

## OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

### GOOD-NIGHT.

A fair little girl sat under a tree,  
Sewing as long as her eyes could see;  
Then smoothed her work, and folded it right,  
And said, "Dear work, good-night, good-night."

Such a number of rooks came over her head,  
Crying, "Caw, caw," on their way to bed;  
She said, as she watched their curious flight,  
"Little black things, good-night, good-night."

The horses neighed, and the oxen lowed,  
The sheep's "Bleat, bleat," came over the road,  
All seeming to say, with a quiet delight,  
"Good little girl, good-night, good-night."

She did not say to the sun, "Good-night,"  
Though she saw him there, like a ball of light;  
For she knew he had God's time to keep  
All over the world, and never could sleep.

The tall pink fox-glove bowed his head,  
The violet curtsied, and went to bed;  
And good little Lucy tied up her hair,  
And said, on her knees, her favourite prayer.

And while on her pillow she softly lay,  
She knew nothing more till again it was day—  
And all things said to the beautiful sun,  
"Good-morning, good-morning; our work is begun."  
—Lord Houghton.

### LAZY ANNIE.

If there was one thing Annie disliked more than another it was to get up early in the morning. The little birds would sing their sweet songs in her window, and her pet pigeons would coax her with their soft, cooing voice, but Annie would not stir. She said one day: "Mamma, I don't see why you always make me go to bed when I am not sleepy, and get up when I am;" for next to getting up Annie disliked going to bed.

This fault of Annie's worried mamma a great deal, for it was very trying every evening to say, "Come, Annie, it is time for you to go up stairs; come, no more playing or reading to-night," and to hear Annie say fretfully, "Oh mamma! can't I stay up just a little while longer? Why must I go now?" etc. It grieved mamma very much, and she wondered what she could do to cure her little girl of this evil habit.

One day she took her to see a lady who had been an invalid for years, unable to lie down or sit up with any comfort on account of the great pain which she endured. During the course of the conversation she said to Annie, "Oh, my dear little girl, if I were only like you what would I give! I look back now and think how I used to complain every night when my dear mother wanted me to go to bed, and grumbled every morning about getting up. I would be thankful enough now if I could only go to bed now as I did then, instead of being obliged to sit up all night in this chair; and glad enough would I be were I able to get up at sunrise and take a walk in the early morning when the birds are singing in all the trees and everything is glistening with dew; but that can never be again. My dear mother is in heaven, but I always reproach myself when I think how I worried her about such a foolish thing. I am sure you would not treat your mother so." Seeing Annie's face look very sober, she said, "This is too sober a subject for a little girl like you, we will talk of something more cheerful."

Annie said nothing until she and her mother

were on their homeward way, then she asked, "Mamma, did you tell Mrs. Gray about me?"

"No, my dear," said mamma.

That night Annie went cheerfully to bed, and in the morning every one was astonished to see her walking about the garden long before breakfast. Some said, "Whatever has got over Annie to take such a turn? It won't last, however." But it did last, and Annie became a healthier and happier little girl, and gave pleasure to all around her. The first thing her eyes rested upon every morning was this text, beautifully illuminated, which hung upon the wall opposite her, "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

### SCHOOL COMPOSITIONS.

Few tasks in school-life are more appalling to boys and girls than the weekly "composition" which they are required to hand their teachers. As a rule, even advanced scholars would rather grapple with a dozen pages of Livy or Legendre, than with one poor blank sheet, which they must cover with their own facts and fancies.

A well known American editor lately visited the school which he had left as a boy thirty years before. "It was 'composition day,'" he writes, "and as one essay after another was read, I could hardly persuade myself that a day had passed, and that these were not my own classmates.

"The boys read the same stilted periods on 'The fall of Rome,' 'The Triumphs of Genius,' 'Liberty,' and 'The Future of America;' and the girls overflowed with precisely the same sentiments about violets, and fairy dells, crimson sunsets, and the lost Pleiad."

"Now," whispered the old dominie to the editor, "you shall hear the clever boy of the school. I anticipate a great career for this lad."

The composition was on the Indian or Free Trade, or some other profound subject, on which it was impossible that a boy of thirteen or fourteen could have a theory or argument to advance, except those which he had heard from others. These were produced with a flood of high-sounding, irrelevant words. "The career," said the editor, "I would prophesy for such a boy would be that of an imitator, who will make his trade on the brain capital of other men."

After this a boy, a quiet, round-faced lad stepped on the platform and read a description of chickens. The lad had a poultry-yard of his own, and gave his observations on the habits, food and marketable value of the breeds he knew. The little paper was full of useful facts, and showed a keen capacity for observation, and a dry humour.

"There is the lad who has stuff in him to make a man of weight," I said to the dominie.

Boys and girls should remember while studying their text-books they are only the recipients of the thoughts of others, but in the school composition they should become producers of ideas. Let them, therefore, carefully avoid reproducing second-hand opinions or facts, and give an account of the simple realities of their everyday life and thoughts upon them.

The poorest essay of this kind will call into action the original power of their brains as no other mental effort can do.

### FEAR AND BRAVERY.

It is said that the Emperor Charles the Fifth, reading an epitaph, "Here lies one who never knew fear," remarked, "Then he never snuffed a candle with his fingers." It is certainly a somewhat absurd, though a favourite, claim for a popular hero, that "he never knew fear." No one possessing human nerves and human brain can say this with truth. That a brave man never yields to the emotion may be true enough; but to say that at no period of his life he experienced fear, is simply impossible. There is a story of a young recruit in the thirty years war going into action for the first time in his life in the highest spirits. "Look at Johann," said one of his comrades, as the troops were drawn up ready to charge. "He is full of jokes; how brave he is." The veteran addressed replied, "Not at all, he knows nothing of what is coming. You and I, old comrade, are far braver, we sit on our horses though we are terribly afraid." Fear is certainly one of the most irrational of passions. It is not always excited by the presence of danger. Men who can always be cool and collected in cases of real peril will tremble at some fanciful alarm. The Duke of Schomberg could face an enemy with ready courage, but fled from a room if he saw a cat in it. A very brave French officer fainted at the sight of a mouse. The author of the "Turkish Spy" states that had he a sword in his hand he would rather encounter a lion in the desert than be alone in a room with a spider. Many people have similar fanciful antipathies, which excite their fears in a manner real danger would be powerless to do. Fear of infection is a dread which embitters the lives of many sensible people. There is a legend of an eastern dervish who, knowing that a plague was about to visit a certain city, bargained with the disease that only a specified number of victims should fall. When twice the number perished the plague explained its apparent breach of contract by asserting, "Fear killed the rest." In all times of epidemics doctors can tell the same.

### A NEGRO'S PRAYER.

A teacher in one of the coloured schools in the South was about to go away for a season, and an old negro poured out for her the following fervent petitions. "I give you the words," said the writer, "but they convey no idea of the pathos and earnestness of the prayer." "Go afore her as a leadin' light and behind her as a protectin' angel. Rough-shod her feet vid the preparation of de gospel o' peace. Nail her ears to de gospel pole. Gib her de eye ob de eagle dat she spy out sin 'far off. Wax her hand to de gospel plough. Tie her tongue to de line of truf. Keep her feet in de narrer way and her soul in de channel ob faith. Bow her head low beneaf her knees, an' her knees way down in some lonesome valley where prayer and supplication is much wanted to be made. Hedge an' ditch 'bout her, good Lord, and keep her in de strait and narrer way dat leads to heaven."