

ETHEL'S SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSON.

BY RICHARD METCALF.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

That was little Ethel's text; and she was trying to learn it, by saying it over and over again, as she walked up and down the sitting room.

I was sitting by the window, reading a volume of *Littell's Living Age*; and my dog Ponto was stretched out before the fire, right in Ethel's way as she walked the floor. So it happened that in the very middle of the verse, she stumbled and lost her temper.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall"—There, take that, you clumsy dog, always in everybody's way."

So saying, she gave him a spiteful kick, which he returned with a spiteful snap, which tore a hole in her "go-to-meeting" frock. Then, she picked up the poker to give him a blow; but Ponto seized it so savagely I was afraid he would really bite her, and I was forced to send him out of the room, and take Ethel in my lap to stop her crying.

"I am very glad you lost your temper," said I.

She wiped her eyes at once, and asked in great wonder,—

"Why, what for?"

"Oh, because it was a very *bad* temper; and I hope that, now you've lost it, you'll get a better one to take its place."

"Where can I get it?" she inquired.

"Out of your verse, which you have learned how to say, but have not yet learned to practise."

"How do you know I shouldn't practise it? I have had no chance yet to try."

"Yes, you did have a first-rate chance to practise it on Ponto; and you didn't do it," was my answer.

"What!" cried the little girl, "practice Sunday-school lessons on dogs!"

"Certainly," said I, "did you never hear that 'a merciful man is merciful to his beast'? And a merciful Ethel will be merciful to Ponto. Your lessons will not do you much good, unless the dog and the cat and all your pets get the benefit of them."

Ethel shook her head at that, and wanted to know if Sunday-Schools were not meant to fit boys and girls to go to heaven, and live with the angels. So I had to tell her that they certainly were meant for that, "But first," I said, "they must fit them to live on the earth."

"Besides," I added, "no one will ever be an angel who kicks a dog that hasn't done him any harm."

Well, I can't tell you all the questions she asked me, and all I said to her in return; but what it amounted to was this:—

"When a little stream flows out of a spring, everybody and everything gets the benefit of it. The fishes swim in it, the flowers drink of it, the trees drink of it, birds, dogs, cattle, men, women, and children, too,—drink of it, and are helped, strengthened and refreshed. So, when one of your Sunday-school lessons has been perfectly learned by one who is eager to practise it, it will do some good to everybody and everything he meets. Dogs, cats, and birds will get the benefit of it, as well as men, women, and children. Let me see how boys and girls treat animals, and I can tell pretty well how much good their Sunday-school lessons have done them. Did you ever see anybody throw stones at a kitten or torment a poor dog with snow-balls, or stand at the corner of Washington street and knock down the swallows that were flying near the ground? I have seen such things, and I have said to myself, 'That boy (or girl) has not yet learned his Sunday-school lesson.' For I think that every lesson of kindness which is good to be practised towards human beings is also good to be practised towards birds and dogs and other animals."

Just then, we heard Ponto scratching on the door, and Ethel jumped down from my lap, saying,—

"I'll practise my lesson on Ponto."

And, when she let him in, they were friends directly, and began to frolic so merrily that I could scarcely read my book. But, before Ethel went to bed, I read her these lines from the book, which she afterwards learned, and recited to her teacher at Sunday-school:

"He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast;
He prayeth best, who loveth best
All creatures, great and small,
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

Christian Register.

A SENSIBLE GOAT.

A thoughtless Welshman with a thirsty throat—
So goes the tale—possessed a favorite goat
Who followed him, when once to play the sot
He sought the tap-room and the foamy pot.
He gave her drink, when, by the cheerful blaze,
Strangely forgetting all her sober ways,
She'd reel'd about and roll'd upon the floor
As never goat had rolled about before.
The giggling toppers so enjoyed the sight
That they would have the fun another night.
The Welshman took her, but the goat, alas!
The portal of the pothouse would not pass.
Her master uselessly tried every mode,
Though pats and punches freely were bestowed,
The landlord strove, and did his best, they say,
But all in vain, for Nanny won the day;
Cuffing and coaxing, both alike she bore,
Nor could they get her through the pothouse door.
The wondering Welshman, now no longer blind,
Ponder'd the thing a moment in his mind,
Then prudently adopted, in the end,
The wise example of his shaggy friend;
Forsook the pothouse, and reformed his plan,
And from that hour became a sober man.
Ye drunkards all, this prudent lesson follow,
Or own, in sense a goat has beat you hollow.

Selected.

THE LITTLE CUP-BEARER.

The little cup-bearer entered the room,
After the banquet was done;
His eyes were like the skies of May,
Aglow with the cloudless sun.
Kneeling beside his master's feet,
The feet of the noble king,
He raised the goblet. "Drink, my liege,
The offering that I bring."

"Nay, nay," the good king, smiling said,
"But first a faithful sign
That thou bringest me no poison draught,
Taste thou, my page, the wine."
Then gently, firmly spoke the lad,
"My dearest master, no,
Though at thy lightest wish my feet
Shall gladly come and go."

"Rise up, my little cup-bearer,"
The king, astonished, cried;
"Rise up and tell me, straightway, why
Is my request denied?"
The young page rose up slowly,
With sudden paling cheek,
While courtly lords and ladies
Await to hear him speak.

"My father sat in princely halls,
And tasted wine with you;
He died a wretched drunkard, sire'—
The brave voice tearful grew,
"I vowed to my dear mother,
Beside her dying bed,
That for her sake I would not taste
The tempting poison red."

"Away with this young upstart!"
The lords, impatient, cry;
But spilling slow the purple wine,
The good king made reply:
"Thou shalt be my cup-bearer,
And honored well," he said,
"But see thou bring not wine to me,
But water pure instead."

—*Morning and Day of Reform.*