

That is our creed upon this subject.

To the children of our hot and dusty cities the sanitary benefit of a day in the free fresh air, amid the bloom of flowers and song of birds, and in communion with the great heart of nature, is very great. Nor is it less so to the children of an older growth who accompany them, and who, in the unbending from the cares of active life, recall the delight of their childhood, and for a time renew their youth in the gleeful sports of the little ones. The following pleasant verses of Longfellow so musically describe these sylvan delights that we cannot refrain from quoting them :

The green trees whispered low and mild ;

It was a sound of joy !

They were my playmates when a child
And rocked me in their arms so wild !

Still they looked at me and smiled,

As if I were a boy ;

And ever whispered, mild and low,

"Come, be a child once more !"

And waved their long arms to and fro,

And beckoned solemnly and slow ;

Oh, I could not choose but go

Into the woodlands hoar ;

Into the blithe and breathing air,

Into the solemn wood,

Solemn and silent everywhere !

Nature with folded hands seemed there,

Kneeling at her evening prayer !

Like one in prayer I stood.

And, falling on my weary brain,

Like a fast falling shower,

The dreams of youth came back again,

Low lisps of the summer rain,

Dropping on the ripened grain,

As once upon the flower.

Visions of childhood ! Stay, oh stay !

Ye were so sweet and wild !

And distant voices seemed to say,

"It cannot be ! They pass away !

Other themes demand thy lay ;

Thou art no more a child !"

Nor are the moral advantages to be derived from properly conducted Sunday

School pic-nics less marked. The sense of social sympathy which is cultivated knits together the hearts of teachers and scholars and parents in bonds of closest fellowship. The teacher is not only respected as a religious instructor, but is loved as a personal and intimate friend. These occasions serve to interpret to the heart of children the fact that religion is not a morose and gloomy thing ; that even pious people can laugh and enjoy themselves ; and that that solemn man, the minister, can lay aside his coat and his dignity and play ball with the boys, and help to swing the girls beneath the tall elm tree, and perhaps be the most gleeful in light-hearted hilarity of them all. Be sure his sermons will be none the less appreciated by the little folks, nor will his influence on their hearts be lessened because he unbends to share their youthful sports and amusements. The boys will have none the less respect for their teacher's Sabbath instructions when they find he is a good stroke with the bat ; nor the girls with theirs when they learn how deftly she can weave oak leaves into wreaths for their adornment, and with what readiness she can prepare tea at a gipsy camp fire.

Then the cultivation of a sympathy with nature may be made a means of grace. Its quietude, its beauty, its harmony of relations, their adaptation to the ends for which they were created, all conspire to raise the mind in adoring gratitude to the Great Architect of the universe, and to lead to the devout exclamation,

"These are thy glorious works, Parent of Good."

Again, as at the bidding of the Divine Teacher, we may consider the lilies of the field, and behold the fowls of the air, and learn lessons of God's goodness and providential care, for which the trembling harebell by the streamlet's bank is not too