

ARE THE CHILDREN SAFE?

THANK God that my darling is resting
Safe in the bosom of God!
Praise Him for little hands folded
Under the churchyard sod!
I'm glad that on the white forehead
I've printed the last, long kiss!
Do you ask why I am glad and thankful,
And can praise God so for this?

Last night as I sat in my window,
Looking out on the moonlit street,
My neighbour's once beautiful boy
Went by with unsteady feet;
And I remembered how I had envied
His mother that sorrowful time,
When God sent his white-winged angel,
And, leaving her boy, took mine.

But now she sits in her lonely home,
In tears, broken-hearted and old;
While the stainless feet of my darling
Are walking the streets of gold.
Thank God for taking my child so soon,
Lest he might have gone astray!
For none are safe while doors of sin
Stand wide as they do to-day.

I pity the children of years to come,
And mothers, who little know
What lies for them in the future,
Of tears and bitterest woe:
For as long as men are licensed to sell
The horrid, accursed thing,
If we cry not aloud against it,
The curse on ourselves we shall bring.

SMALL TALK.

BY MRS. MARY L. GRIFFITH.

ALL the light and foolish talk
which is bandied from tongue
to tongue, and which will not
bear analyzing, the small talk
and would-be jokes among
young and old people about
courtship and marriage, is
most disgusting when seriously ex-
amined.

Like religion, it is a subject upon
which it is almost, if not entirely, im-
possible to speak lightly without irre-
verence and coarseness.

We have been covered with shame
and confusion more, than once at the
unthinking jests of young people
among and about each other.

All this badinage and teasing, this
talk of "catching beaux," lamenting
the scarcity of young men here and
there, bewailing growing to such ex-
cess an age without effecting a match,
the undisguised desire to make a good
appearance for an undisguised end, the
stale and silly folly about women's
ages, etc., all are low enough to
astonish and shock us, if our ears had
not grown so used to them.

Think a minute what it all means.
What, shall a woman stand in the mar-
ket and offer herself with all her costly
dower of womanhood? Nay, verily,
the world says, but she may hint at it
and giggle over it, and toss her pure
pearls about till they are trampled in
the mire by any swine that come along.
Better, almost, the old days of chivalry,
when the lady-love was fought for with
sword and spear.

A woman gives so much! Surely a
woman should be sought. If she
chooses to say honestly and seriously,
"I wish to marry. I covet the sincere
love of a good man," who shall dispute
her? Few common utterances ever
sound more pleasantly to us than the
heartly, tender, manly expression of a
pure young man, concerning the joy
his bridal day should bring him;
and, perhaps, a woman might speak
in like manner. But this smearing
over with low light talk of the
highest and holiest things; this tramp-

ing of careless feet into the sacred
places—*pa!*

Marriage is a thing to be waited for
—not idly—to be dreamed of in still
and solemn moments; to bow down
and veil our faces before; to be left in
God's own planning providence.

In the same category of evils are
flirting, kissing games, and, most of all,
dancing. It is not hard to think out
the true inwardness of these things,
and when found it is not a very pretty
subject for reflection. Who wants a
rose that has nodded in a dozen button-
holes, or fruit with all the bloom rubbed
off? Yet, how rare is the maiden who
can bring to her true mate, her "one
lover," hands and lips that have never
been pressed before. Of course, still
less, immeasurably less, can be said on
the masculine side of the question, and
alas, and alas for it!

Let young people associate together
naturally, sensibly, merrily, as we think
they would do to a far degree if older
people would not tease and smile, and
put ideas in their heads that have no
business there. Certainly there is al-
most nothing better for a young man
—if he is in any way worthy of it—
than the society of a pure, womanly,
young girl. But let all thought of
love and marriage come to them fresh,
sweet, and solemn; like an inspiration,
an evangel, a revelation.

SOMEWHAT MIXED.

Two primary Sunday-school scholars
were playing Sunday-school on the
afternoon of December 4, and this is
the way that one of them repeated
the Golden Text: "The double-minded
man is under the manger at all times."
This was promptly corrected by the
other, who said: "No, it is under the
stable always." And then they had a
discussion as to whether it was a
"double-minded man," or double-headed
man." The origin of their honest
blunder is quite obvious.

"The double-minded man is unstable
in all his ways," and this fact the
Sunday-school teachers will discover
who allow their scholars to have their
minds equally balanced between the
appointed lesson for the day and in-
terests outside of that, whether in the
school at the hour of recitation, or in
the ends of the earth, whither the
fool's eye wandereth.

THE SAFE CHANNEL.

A GOOD ship was passing on safely
along a dangerous strip of coast where
thousands have made shipwreck.

"I suppose you know every rock
and sand bar along this coast," said a
passenger, as he stood on the deck be-
side the captain.

There was a deep meaning in the
glance that he gave from under his
shaggy eye-brows as he answered, "I
know where they are not."

Ah! that was wherein lay the safety
of those who had committed their lives
and merchandise into his keeping. He
knew where the safe channel lay, and
he kept it.

Many think they ought to be learned
in the evil habits of this world in order
to shun them. It is far better to know
what is good and pursue it. "My
soul, enter not thou into their secret."
One good man's life is worth ten times
more, for a model to work out your
own career by, than the lives of ten
wicked men whose example you are to
shun.

GOING THE WRONG WAY.

YOU are going the wrong
way," said the conductor of
a train on the railroad to a
passenger, on receiving his ticket.
That assertion fell very unpleasantly
upon the ear of him who had made the
mistake. Still, it was not a very ser-
ious one. It could be corrected. He
was advised to get out at the first stop-
ping place, and to take the opposite
train on its arrival.

Going the wrong way! In another
sense, this is affectingly true of
thousands. It is true of the child who
goes not in the way of its parents' com-
mands. It is true of the man who,
with hot haste, is in pursuit of the
riches, or honors, or pleasures of earth.
It is true of every one whose course
has not been changed—who is not
running the Christian race. Says the
Saviour, "Enter ye in at the straight
gate: for wide is the gate, and broad
is the way, that leadeth to destruction,
and many there be which go in there-
at: because straight is the gate, and
narrow is the way, which leadeth un-
to life, and few there be that find it."

Oh, how many are now hurrying on
toward eternal death, while they are
vainly hoping to reach, at the end of
their course, the New Jerusalem above!
They are going the wrong way. The
language of God to them is: "Turn
ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for
why will you die?" Turn to-day.
Soon it will be too late; soon destruc-
tion will become inevitable.

EFFECTS OF DRINK IN
TORONTO.

FROM one number of a Toronto
paper we clip the following:—Ed.

LOOKING FOR HER HUSBAND.—The
other evening about seven o'clock a
poor woman, with a most dejected look,
was seen walking up and down before
a liquor saloon on Church-street. A
compassionate passer-by questioned
the poor creature on the cause of her
sorrow, and learned that her husband
was in the bar room; that he had been
drinking for the past week and had
not been home for the past three days;
that she had no fuel to keep herself
and her baby warm, and that they were
then also in need of food.

THREE LITTLE OUTCASTS.—Three
little boys, the oldest not more than
ten years, the other two younger, stood
shivering the other evening behind a
corner on Yonge street, near Adelaide.
They were counting up how much
money they had, and seeing what they
would be able to buy. Their father
had beaten them the day before in a
drunken fit and turned them out of
doors, and their mother was sick in bed
and could not save them from their
father's wrath. They sold papers they
said, earned forty-five cents, and were
going to buy some sandwiches and
cakes, and then pay for their lodgings
in a Lombard street lodging-house.

"ABSTAINERS are a set of reformed
drunkards" is the common cry of the
ignorant, but among our ranks we have
Demosthenes, the greatest orator;
Milton, the greatest epic poet; New-
ton, the greatest natural philosopher;
Howard, the greatest philanthropist;
Wesley, the greatest religious revival-
ist; and Dr. Livingstone, the greatest
modern traveller and missionary.

(Written for PLEASANT HOURS.)

THE LONDON BOOT-BLACKS.
BY HERBERT G. PAULL, TORONTO.

WHEN sinks my heart in sadness,
And the road is dark below;
The sunshine and the gladness
With the daylight seems to go.

Then comes to me a story,
Full of eloquence divine;
An episode of London,
How I wish the deeds were mine!

There lived a simple urchin,
An orphan, his name unknown,
Who never heard a sermon,
But worshipped his Lord alone.

And from the Sacred Scripture
He learned of Jesus' love;
How that for those who love Him,
Are mansions prepared above.

The boot-blacks gathered round him,
To hear of the narrow way,
And kneeling down beside him,
Wept loud when they heard him pray.

He sang of their Redeemer,
He showed them His wounded side;
Then fell the Arab's tears, at
The feet of the Crucified.

He told them of God's mercy,
The virtue of charity;
And taught his young companions,
The zeal of philanthropy.

Until these little heathen
By their deeds of deathless fame,
Aroused the mighty city
To a blush of awkward shame.

A miserable outcast,
One night when the blast blew cold,
Over the Thames' Embankment
Into the river war rolled.

One of these childish heroes
Leapt into the rushing tide,
And fought the cruel waters
To rescue the suicide.

From Westminster Palace stairs
To the docks below the Tower,
Billingsgate, Greenwich Hospital,
In the solemn midnight hour.

When the great metropolis
Somniferously slept,
Off from a bridge's buttress
Has a city Arab leapt,

To save a fellow creature,
Awed with sin and shame;
Who never heard of mercy
Until the shoe-black came.

Oh, ye who hid your talent
And buried it long ago,
Do you deserve a mansion
As much as the Arabs do?

Once in a skiff a boatman
As he sought to find the drowned,
Floating down with the ebb tide
A poor little boot black found

Whose face was like an angel's,
Smiling and heavenly fair.
He seemed to sleep, or rather
His eyes were closed in prayer.

But no! his soul had vanished,
He had fought the fight and won,
And the immortal chorus
All heard the cry "well done!"

When weary in well doing,
I long for inglorious rest,
And darkly my deeds reviewing
Sigh "had indeed is the best,"

Then comes to me a story
Full of eloquence divine,
An episode of London;
How I wish the deeds were mine!

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