the great world lies
Beyond me as it laid;
O'er love's and duty's boundaries
My feet have never strayed."

"Faint murmurs of the wide world come
Unheeded to my ear;
My widowed mother's sick bed room
Sufficeth for my sphere."

They clasped each other's hands, with tears
Of solemn joy they cried:
"God gave the wish of our young years,
And we are satisfied."

—*Youth's Companion.*

HISTORY OF A CHILD.

Many years ago, more than a thousand, indeed, there lived on an island whose name you know as well as your own, King Ethelwolf. This king had several sons; and the youngest of these, his father's favourite, is the hero of our story.

You think perhaps that because this little boy was a prince, he had everything that he could wish for, and so he had; but his wishes would not be the same as yours. You must remember that this was long ago, when even kings had not as comfortable homes as your own; and the toys that you think necessary to your happiness, had never been invented. The little fellow had one amusement, however, that our boys can enjoy. He spent much of his time in hunting, of which he never tired, though when he grew older, his many cares prevented his engaging in it. While the prince had, no doubt, as much enjoyment as you, his father, though very fond of him, could not give his son the advantages that you have; for schools were rare in those days. You need not be shocked, then, at the ignorance of the prince, when I tell you he was twelve years old before he knew his letters.

But though he knew so little of books, he had learned a great deal by travelling; for when he was eight years old he made his second visit to Rome with his father. The great city, with its splendid palaces and temples, seemed very grand to the boy, who was used to seeing the rough houses of his island home. It was during this visit that the Pope, who, you know, is at the head of the Roman Catholic Church, anointed the head of the young prince with oil, as a sign that he should some day be king.

Our prince did not always remain ignorant, even of books, as you will see. It was the custom in those days for kings and nobles to have in their courts minstrels or gleemen, who played on their harps and sang ballads. By listening to these songs, which was as great

an amusement as hunting, the young prince had become very fond of poetry, and had learned many of these pretty ballads by heart. So, one day, when his mother called her boys around her and showed them a beautifully illuminated poem in their own language, promising to give it to the one who should first learn to read it, our little hero, though the youngest of the brothers, set himself to work and soon won the prize. Do you not think that his big brothers must have felt quite ashamed? The prince now became very fond of study; and not content with reading his own language, he began the study of Latin. He soon became a good scholar, and afterwards did much for the education of the people of the island.

Before the young student was twenty-two years old, his father and all his brothers died; so, you see, he became king while very young. Do you not think he must have been very glad that he had spent his time well, and so was better able to govern his people?

The young king had a good deal of trouble at first; for the Danes, who came in ships from the North, tried to take the island from the people to whom it belonged. For a long time, the king was obliged to hide from his enemies; and one day he came to a herdsman's cottage. The herdsman's wife had no idea who her guest was; and as he sat by the fire, she asked him to watch her cakes while she was busy. The king, who did not know much about cooking, let the cakes burn; and the woman scolded him well for his carelessness.

Finally, this brave king, dressed like a harper, found his way into the camp of his enemies. While playing for the Danish king and his nobles, he heard all their plans. With this knowledge, and by the bravery of himself and his soldiers, he was able to defeat the Northmen.

When the war was over, the king devoted himself to the good of his people. He invited great scholars to the island, established schools, and did everything that was possible to improve his subjects. When you study history, you will learn much more about him than I can tell you in this short story. I scarcely need to give you his name; for you all know by this time, I am sure, that I have been telling you about Alfred the Great, King of England.

THE CAMEL.

The expression of his soft, heavy, dreamy eye tells its own tale of meek submission and patient endurance. Ever since travelling began in the deserts, the camel appears to be wholly passive—without doubt or fear, emotions or opinions of any kind—to be in all things a willing slave to destiny. He has none of the dash and brilliancy of the horse; that looking about with erect neck, fiery eye, cocked ears and inflated nostrils; that readiness to dash along a race-course, follow the hounds across country, or charge the enemy; none of that decision of will and self-conscious pride which demand, as a right, to be stroked, patted, pampered, by lords and ladies.

The poor camel bends his neck, and with a

halter round his long nose, and several hundred-weight on his back, paces patiently along from the Nile to the Euphrates. Where on earth, or rather on sea, can we find a ship so adapted for such a voyage as his over those boundless oceans of desert sand? Is the camel thirsty—he has recourse to his gutta percha cistern, which holds as much water as will last a week, or, as some say, ten days even, if necessary. Is he hungry—give him a few handfuls of dried beans; it is enough; chopped straw is a luxury. He will gladly crunch with his sharp grinders the prickly thorns and shrubs in his path, to which hard Scotch thistles are as soft down. And when all fails, the poor fellow will absorb his own fat hump. If the landstorm blows with furnace heat, he will close his small nostrils, pack up his ears, and then his long defleshed legs will stride after his swan-like neck through suffocating dust; and having done his duty, he will mumble his guttural, and leave, perhaps, his bleached skeleton to be a landmark in the waste for the guidance of future travellers.

NOW I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP.

As "now I lay me down to sleep,"
May angel guards above me keep,
Through all the silent hours of night,
Their watch and ward till morning light,
Dim evening shades around me creep,
As "now I lay me down to sleep."

"I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep,"
The while I wake or while I sleep;
And while I work and while I play,
Give me Thy grace that day by day,
Thy love may in my heart grow deep—
"I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep."

"If I should die before I wake;"
If I this night the world forsake,
And leave the friends I hold most dear;
Leave all that I so value here,
And if Thy call my slumbers break—
"If I should die before I wake,"

"I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to take;"
I pray that Thou wouldst for me make
Close at Thy feet a lowly place,
Where I may e'er behold Thy face,
And this I ask for Thy dear sake—
"I pray, Thee, Lord, my soul to take."

While bending at my mother's knee,
This little prayer she taught to me—
"Now (as) I lay me down to sleep,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to take."

THE NEW KEY.

"Aunt," said a little girl, "I believe I have found a new key to unlock people's hearts, and make them so willing."

"What is the key?" asked her aunt.

"It is only one little word. Guess what!" But aunt was no guesser.

"It is *please*," said the child. "If I ask one of the great girls in school, '*Please show me my parsing lesson*,' she says, '*O yes*,' and helps me. If I ask Sarah, '*Please do this for me*,' no matter, she will take her hands out of the suds and do it. If I ask uncle, '*Please*,' he says, '*Yes, Puss, if I can*.' And then if I say, '*Please, Aunt*—'"

"What does Aunt do?" said aunt herself.

"O, you look and smile just like mother, and that is best of all," cried the little girl, throwing her arms round her aunt's neck, with a tear in her eye."