

church except on some ceremonial occasion of the Sunday-school, till they are twelve years of age. Are they the losers or the gainers by this?

For our own part, one of the very dearest memories of our childhood is of the Sabbaths spent in the venerable sanctuary where we, as a family—for nobody in health ever stayed at home—were used to worship. Long before we could understand the argument of the preacher, his benignant face, framed in its silvery hair, his gold-rimmed spectacles, and his tall figure, had made a picture for us which we somehow mixed in with our thoughts of God and Moses and David and the cattle on a thousand hills. Still can we remember how his clear voice would announce his favourite psalm,—

"Sweet is the work, my God, my King,
To praise Thy name, give thanks, and sing;"

and we never hear the rapt and accumulative splendour of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews without hearing the triumphant ring of the good pastor's tone as he would say, "By faith Noah," "By faith Abraham," its naturally plaintive cadence rising into a martial and victorious strain.

The benefits of the old way were shown in the fact that as they grew older, the children, instead of drifting into non-church-going, or roaming wherever they would, stayed where their parents were. As the mantle fell from the fathers, the sons assumed it. As the mothers ceased from labour, the daughters were trained to take their places. The boys and girls, fed on wholesome meat of creed and catechism, grew up strong in their convictions, self-poised, able to render a reason intellectually for their religious belief. And we have yet to see what there is which, under God, can make men and women so strong, so able to endure the manifold temptations of life, as a mental diet of the Bible, well learned and thoroughly assimilated in the days of their youth.

Little children would consider it no hardship, but, on the contrary, a pleasure, to be permitted to go often, indeed always, to church with their parents. They would feel altogether better if they were not treated during so many years as something between heathens and idiots. There would be a sort of moral leverage, a purchase upon them, when they were naughty and self-willed, which parents who go to church and leave their children at home to quarrel or to play never have. There would come no conflict after a while, when the parents concluded that the children were old enough, and suddenly required that which they had previously ignored. And, as in the old Jewish times, the father of a family could say with confidence, as few fathers, unhappily, in this period of juvenile misrule, can: As for me, I and my house will serve the Lord.