

to leave these few words as a legacy to my readers—Never be deceived by words. Always try to penetrate the realities. Have your wits sharpened, your senses exercised to discern good and evil. Be not imposed upon by pompous manners. Many a solemnly-uttered sentence is often a sheer inanity, which will not bear the scrutiny of an observant intellect. Be not frightened by denunciations; by being told that you are not a good subject, or a good Christian, if you do not believe, or say that you believe, this or that. Be not led astray by iteration; mistake not the familiar for the intelligible. Ascertain what words are meant to convey, and what they actually do convey. Go to the substance and soul of whatever is propounded. Be on your guard against bold assumptions, nor let them bear you away against the dictates of your own understanding. Look at phrases as counters, or paper money, that may pass for much or little, according to circumstances. Endeavour to arrive at truth, and make that your treasure. Be ever wide awake to see through any veil of sophistry and cant; nor, by the agency of words, be made the dupe of any critic, lawyer, priest or politician.

*Quevedo Redivivus.*

### BOYS—AN ADAPTATION.

It has often occurred to me what a happy time Adam and Eve must have had with their boys—their boys never belonged to a lacrosse or boating club, and never teased for a pair of skates, so Mrs. Eve could prepare, without being bothered by questions, her three meals a day, 365 times a year, and had time to chase the flies out of the sitting-room. Parents now-a-days have a different time of it. You have your own boy to look after, or your neighbour has a boy, whom you can look after much more closely than his mother does, and much more to your own satisfaction than to the boy's comfort. Your boy is an animal that asks questions; if there were any truth in the old theory of the transmigration of souls, when a boy died he would pass into an interrogation point, and he'd stay there, he'd never get out of it for he never get through asking questions. The older he grows the more he asks and the more perplexing his questions are and the more unreasonable he is about wanting them answered to suit himself. The oldest boy I ever knew—he was about 57 years old and he taught school—could and did ask the hardest questions for a boy to answer and when his questions were not answered to suit him, he would take up a long slender rod which always lay near the big dictionary and with it smite us ignorant boys: this custom of his was, strange to say a custom more honoured in the breeches than the observance. A boy ever looks forward to the time when he will be a man and know every thing—that happy far-away manhood which never comes to any of us; which would never come to him if he lived a thousand years; manhood, that like boyhood, ever looks forward from day to day to the morrow; still peering into the future for brighter light and broader knowledge; day after day, as its world opens before it, stumbling upon ever new and unsolved mysteries; manhood that so often looks over its shoulder and glances back toward boyhood and only finally reaches the grandeur of boyhood—and now in a few years your boy, without entirely ceasing to ask questions, begins to answer them, until you are amazed at the extent of his knowledge. He thinks he knows everything—he will tell you how to distinguish good mushrooms from bad ones and will manage to give you the bad ones and he knows lots of roots to make medicinal drinks and brings them home and comes very near sending the whole family to the cemetery with his experiments. He has a formula, repeating which nine times a day, and pointing his finger toward the sun, causes warts to disappear in three days; he has one particular marble which he calls blood alley or commie and with which only he can so he thinks have any luck. If he loses this, he stops playing, and like older boys fails with his pockets full and holds a creditors' meeting, perhaps in the school house porch. A boy's world is open to no one but a boy; you never really revisit your boyhood years much as you may dream of them. After you get into a tail-coat and tight boots, you never again set foot in boy world; you lose your instinct for the woods, and cannot tell a hickory-nut tree from a maple; you can't make friends with strange dogs; you can't make terrific noises with your mouth, beside a host of other things which a boy can do. Your boy gets on; he reaches the dime-novel period; he wants to go to Sunday-school or build a church, or he may want to be a missionary or a pirate or an Indian scout or a councillor—he is not particular which, nor does he see any difference. Perhaps he would rather be a pirate, as he thinks he can make more money than as a missionary, and runs less chance of being devoured. He likes school at this time, and every time he dreams of being a pirate he dreams of hanging his school-teacher at the yard-arm in the presence of all the delighted scholars. His voice develops and gets louder; it develops much more than his morals. In the yard, down the street, at the railway station, on the river—in fact, everywhere, the voice of your boy is heard. He whispers in shouts and converses by means of shrieks. He talks about his father's domestic matters over the fence with your neighbour's boy, so that all the neighbourhood can hear that you are about to be sued, or that there is a mortgage on your house. He hates company, and cannot be induced to walk down stairs, and by sliding down the banisters soon loosens every rail, and the lamp-stand at the foot of the stairway

is knocked over every night, curing the family of the careless habit of leaving it there. On rainy days he wears his father's boots, and brings in mud to be left on the carpets. He carefully and designedly steps over the door-mat, and until he is about seventeen years' old never knows that a door scraper is intended for use and not for ornament. He draws with a pencil or a burnt match, artistic pictures on the new wall paper; he always wants a new hat or a new pair of boots; he wears his hat in the air and on the ground far more than he does on his head, and he hardly ever hangs it up without either pulling the hook through the crown or pulling the hat-rack over. He can make a kite that will fly higher than any balloon; he will make a sled out of the pantry shelves that will go, as he says, "like the very dickens"; he will build a splendid mouse-trap out of the water pitcher and the family Bible, so splendid that it is only equalled by the excuse he makes for having used the Bible for such a purpose. He steals the clothes'-lines and drives a team of six-in-hand composed of boys like himself. Perhaps you send him on a message—there are three ladies in the parlour; you have waited for them to go; they have shown alarming symptoms of staying to tea, and you know that there is not enough preserves or fruit to go around. It is only three minutes' walk to the grocery, however, and your boy sets off like a rocket and you are so pleased at his quickness. He is however gone a long time—ten, fifteen, twenty minutes, perhaps half-an-hour pass away, and your boy returns at last—he comes back and asks humbly what it was you wanted him to get. Your boy falls in love; he brings his sister and gets cuffed for it, and two hours later another boy—not your boy, but one a little older—will come in and will hug as much as he likes, and all that is said is "must he go so soon," and does not go until perhaps you come in and ask him if he is going to stay to breakfast.

To be more serious, your boy's life is not all fun and mischief at this period. Go up to his room some night and his sleeping face will tell you that he has griefs and troubles that sometimes weigh his little heart down almost to breaking. The stained hand outside the sheet is soiled and rough, and the cut finger with the rude bandage of the boy's own making plead with a mute pathos of their own for the mischievous hand that is never idle. On the browned cheek the trace of a tear marks the piteous close of the day's troubles—trouble at school with books that were too many for him, temptations too strong to resist, just as come to his father—and at last in his home, trouble has pursued him until feeling utterly friendless and in everybody's way he has crawled off to what is called the boys' room, and his over-charged heart has welled up into his eyes, and his last waking breath has broken into a sob, and while he thinks there is nothing but trouble in this world, he falls asleep. However, all is forgotten in the morning, and his hand is against everybody's, and everybody's hand is against him, when they can catch him. He wears his mother's slipper on his jacket just as much as she wears it on her foot; this is wrong however; it spreads the slipper and discourages the boy; and often, when his poor mother is pained because she has to slipper him, your boy is chuckling over the thought that he was cute enough to wear two coats. By and by your boy develops into a tail-coat—he does not appreciate it at first—how he sidles along the fence and what a wary eye he keeps in every direction for other boys. It seems to him to be an ill-fitting monster. Passing into the tail-coat period your boy finds out that he has hands. He is not very positive how many, and hitherto he would wear anything on his feet but now he wants a glove-fitting boot, and learns to smile while his feet are in agony. And, his mother never cuts his hair again. Never. His hair will be trimmed and clipped, barberously it may be, but she will not be accissory before the fact. She may sometimes long to have her boy kneel down before her, while she gnaws around his terrified locks with a pair of scissors that were sharpened when they were made, and have since then cut acres of calico, and miles and miles of paper, and great stretches of cloth, and snarls and coils of string, and lamp wicks, and have snuffed candles, and have dug refractory corks out of the family ink bottle, and punched holes in skate straps, and trimmed the family nails, and perhaps have been used to cut stove-pipe lengths once a year, and to open sardine cans—well these scissors have gone snarlingly and toilsomely around your boy's head and made him an object of terror to the children on the street—but it is done no more. And now, your boy makes a wonderful discovery, though it dawns but slowly upon his consciousness, it is the great fact that the upper lip is intended by Nature to be used as a mustache pasture. He explores the land of promise with the tip of his little finger, delicately backing up the grade the wrong way, going always against the grain, so as to perceive the velvety resistance. And in the first dawning consciousness that the mustache is there and needs only to be brought out like the vote, your boy walks down to the barber shop, gazes in at the window and walks past. And how often when he musters up courage to go in and climbs into the chair, and is just about to whisper that he would like a shave, he gets frightened and has his hair cut again. Often, in fact more often he begins to learn to shave by using his father's razor, and his father asks who has been opening fruit-cans with his razor, and nobody knows. Your boy strops the razor furiously, or rather he razors the strop: he slashes and cuts the strop in as many directions as he can make motions with the razor, and would cut it oftener if the strop lasted longer; then he nicks the razor against the side of the mug; then he drops it on the floor and steps on