

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

THE FIVE LOAVES

What if the little Jewish lad,
That summer day had failed to go
Down to the lake, because he had
So small a store of loaves to show?

"The press is great," he might have said,
"For food the thronging people call.
I only have five loaves of bread,
And what are they among them all?"

And back the mother's words might come,
Her coaxing hand upon his hair
"Yet go, for they might comfort some
Among the hungry children there."

Lo, to the lakeside forth he went,
Bearing the scant supply he had;
And Jesus, with an eye intent,
Through all the crowds, beheld the lad.

And saw the loaves and blessed them.
Then beneath his hand the marvel grow;
He brake, and blessed, and brake again;
The loaves were neither small nor few;

For, as we know, how it came to pass
That hungry thousands there were fed,
While sitting on the fresh green grass,
From that one basketful of bread.

If from his home the lad that day
His five small loaves had failed to take,
Would Christ have wrought—can any say
That miracle beside the lake?

OPENING THE GATE.

The following article contains a hint which many boys may profit by. There are too many youths who sit down and wait for others to "open the gate" for them when they meet with any difficulty, instead of using their own hands and strength in removing the obstacle:

"I wish you would send a boy to open the gate for me," said a well-grown boy of ten to his mother, as he passed with his satchel upon his back, and surveyed its clasped fastenings.

"Why, John, can't you open the gate for yourself," said Mrs. Easy. "A boy of your age and strength ought certainly to be able to do that."

"I could do it, I suppose," said the child, "but it's heavy, and I don't like the trouble. The servant can open it for me, just as well. Pray, what is the use of having servants, if they are not to wait upon us?"

The servant was sent to open the gate. The boy passed out, and went whistling on his way to school. When he reached his seat in the Academy he drew from his satchel his arithmetic, and began to inspect his sums.

"I cannot do these," he whispered to his seat-mate, "they are two hard."

"But you can try," replied his companion.

"I know I can try," said John, "but it's too much trouble. Pray, what are teachers for, if not to help us out of difficulties? I shall carry my slate to Professor Helpwell."

Alas, poor John. He had come to another closed gate—a gate leading into a beautiful science, "the laws of which are the mode in which God acts, in sustaining all the works of His hands"—the science of mathematics. He could have opened the gate and entered in alone, and explored the riches of the realm, but his mother had injudiciously let him rest with the idea that it is as well to have the

gates opened for us as to exert our strength. The result was, her son, like the young hopeful sent to Mr. Wiseman, soon concluded that he had no "genius" for mathematics, and threw up the study.

The same was true of Latin. He could have learned the declensions of the nouns, and the conjugations of the verbs, as well as other boys of his age; but his seat-mate very kindly volunteered to "tell him in class," and what was the use in opening the gate into the Latin language when another would do it for him? Oh, no! John Easy had no idea of taxing his memory or physical strength when he could avoid it, and the consequence was that numerous gates remained closed to him all of life to come—gates to honour—gates to riches—gates to happiness! Children ought to be early taught that it is always best to help themselves.

"YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ME."

"Ye have done it unto Me, ye have done it unto Me," sang Jenny one Monday morning. "Here! I'll remember it this time, sure. But, dear me! I'm forgetting, after all. The teacher said we must not only learn the words, but think of what they mean, and try to do them."

"Let me see, now," and she pressed her chubby hands to her forehead; "teacher said: If we gave a cup of cold water to one of His little ones, for the Saviour's sake, he would say, 'Ye have done it unto me.' I don't s'pose I know any of his little ones, but I'll try if I can find 'em."

She ran into the kitchen, where, on the dresser, she spied a large bowl, which was used to mix cake in.

"Ah!" thought she, "the Saviour is pleased if we give his little ones a cupful of water. He'll like a bowlful better still. Bridget, may I take this bowl a while?"

Bridget, who was busy with her washing, did not turn her head, but said:

"Oh, yes; take what you like."

Jenny lifted the big bowl down very carefully; but how to fill it was the question. She did not want to trouble Bridget; besides she had an idea that she ought to do it all herself.

A bright thought struck her; taking the cup that always hung on the pump, she filled it several times and poured it into the bowl.

"It's cupfuls, after all," she thought.

It was almost more than she could carry without spilling; but she walked slowly to the front gate. There was no one in sight, and Jenny set her burden on the grass and swung on the gate while she waited. Presently, along came two little girls on their way to school.

"Want a drink?" called Jenny.

"Yes, indeed; it's so hot, and I'm dreadful thirsty. I most always am. But how are we to get at it?"—laughing as she saw the great bowl.

"Oh, I'll soon fix that!" and Jenny ran for the tin cup, with which they dipped out the water.

"It tastes real good," they said, and kissed her, as they ran off to school.

The next that appeared was a short, red-faced Irishman, wiping his face with the sleeve of his flannel shirt, while an ugly dog trotted at his side.

"He don't look like 'one of the little ones,'" thought Jenny doubtfully, but she timidly held out her tin cup. He eagerly drained it, filling it again and drinking.

"And it must be a blessed angel ye are, for it's looking for a tavern I was, and now I won't nade to go nigh one at all. And shure, afther all, water's better nor whiskey. Might I give some to the poor baste?"—pointing to his dog.

Jenny hesitated; She did not like the idea of having the dog drink from her cup or bowl. But the man settled it by pouring the remnant of the water into his dirty old hat, the dog instantly lapping it up.

After they were gone, Jenny filled her bowl again. But I can't tell you now of all to whom she gave cups of cold water that hot day. But when she laid her tired head on her pillow that night, she thought:

"I wonder whether, after all, any of 'em were His 'little ones.'"

And the dear Saviour, looking down and seeing that the little girl had done all she could for His sake, wrote after her day's work, "Ye have done it unto Me."

WORDS THAT STAIN.

A small brush of camel's hair had been dipped into a fluid in which was some nitrate of silver, or "caustic," as it is sometimes called. The brush was wiped upon a white sheet. Pretty soon there appeared a black stain upon a white surface. It did not look very dark at first, but the action of the light seemed to deepen the colour, until it was an ugly spot that could not be washed out nor bleached out in a whole summer's sunshine.

A bright boy heard a vile word and an impure story. He thought them over. They became fixed in his memory, and they left a stain which could not be washed out by all the waters of this great round earth.

Do not allow yourself to think of vile, "smutty" stories, or unclean words. There are persons who seem to take an evil delight in repeating such things. And those who willingly listen to them receive a stain upon their memory. To give ear to filthy talkers is to share their sin. Don't lend your ears to be filled and defiled with shameful words and vile stories.

In these days of evil speech and bad books, it is our duty to take care what we listen to and what we read. A bad story smirches and defiles the heart, pollutes the memory and inflames the fancy.

Shun these things as you would poisonous vipers. Draw back from hearing them as you would shrink from the "cancerous kisses" of the crocodiles seen in DeQuincéy's opium dream. If, by chance, you have heard any obscene words or vile stories, drive them from your thoughts, as you would the black-winged bats from your face at night. Ask God to help you. Think of the true things He has said, and study the pure and beautiful things He has made.