

## THE LOST CHILD.

The bairnie by the cottage door  
Had all the morning played;  
The sun shone bright as down the lane  
The wee bit bairnie strayed.

He'd go and catch the pretty birds  
That sing so clear and sweet:  
So down the lane and through the fields  
Wander the little feet.

And when the sun sinks in the west,  
The child is far from home,  
And tired, tired are the little feet—  
"O mammy, mammy, come!"

The pretty birds have gone to sleep,  
All nature is at rest;  
Ah! how this weary, wandering bird  
Longs for his cozy nest.

The bright eyes of the night keep watch,  
And angels hover round  
His grassy bed; O, weary head,  
Its pillow is the ground!

The angels spread their snowy wings;  
And, as he sleeping lies,  
They bear him to his Father's home—  
He wakes in paradise.

For two long days the mother seeks  
Her boy; in anguish wild;  
Three miles away from the cottage door,  
A stranger finds the child.

O! mother, dry thy weeping eyes;  
Thy bairnie's safe at home,  
And thou shalt see thy boy again—  
"O mammy, mammy, come!"

## MR. ANY-TIME THE SPANIARD.

I have a friend whose reply generally is, when you ask him to do a thing: "Oh, yes, that can be done any time."

He is not the least unwilling to do things. He is not obstinate about admitting that the things ought to be done, but his first instinctive impulse in regard to almost everything in life is to put it off a little.

If you remonstrate with him, he has a most exasperating proverb on his tongue's end, and he is never tired of quoting it: "There is luck in leisure."

Do what you will, you can't make him see that his proverb is aimed at people who hurry unwisely; not in the least at people who are simply prompt. As if headlong haste and quiet energetic promptitude were in the least like each other.

We call Mr. Any-Time the Spaniard, because it is well known that the Spaniard's rule of life is, "Never do to-day that which can be put off till to-morrow." Even into the form of a historical proverb, the record of this national trait of the Spanish people had crystallized many years ago. Even the Spaniards themselves say sarcastically, "Succors of Spain: late or never."

But says Mr. Any-Time, "What is the use of being in such a hurry? Oh, do be quiet, can't you! Let's take a little comfort"; and then he settles back in his chair and looks at you with such a twinkle in his eyes, that you half forgive him for his laziness. That is one thing to be said for lazy people. They are almost always good-natured.

Then we preach a little sermon to him, and the sermon has four heads; four good reasons why we ought to do things promptly.

Firstly, we say to him, "How dost thou know, O lazy Spaniard, that thou canst do this

thing at any other time than the present? Many things may prevent—sickness, thine own or thy friends'—business, forgetfulness, weather, climate; there is no counting up all the things which happen, and which hinder our doing the things we have planned to do, but have put off doing."

Secondly, "There is another truth, O lazy Mr. Any-Time; each day, each hour, each minute, has its own thing to be done—its own duty. If one single thing is put off, that thing will have to be crowded into the day, or the hour, or the minute which belonged to something else; and then neither thing will be well done."

Thirdly, "If it *can* be done now; that alone is reason enough for doing it now; that alone is enough to prove that now is the natural time, the proper time for it. Everything has its own natural time to be done, just as flowers have their natural time to blossom, and fruits have their time to 'pen and fall.'"

Just suppose for a minute, that such things should get into the way of saying, "Any-Time!" That the grains should say, "Oh we can get ripe any day," and should go on, putting it off and putting it off all through July and August and September, and October, for when people once begin to put off, there is no knowing what will stop them—until all of a sudden, some day a sharp frost should come and kill every grass-blade throughout the country. What would we do for hay then I wonder! Why, half the poor horses and cows would starve, and all because the lazy grains said they could get ripe "any-time."

Suppose strawberries or apples should take it into their heads to say the same thing. Wouldn't we get out of patience going, day after day, looking for some ripe enough to eat? And wouldn't the summer be gone before they knew it? And all the time be wasted that the vines and the trees had spent in putting out their leaves and blossoms, which had not come to fruit? And wouldn't the whole world and everybody's plan of living be thrown into confusion if such things were to happen?

Luckily no such thing is possible in this orderly earth, which God has made with a fixed time for everything; even for the blossoming of the tiniest little flower, and for the ripening of the smallest berry that was ever seen. Nobody every heard the words "any time" from anything in this world except human beings.

Fourthly, we say to our dear Spaniard, "Things which are put off are very likely never to be done at all. The chances are that they will be, at last, forgotten, over-looked, crowded out."

"Any-time" is no time; just as "anybody's work" is nobody's work, and never gets attended to, or if it is done at all, isn't half done.

And after we have preached through our little sermon with its four heads, then we sum it all up, and add that the best of all reasons for never saying a thing can be done "any-time" is that, besides being a shiftless and lazy phrase, it is a disgraceful one. It is the badge of a thief; the name and badge of the worst thief that there is in the world; a thief that never has been caught yet, and never will

be; a thief that is older than the Wandering Jew, and has been robbing everybody ever since the world began; a thief that scorns to steal money or goods which money could buy; a thief that steals only one thing, but that the most precious thing that was ever made.

It is the custom to have photographs taken of all the notorious thieves that are caught; these photographs are kept in books at the headquarters of the police, in the great cities, and when any suspicious character is arrested, the police officers look in this book to see if his face is among the photographs there. Many a thief has been caught in this way when he supposed he was safe.

Now most of you have had a photograph of this dangerous and dreadful thief I have been describing. But you will never guess it till I tell you where it is. It is in your writing-book under the letter P.

You had to write out the description of him so many times that you all know it by heart.

"Procrastination is the thief of time." When you wrote that sentence over and over, you did not think very much about it, did you? When we are young it always seems to us as if there were so much time in the world, it couldn't be a very great matter if a thief did steal some of it. But I wish I could find any words strong enough to make you believe that long before you are old you will feel quite differently. You will see that there isn't going to be half time enough to do what you want to do; not half time enough to learn what you want to learn; to see what you want to see. No, not if you live to be a hundred, not half time enough; most of all, not half time enough to love all the dear people you love. Long before you are old, you will feel this; and then, if you are wise, you will come to have so great a hatred of this master thief, that you will never use—or if you can help it, let anybody you know use, that favourite by-word of his, "any-time."

## HINDOO GIRLS AND THEIR DOLLS.

Once a year, just before the Dasserah festival, the little Hindoo girls destroy their dolls. The girls dress themselves in the brightest colours, and march through the busy bazaars of the city and along roads shaded by overhanging mango or sissoo trees, till they come to water—probably a large tank built by some pious Hindoo. A crowd of men and women follow them. Round the tank are feathery bamboos, plantains with their broad, hanging leaves, and mango-trees, and on every side are flights of steps leading down to the water. Down the steps the little bare feet go; and taking a last look at their favourite dolls, they toss them into the water. No Hindoo girl has such a family of dolls as many of our readers have in this country. But her dolls cost very little, and so the lost one is easily replaced. They are made of rags, or more generally of mud or clay, dried in the sun or baked in an oven, and rudely daubed with paint. An English doll is a marvel to a Hindoo girl. The fair hair, blue eyes, pretty face, and the clothes that are put on and taken off, fill her with wonder. In some of the mission-schools the scholars get presents at Christmas, and the girls get dolls, to their great delight.