

The Children We Keep.

The children kept coming, one by one,
Till the boys were five and the girls were three,
And the big brown house was alive with fun
From the basement floor to the old roof-tree;
Like garden flowers the little ones grew,
Nurtured and trained with the tenderest care;
Warmed by love's sunshine, bathed in its dew,
They bloomed into beauty, like roses rare.

One of the boys grew weary one day,
And leaning his head on his mother's breast
He said: "I am tired and cannot play—
Let me sit awhile on your knee and rest."
She cradled him close in her fond embrace,
She hushed him to sleep with her sweetest song;
And rapturous love still lighted his face
When the spirit had joined the heavenly throng.

Then the eldest girl, with her thoughtful eyes,
Who stood "where the brook and the river meet,"
Stole softly away into Paradise
Ere "the river" had reached her slender feet.
While the father's eyes on the grave are bent
The mother looked upward beyond the skies;
"Our treasures," she whispered, "are only lent,
Our darlings were angels in earth's disguise."

The years flew by, and the children began
With longing to think of the world outside;
And as each in his turn became a man
The boys proudly went from the father's side.
The girls were women, so gentle and fair
That lovers were speedy to woo and win;
And with orange blossoms in braided hair,
The old home was left—new homes to begin.

So one by one the children have gone—
The boys were five and the girls were three,
And the big brown house is gloomy and lone,
With two old folks for its company.
They talk to each other about the past,
As they sit together at eventide,
And say, "All the children we keep at last
Are the boy and girl who in childhood died."



"I desire to form a League, offensive and defensive, with every soldier of Christ Jesus."—John Wesley.

Our Great Need.

APPROVED machinery is good. He who would make use of inferior appliances while vastly better ones are at hand would not be wise. There is widespread satisfaction with our remodeled Epworth machinery. It is simply, compact, and usable. With it many things can be done speedily and well. But we need more than good machinery.

We might place on the track the mightiest locomotive ever built. We might attach it to the longest train to which a locomotive was ever hitched. We might burnish every brazen mounting until it glistened with brightness. We might smooth every journal-box and oil every bearing. We could do all this with the mightiest engine ever built, and yet it would be a great lifeless, useless thing. But let the fires once be kindled under the boiler; let the steam go coursing through its iron arteries, then you have a thing of life, a marvel of mighty power. It will do its work as if it were only play for its iron strength.

It is so in our work. Our board of control has given us an admirable machine. But the machine has no power. We need more. The fire must fall from above. The energy of the Divine spirit must sweep through the soul. Our whole being must be permeated and thrilled with a pentecostal baptism. Then shall we have power. That power will be to us a wonderful inspiration. It will revivify and refresh. It will reinforce. Possessing it we shall move forward harmoniously, victoriously, in our great work. Our burdens will then seem light.

Our most perplexing and difficult duties will be easy. Our labour will no longer be labour, but a glad some privilege—a joyous play of the soul.—*Epworth Herald.*

Epworth League Notes.

(From the *Epworth Herald*.)

The true Epworth disciple is an out-and-out optimist. He sometimes becomes blue, but never looks that colour. His head and heart and life are so full of sunshine that wherever he goes he spreads the blessed contagion.

—It is amazing what small communities are sending clubs of twenty-five subscribers or more. It shows what an energetic canvasser will do. And if this sort of thing is kept up, it means a total subscription list that will roll high up into the thousands.

—Now, see here. If friends call upon you when you are going out to spend a social evening, you excuse yourself, and go. Why not do so on League evening? In the former case you may not be at liberty to invite them to accompany you. In the latter you always may.

—Shake hands. Do it often. Do it heartily. Cultivate your own social powers, and the social life of the church. Try to make everyone feel very much at home in the Lord's house. And be particularly kind to any one who may not be able to wear as good clothes as you do, and to "the stranger within thy gates."

Water-Drops.

A YOUNG girl walked among her flowers one bright spring morning. She was herself as fair a flower as any, with a heart so pure that evil thoughts could find no lodgment there. As she bent above a bed of fragrant violets, a single drop of water flashed like a diamond before her eyes.

"Oh, what a lovely mission is yours, little water-drop!" cried the young girl. "You fall from the fair sky above only to find a fairer resting-place in the heart of one of nature's own darlings, which it is your happy lot to brighten and refresh."

Then, bending low, she kissed the drop away, and, plucking the violet, wore it with others of its mates in her bosom.

A few days later, the same fair young girl walked in the streets of a crowded city. Looking up, she saw a dark cloud gather, and soon a summer shower was falling. From a safe shelter she watched the bright drops fall, and again her thoughts turned to the lovely mission of the water-drops—so pure, so wholesome, so life-giving.

Soon the shower was over, and she went her way. At the street corner she paused to see the rushing stream pouring into the sluice-ways that led into the dark sewer. Down came these water-drops in a great hurrying, scurrying company now, beautiful no longer, but dark and foul with the filth they had accumulated.

How unlike the crystal drop that rested lightly on the violet's pure face, and how unlike the shining company that fell a few moments before, with a kind of rushing gladness, as though it were a great joy to find work to do on the earth!

"Ah," said the young girl, "it is not so pleasant to come into contact with the slime and filth of the city streets, and then to be plunged into noisome sewers, and so be carried away, no one knows whither." And she sighed as she walked on.

But another day, as this maiden walked through the sunny lanes of her country home, she saw a filmy white cloud hanging low above her head. It came from seaward. And then she remembered that this cloud carried rain-drops in its bosom, which the sun had won away from the smiling sea.

Her thoughts went back to the day when she saw the stained, foul water-drops rushing down into the sewer, as if to hide their shame.

"Can it be," she said, "that these same drops, carried out into the great sea, and cleansed of earthly impurity, have again been called up into the sky, and may even now be hovering over me in this lovely, white cloud?"

And the young girl learned this lesson: That the purest and brightest things on earth may mingle with the vilest, and not be defiled, if only they are doing God's errands.

Keep Away.

THE proprietor of a high-toned drinking-saloon in New York signed the pledge and closed his dramshop. On learning that a company of lads had organized themselves into a temperance society, he went to them and gave them some of his experience as a rum-seller.

"I sold liquor," said he, "eleven years—long enough for me to see the beginning and end of its effect. I have seen a man take his first glass in my place and afterward find the grave of a suicide. I have seen man after man, wealthy and educated, come into my saloon who now cannot buy a dinner. I recall twenty customers, worth from one to five thousand dollars, who are now without money or without friends."

He warned the boys against entering the saloon upon any pretext. He said that he had seen a young fellow, a member of a temperance society, come in with a friend and wait while he drank. "No, no," he would say, when asked to drink, "I never touch it. Thanks all the same." Presently, rather than seem churlish, he would take a glass of cider or harmless lemonade. "The lemonade was nothing," said he, "but I knew how it would end. The only safety, boys, for any one, no matter how strong his resolutions, is outside the door of the saloon."—*Wesleyan Christian Advocate.*

A Royal Laundress.

A PLEASANT story is told of the Princess Louise's visit to the Bermuda Islands, which belong to Great Britain. The islanders determined to give her a reception, and rich and poor made ready to do her honour. One day she was out sketching; for, like the Queen and the rest of her daughters, she is fond of sketching. She was thirsty, and called at a cottage door for water. The good woman of the house was busy, and refused to go for the water. She, of course, did not know who the Princess was. She was busy, she said, ironing a shirt for her husband to wear at the reception of the Queen's daughter; and she could not leave that to get water for anybody.

"If you will get me the water," said the Princess, "I will finish ironing the shirt while you are gone."

So the Princess ironed the shirt, while the woman fetched the water. But imagine her surprise when she learned who it was that had been doing her ironing. She at once declared that her husband should not wear the shirt at the reception, nor anywhere else. She should always keep it just as it was; for had not the Queen's daughter ironed it?

AN old Arabian proverb says: "It is the second blow which begins the quarrel." Herein lies deep wisdom. It is, indeed, only another version of the noble Christian maxim: "A soft answer turneth away wrath." A word of kindness and forgiving forbearance, in return for a blow, will often make the aggressor more grieved and ashamed than any triumph of force over him could have done. Children, remember that "kind words awaken kind echoes."