

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

THE FEARFUL BEGINNING.

It was but a little sip,
Just a taste upon the lip;
But it left a longing there;
Then the measure larger grew,
And the habit strengthened too,
Till it would no curbing bear.
So the demon *Drink* decoys;
Soul and body both destroys.

CASTLE-BUILDING.

ELLA was comfortably seated in a great arm-chair, reading of heroic deeds, and wishing, O, so much, that she might accomplish something to make her famous—something to be talked about and win praise from all who knew her, as well as from an admiring public, far and wide.

"Now, if I were only old enough to be a Florence Nightingale, go to the seat of war and nurse the wounded soldiers, wouldn't that be splendid? Or, like Grace Darling, rescue some one from a watery grave. Dear me, what can or shall I ever do?"

And foolish Ella, forgetting her room needed righting, that she had not yet practised her music lesson, or that her mother might need some assistance this busy morning, with nurse sick and Willie fretting over not receiving his usual attention, went on idly dreaming or planning what she would do at some future day, when big enough to accomplish something worth while.

"Ella, dear," called out a sweet, gentle voice from the parlour door, "won't you please run up into the nursery and help amuse Willie? Jennie's face is aching so badly she cannot pay much attention to baby."

"O dear, it is always just so; I no sooner get comfortably seated reading than I must go amuse Willie. He's a perfect bother!" mentally said Ella, as she slowly closed her book, and still more slowly rose out of the arm-chair into which she had curled herself for a good indulgence in reading and castle-building.

"Come, Ella, Willie will get to fretting real hard, and then it will be much more difficult to amuse him."

"But, mother, this is Saturday, and I think I might have a little rest and pleasure of my own, without having to amuse baby whenever he is cross and fretful."

"Very true, dear, it is your holiday, but cannot you find pleasure in making others happy? I would not have my little girl grow up cold and selfish, thinking only of her own enjoyment."

"Grow up cold and selfish?" repeated Ella, as she ascended the stairs. "Why mamma doesn't know what great things I mean to accomplish one of these days. How I do wish I was big enough now to go away to China or Africa to teach the heathen, or do something of the kind."

A scream from Willie quickened her steps, but her brow bore rather a sulky look as she turned the knob of the nursery door.

"O, Miss Ella! I'm so glad you have come. I have a distracting toothache and the neuralgia all down the one side of my face, and I can't amuse Willie no way."

"You took cold talking for so long a time

over the fence last evening," replied Ella, in no very gracious tone. "There, Willie, stop your crying, or I'll not play with you. Just see, you have upset the soap-suds and broken your soap-bubble pipe."

Willie had stopped crying upon his sister's entrance into the room, but now he stood with quivering lips, scarce knowing whether to confess he was sorry, or to rebel and again set up that defiant yell.

What has become of Ella's wish to care for wounded soldiers, or teach the heathen? Has she poured oil upon the troubled waters? Helped to ease Jennie of the torturing pain she is so patiently trying to endure, or seen what gentle words may do to comfort Willie? Alas! no. The work just before her does not seem grand enough to claim her attention. It is not one that will win praise from her fellow creatures, and so Ella sets about amusing her little brother in a pre-occupied, listless manner. Jennie is not sent to lie down, or Willie put into a thoroughly good humour until mamma is disengaged, enters the room, and by her bright, sunny face and manner, sets things to rights. Jennie has something given her for her tooth, and a soothing lotion to bathe her face, and is then sent off to lie down and rest. Willie is taken upon the lap and soon quieted with a pretty picture-book.

Ella watches these proceedings, wondering why she had not thought of them, and with regretful feelings tells her mother so.

"Well, Puss, it is not so easy to put old heads on young shoulders."

"But, mamma, only this very morning I was planning what great deeds I meant to do, and was wishing to begin them right straight off."

"And forgot that the work directly before you was the only one God requires of you. I'm afraid my little girl indulges in castle-building. Like bright bubbles, they only fall to pieces, deary, unless you first lay a firm foundation."

"And how can I do that, mamma? I do not quite understand your meaning."

"It is this. Day-dreaming, or castle-building, as I call it, for future time, to the neglect of present duties, is apt to weaken the character instead of strengthening it, so when the time comes for some great and heroic deed, such ones are unnerved or incapacitated to act in the way they had dreamed they should. While another who forgets self, and daily strives to make others happy, unconsciously performs brave deeds all the time. This is the firm foundation of which I spoke. And you see, Ella, when a time comes for what you consider great and heroic deeds, they are performed as naturally and with as little thought of self as the simple ones have long been transacted; and, dear child, let me add, without a thought of this world's applause, as castle-builders expect to follow their great deeds."

Ella looked very thoughtful. Had mamma so clearly read her thoughts? Or was this really the way with all dreamy-castle builders? If so, she would not be one of them; and forming a good resolution, she no longer found the care of dear Willie a bother, or present duties distasteful. But in the strength of Him who ever helps His trusting children

to do right, Ella at once set about building a firm foundation against the time she might be called upon to make greater sacrifices for others.

PRAYING AND DOING.

"BLESS the poor children who haven't got any beds to-night," prayed a little boy just before he lay down on his nice warm cot on a cold, windy night.

As he rose from his knees his mother said:

"You have just asked God to bless the poor children, what will you do to bless them?"

The boy thought a moment. "Why, if I had a hundred cakes, enough for all the family, I would give them some."

"But if you have no cakes; what then are you willing to do?"

"When I get money enough to buy all the things I want, and have some over, I'll give them some."

"But you haven't enough money to buy all you want, and perhaps never will have; what will you do to bless the poor now?"

"I'll give them some bread."

"You have no bread—the bread is mine."

"Then I could earn money and buy a loaf myself."

"Take things as they now are—you know what you have that is your own; what are you willing to give to help the poor?"

The boy thought again. "I'll give them half my money; I have seven pennies, I'll give them four. Wouldn't that be right?"

JESUS IN THE HEART.

I WAS telling a dear little baby child, only three years old, of the kind Saviour, Jesus, who loved him so much and had a place in heaven for every one who came to Him and was willing to go there.

The little one listened to me with wondering brown eyes, for a time in silence. Suddenly he sat upon my knee, and opening his arms wide toward heaven, said earnestly, "I wants my Jesus *here!*" pressing the tiny hand upon his heart.

My heart went up to the Saviour that He would take my child listener at his word, and come as an everlasting guest to the little heart that opened to Him that day. You, dear children, who are reading this little story, have the same "want" as that little one needed. You need Jesus, but do you feel your need? Have you ever felt you must have Him "here"—in your very heart—that you cannot be content until He comes and dwells there forever?

Little Herbert spoke out the need of every human soul; an indwelling, loving Saviour. No far-off Jesus was enough for him, he wanted a presence and a possession. That is what you and I, and every child of man have need of—Jesus, Jesus only. Will he refuse to supply all your need? Nay, "My God shall supply all your need."

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear My voice and openeth the door I will come in unto him." Only let your heart cry to the Lord Jesus, "Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

SAYS the good book: "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men."