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For the Sunday-School Advocate.

THE GOOD-NATURED IDLER.

Thrs fellow looks as if he was on excellent terms with his cat. Puss enjoys his company as if he was an old acquaintance who always treated her with kindness. There is good-nature on both sides, and one cannot help having a kindly feeling for both boy and cat. What he is saying to puss is contained in the following lines:

"Tommy, I found you yesternight
Mewing outside the door,
Looking as if you'd wanted meat
For a long week and more.

"I took you in beside the fire,
And gave you lots of food;
And we shall be the best of friends
If you are very good.

"Now, Tommy, listen carefully
To what I've got to say;
Don't let me have to say the same
To you another day.

"I've got a lot of pets that you
Must tenderly regard—
They are my ducklings and my chicks
That run about the yard.

"Don't touch my pigeons, and don't go
Too near my rabbit-hutch;

Don't frighten my canary-bird,
For I love Dicky much;

"It was my brother Robert's bird,
I got it when he died;
When Dicky sings I almost feel
My brother at my side.

"Don't quarrel with the neighbors' cats,
They'll tear your coat of silk:
And now this lesson, Tom, is done,
Jump down and take your milk."

Pretty good words for a boy! But if we think a little our feelings will change somewhat—not toward the cat, for it is a cat's business to be idle. Provided it kills the rats and mice, it is at liberty to play and sleep as much as it pleases. But a boy is not a cat. He was not made merely to eat, sleep, and play. He has work to do, and however good-natured he may be we are not satisfied when we see him spending his time in idleness.

That boy in the picture is neglecting several duties while playing with his cat. His mother told him to get her a few pails of water from the spring, because it is washing-day, but seeing puss run into the shed he dropped his pail, ran after her, and left his mother waiting and wondering while he amused himself. He isn't ugly and cross, but he is simply a good-natured idler. Do you approve his conduct?

No? Rightly answered, my children. You know enough, I see, to keep you from being idle, provided you do as well as you *know*. Explain then, my dear little Miss Listless, why it is you so often spend a whole hour looking into the fire while your sewing lies untouched in your lap? How is it, Master Playwell, that your lesson-book so often lies unused on the table while you make dots and crosses on your slate. How is it, idlers all, that you so constantly shrink from work and spend hours which ought to be busily occupied in doing nothing? Ah me, I fear you do not all act up to your knowledge.

Mark what I say! Children have *work* to do. They have to help pa and ma. They have to study their lessons. More than all, they have to work on their own hearts. In those little breasts of theirs are many evil feelings which must be pulled out just as you pull weeds from the garden-plot. There are good purposes, also, which must be cherished by prayer and pious thoughts. The great work of every child's life is to become like Jesus. That's *the* business to be pursued above all other things. Jesus is the child's helper in this work, but much of it must be done by the little one himself. Think of it, little one. By the grace of God you are to build a character just like the Saviour's. Isn't it a great idea. Will you not all become *character builders*?

Q. Q.

On a Lord's day, at the time of the great frost in the year 1634, fourteen young men were playing at foot-ball on the river Trent. While thus engaged, in the open violation of God's command, they met together in a scuffle; the ice suddenly broke, and they were all drowned!