

FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

THOUGHTS BY THE WAYSIDE.

ON THE BEAUTY OF NATURE.

"He hath made everything beautiful."—Ec. iii. 11.

What wondrous beauty spreads around,
On wood-clad height, in cultured vale,
And testifies the love profound
Which, thus adorning hill and dale,
Delights the eye, the heart makes glad,
And cheers the suff'ring and the sad.

Beneath the tall umbrageous trees,
When bright the morning sunbeams fall;
Or when the evening symphonies
To meadow-meditations call,
What pure enjoyment for the mind,
May we in nature's beauties find.

And when, amid the foliage green,
Distant or near, the rising spire,
Which marks God's sacred fane is seen,
Enkindled then the heart's desire,
Tribute of holy song to bring,
To God—Creator, Lord, and King.

But ah! familiar with the gifts
Pour'd by th' All-Loving Father's hand,
Too seldom cares to understand
Too seldom man the heart uplifts,
That earthly blessings all may share
Should turn the voice to praise and pray'r

Thus in the beautiful, the bright,
In nature's sweet, soft harmonies,
Souls oft are bound in fetters light,
Which hinder thoughts that fain would rise;
And thus content men live and move,
Nor care the joys of Heav'n to prove.

Give me, O God, an eye to see
Thy Hand in ev'ry earthly thing;
An ear to hear Heav'n's melody
In ev'ry note the song-birds sing;
And may my praise as theirs be pure,
For mercies that for aye endure.
Henbury. J. F.

Daddy's Boy.

(By L. T. MEADE.)

CHAPTER XXVI.

The almswomen and Peters being now satisfied, Bob not removed away to the tender mercies of the pawnbroker, and the Kemps having secretly returned Major Frere's money, the whole incident was speedily forgotten by Ronald, and the one grand topic of conversation was the coming fancy ball. Nothing else was thought about, nothing else was dreamt about during the few days which intervened between New Year's day and the 6th of January. The different costumes, the decorations, the supper, in short, the various details absorbed one and all.—With his usual enthusiasm Ronald threw himself into the affair, and was most anxious to sustain his own character on the eventful night to perfection. Having made a confidant of the Major, he much worried the old gentleman with queries and numberless remarks.

Uncle Ben had arranged that Ronald should wear the dress of a drummer boy of his own regiment, and as his regiment had really fought at Waterloo, nothing could please the little boy better. The old regimentals for this special corps were red with yellow facings.

"Not that we were proud of our facings, boy," said the Major, "for yellow is the traitor's color, and we put them on because we came long ago to that usurper, Prince William of Orange. There, there, we won't go into history, little chap; yellow our facings were

at the period of the great battle, though I'm glad to say they are changed to white now."

"I'd better wear the facings you had on when you won your chief glory, Uncle Ben," said Ronald. "I should not like any change, please, and I don't really care about the Prince of Orange, because I have not come to him in my history book yet. I am at Charles II now, and I don't think much of him. Well, Uncle Ben, I must have my drum and my trumpet. I am not only a drummer boy off the field of Waterloo, but I have gone with one of the generals into the thick of the fight, and have sounded my trumpet for more than one magnificent charge. I must be wounded, Uncle Ben; it would be very unnatural if I wasn't wounded, now wouldn't it, Uncle Ben? I must have my wound, and I think it had better be on my arm, for then I can wear it 'in a sling.'"

"Well boy," replied the Major, "I think that fancy of yours of being wounded carries the thing a trifle too far. You must know, my boy, that no soldier wilfully fires at a drummer boy."

"Yes, but, Uncle Ben, he must be in danger. I mean the drummer boy who goes with the general, for he's in the thick of it all, and if he sits his horse like a man, and rides straight forward and never flinches, why you know, Uncle Ben, a shell may burst near him, or a few stray shots may riddle him here and there."

"Yes, my boy," said the Major rather sorrowfully, "it's quite within the reach of probability, and I have heard of more than one blue-eyed drummer lad who got his quietus just as he was in the act of sounding his trumpet for a gallant charge.—There is nothing at all improbable in your acting the part of a wounded drummer boy, but I only think that you are carrying your joke a little too far. When we come to wounds, the play dies out, you know."

"So it does," said Ronald. "Uncle Ben, I have made up my mind I can only be a play drummer boy on Twelfth Night with a play wound; but I will follow in your steps, Uncle Ben, if I live: I will bleed for my country's honor as you have bled.—Uncle Ben, I must say it, except father, you are the greatest hero I know. Oh, dear! it will be lovely to put on regimentals! but I don't much care for the notion of a play wound."

CHAPTER XXVII.

Few little boys ever opened their eyes in a happier frame of mind than did Ronald on the morning of Twelfth Day. A double cause of pleasure was before him, for Uncle Ben, who had been better for the last few days, had been won over by his constant entreaties, and had promised that about noon on this day, provided the weather was fine and still, he would meet him in the copse about half a mile from the house and give him his first lesson in shooting.

Ronald felt nearly wild with happiness over this idea. At last, at last, he should use that beloved little gun which his father had given him. At last, with his own hands, he should fire a gun; and this one accomplishment, in which he had made no way whatever since his father's death, should be his.

"I wonder if father knows anything about it," he said to himself.—"I shouldn't be surprised if father hasn't felt a little low about my never becoming a sportsman; but if he does see things, and I rather think he must, he'll be very happy to-day. Dear father! How dreadful it would have been if God had sent for me and I had been obliged to tell father that I had never once used my sweet little fowling piece!"

Ronald ran down stairs to breakfast, and when the meal was over he found himself for a moment by his uncle's side.

Now a very sad truth is here to be confessed; Uncle Ben, for all the warlike and heroic qualities which Ronald invested him with, stood in

considerable awe of Aunt Eleanor. Not for worlds would the Major confess to his good wife that he was about to carry Ronald off on a secret shooting expedition. Aunt Eleanor, since her brother's death through a gun accident, had been mortally afraid of these instruments of destruction, and had strictly forbidden either Guy or Walter to handle a gun, except when accompanied by one of the most trusty of the keepers. Never had it entered even into her wildest imaginings that Ronald would touch firearms, and the Major, who knew her prejudice without at all sharing it, quite made up his rather cowardly old mind that the shooting expedition must be a profound secret between himself and his nephew.

"Yes, yes," he said, fidgeting as the boy came up to him with his face brimful of happiness; "yes, yes; I quite understand—twelve o'clock—yes, I'll be punctual, never, fear."

"What's all that about twelve o'clock?" said Mrs. Frere. "You are not going to venture out, surely, Ben, this damp morning? What is Ronald whispering to you? That boy is always up to some mischief!"

"Oh, nothing, my dear, nothing!" said the Major, turning his back on his wife. "There, be off, Ronald, be off. I want to read this leader on the Irish Land Bill."

"I'll bring my little gun," buzzed Ronald into his ear, but the Major gave him a push, and he ran out of the room; Aunt Eleanor, unfortunately, as things turned out, not having heard these dangerous words.

The whole house was in a state of topsyturvy in preparation for the coming ball. The fancy ball was to take place in the great hall, a magnificent apartment which ran across the whole width of the house, and the children were all busy twining greens round the stately marble pillars. Mrs. Frere, too, had not a moment to think of any one in her anxiety for the success of the evening, and Ronald was quite at liberty to disappear unnoticed from the active scenes of preparation about half past eleven. A brilliant idea had come into his head, and he resolved instantly to put it into execution.—What more suitable and more glorious than that he should fire his first gun in regimentals? Why should he not put on his drummer's dress a few hours before the ball, and with his drum and his trumpet and his beloved little fowling piece, sally forth to meet his uncle? He rushed up to his room and locked his door, trembling with delight over this happy thought. The dress was laid neatly in the wardrobe, all ready for the evening, and he soon tore off his ordinary black velvet suit, and got into the little drummer's trowsers and scarlet jacket. The dress fitted him nicely, for Uncle Ben had seen to that, and the drummer's cap, the trumpet, and the drum were all complete. Ronald felt lifted into the seventh heaven of ecstasy when he saw his own little figure so attired.—He banded his velvet suit into the wardrobe, and fetching his gun from its place on the wall, and putting into his pocket the precious powder and shot which he had purchased weeks before at Conton, he flew downstairs and out of the house. No one saw him, for nearly every individual was at work in the great hall, and Ronald ran down stairs by a back way which he well knew. Exactly at five minutes to twelve he had reached the copse, and there he waited as patiently as he could for the Major to appear.

[To be continued.]

NEW BOOKS.

THE SACRAMENTAL TEACHING OF THE LORD'S PRAYER—by Rev. Edward Lartabee, S.T.B., (The Young Churchman Co.) In this little book, 94 pages in all, the author strives to show that the Lord's Prayer naturally lends itself to the explication of the sacramental system; and through a supposed correspondence between its seven petitions and the "seven"