THE "GOODEST" MOTHER.

BY MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

Evening was falling cool and dark,
And people hurried along the way,
As if they were longing soon to mark
Their own home candle's cheering ray.

Before me toiled in the whirling wind,
A woman with bundles great and small,
And after her tugged, a step behind,
The bundle she loved the best of all.

A dear little roly-poly boy,
With rosy cheeks and a jacket blue,
Laughing and chattering, full of joy;
And here's what he said—I tell you true:

"You're the goodest mother that ever was,"
A voice as clear as a forest bird's;
And I'm sure the glad young heart had cause
To utter the sweet and lovely words.

Perhaps the woman had worked all day
Washing or scrubbing; perhaps she sewed;
I knew by her weary footfall's way
That life for her was an uphill road.

But here was a comfort, children dear!
Think what a comfort you might give
To the very best friend you can have here,
The mother dear, in whose house you live.

If once in a while you'd stop and say,
In task or play, for a moment pause,
And tell her in sweet and winning way,
"You're the goodest mother that ever was."

—Selected.

THE HOME.

The Gospel of Standing Straight.

BY EMILY A. KELLOGG.

A beautiful little missionary book, which I read when a child, told the story of Judith Perkins, the Persian Flower. When that lovely young spirit was passing away from this life, she called her little brother, to receive her last words. "Good-bye, Henry," she said. "Be a good boy and stand straight."

Could childish admonition be more complete? It counsels what each boy and girl needs through life. "Be good and stand straight." Did you ever think how they belong together; how they help each other? Do you know that, of all God's creatures, man is the only one formed to stand erect? And the bible says that God "made man in His own image." Surely He intended that we should be good and stand straight. Moral and physical rectitude in our inheritance. Yet how few accept and enter into it. Watch the passers by on any crowded street. Notice yourselves and your schoolmates. How few hold themselves gracefully erect. One allows his shoulders to stoop, another contracts his chest, another sets an uncalled for crook in his neck, so that his head gets through the door quite in advance of his body. Many, who may think themselves models, are merely bending backward. While this position does not cramp the breathing powers, as does the contracted chest it throws the body out of balance, giving undue prominence and an unnatural strain to the heavy organs, and is thus at once injurious and extremely inelegant.

Miss Julia Thomas, who has lately died, was widely known as a brilliant and earnest apostle of what I have here called the gospel of being good and standing straight. She said that, when a growing girl, she was frequently admonished: "Julia, stand up straight; throw your shoulders back." She naturally thought that this was all that was necessary. So her shoulders were jerked back out of all symmetry. But alas! they would drop back into their natural position and then she had it all to do over again. It was not until she was a woman, and had studied out the matter for herself, that she learned that the body must speak for the spirit, and that a graceful carriage of body belongs with a gracious manly or womanly soul.

Is this beyond you? Try it, and see. Does not your body respond to your inward thought? Is not your poise finer than ordinary, when you are filled with some warm and generous impulse? What does your posture say when you are angry, or stubborn, or unhappy? When a mate is quarrelsome, or discouraged, do you not know it, without a word being spoken, and even sometimes without seeing the face?

Do you say that you need more particular directions, to aid you in the endeavor to "stand straight?" Here is the one point: Chest up and forward. Get this right, and all else will come right with grace and ease. Do not think especially about your shoulders or your back. Think only of your chest. Let your breathing begin in the lower part of your lungs, and expand upward. The breath, freely filling the upper chest, will give a wonderful feeling of buoyancy. Breathe deeply and vigorously. Ten inhalations a minute is a good measure as to frequency. This deep slow breathing is very restful and quieting. You will find it helpful in this way, if you begin to be nervous (cross, your elders and little sisters call it) over your lessons. It will surely help you out of that bad rut, if you will practice it perseveringly. To test your position, walk straight up against a wall. If it is correct your toes, chest, chin and lips will touch the wall at the same time. If forehead and abdomen are unduly prominent and come first to the front, be sure you need to reform. Try the experiment daily until the right habit is established. School recess is a good time to practice. In walking you should poise your face and chest well over the advanced foot, letting the weight fall upon the ball of the foot. Do not be "heel-clackers." The force with which most people bring down their heels must be a shock to poor Mother Earth.

After all, remember that these directions are only to aid your body in falling easily and gracefully into a habit of truly expressing the best that is in you. Do not make of them an artificial, stiff framework of outside manner, which corresponds to nothing within, and is therefore not your honest belonging. Let the inward thought and aim be noble, manly, womanly. Cultivate a hopeful, helpful, modest self respect. Then the noble poise will be its outward expression, and not like borrowed finery, which ills adorns an ignoble girl or boy. Banish alike a stiff constraint and a negligent disregard of appearance, and see how much you can help yourself, through the rule given by the sweet Persian Flower: "Be good and stand straight."

Not Lovers but Friends.

"I wish boys and girls could sign a pledge to be only friends," said a bright and sensible girl to me. "I think more than half the pleasure of association is spoiled by the prevalent idea that there can be no interest in each other that does not mean love. If my brothers show to girls such kindly attention as brothers might, the girls at once begin to act as if they thought the boys in love with them, and so they do not care to be even kind; and they say that the other young men have the same experience, and are afraid to be genuinely friendly unless they are willing to be supposed to be lovers. On the other hand, if I like a young man, and treat him in a frank and friendly way, he at once imagines I am 'setting my cap' for him, and either 'fights shy' or begins to treat me with a lover-like familiarity which is not pleasant."

This voices the experience of many a true-hearted young woman, whose sincere friendship might be the salvation of many a young man, and who would be glad to be a genuine helpful comrade, but who hesitate for fear of being misunderstood.

If we seek for the cause of this unfortunate misapprehension of what the true association of men and women ought to be, we may find that wrong teaching in this respect often begins in the home during the very infancy of the child, and that the seeds of evil are sown by parental hands. A writer in a late number of the *Ladies' Home Journal* tells of a five year-old who amused her mamma's friends by showing "how the ladies roll their eyes and drop their lids at the gentlemen," and the little one had her first lesson in flirting well learned. How often do parents of really fine sensibilities teach mere babes that they are "lovers" and "sweethearts!" These words, in themselves, have no evil significance, but applied to children make them constantly conscious that they are boys and girls at an age when no thought of sex should be introduced to their minds. The boy should, indeed, be taught to be the chivalrous gentleman and the girl to be the courteous lady, but with no thought of special tender relations with any individual. I clip an item from a Virginia newspaper: "Cards are out announcing the engagement of Master Willie Scott, aged four years, and Miss Mabel Perry, aged six years." What true appreciation can those children have in after years of the value of love and the dignity of marriage?

But wrong teaching does not end here. If older boys and girls manifest a friendly and perfectly proper interest in each other, adults are ever ready to force the buds of sentiment into untimely blossoms. It is somewhat surprising that parents, who deplore the existence of this state of things, are yet propagating it by their jests, innuendoes and teasings. This was forcibly illustrated to me by a little incident. A fond and anxious mother was bewailing the flirtatious propensities of her fifteen year old daughter and her companions. Said the mother: "Those girls never talk of anything, when by themselves, but boys and beaux. Just listen." A group of girls were in an adjoining room, and the sound of their merry young voices was music; but attention to their conversation recalled to me the disgusted expression of one young girl who had said of certain other girls, "I don't like them, for they never talk of anything but 'him.'" It certainly was a painful revelation of the thoughts that filled their young minds, and the mother heard it with an anxious face. "What can we do?" she asked. "My husband feels as badly about it as I do."

A few minutes later we were all seated at the table, and the husband just mentioned turned to one of the smiling girls and said: "I saw Charlie as I came home. He was looking very doleful. Have you given him the mitten?" To another who sighed because she had been pouring over a book all the morning and her lungs gave in sighs their call for more oxygen, he said: "What is the matter with you? Have you an affection of the heart?" with a meaning look. And so through the meal this "anxious" father teased the girls, and the "anxious" mother smiled at the jests and added her word of badinage, and neither seemed to have the slightest idea that they were instructing those young people in the very thing which they so much deplored as moral evils.

Our daily papers do much to lower moral tone and blunt sensibility by their publication of jokes, the wit of which turn upon personal familiarities, and which ought to bring the blush of indignation to our cheeks instead of the smile to our lips. A thrust at the true womanliness of our daughters or the manliness of our sons is neither wit nor humor. If we would raise the standard of morality in thought and deed it would be better to follow Paul's advice: "Whatsoever things are pure,.... if there be any virtue,.... think"—and speak—"on these things."—*Mary A. Allen, M. D., in Congregationalist.*

THE FARM.

— "Immediately after planting see that each quince-tree is well mulched and keep them mulched even after they come into bearing," says Mr. Jessup. Exactly! And I don't know of a tree or vine of any kind which does not thrive mightily under the same treatment.

— The fundamental principle of the cultivation of crops, mostly ignored by those who should most observe it, is that weeds should be killed before really visible. If the soil of a weedy field is examined early in the season, it will be found alive with germinating seeds, with the young spires not yet appearing above the surface. Then is the time to put in the cultivator and kill these weeds, weak and helpless and destroyed with ease. To stir the surface is all that is then necessary. For some years I have used no other cultivator than a home-made V-harrow, with handles and half-inch steel teeth, brought to a sharp point and sloping back at 45 degrees. And this is used for stirring and loosening the soil, a necessity for plant growth. To kill the weeds is an incident, not the main purpose, but it does it effectively.

— Verbena, phlox, petunia, pansy, portulacca, double balsam, sweetpea, mignonette are named as reliable standbys, sure to give satisfaction in good soil, with the beds kept clear of weeds and the plants not overcrowded. I would place the sweetpea first on the list as combining fragrace, color, grace, endurance, variety and adaptedness to cutting beyond any other annual, if not beyond any other flower of any sort.

— Evergreen trees can be transplanted as readily and safely as deciduous trees, if the roots are not allowed to become dry at all during the time they are necessarily out of the damp soil, but they are sure to perish if this care is neglected even for an hour. A writer says it was demonstrated in Wisconsin some years ago that the roots of resinous trees glaze over with a resinous film whenever they become dry; that this prevents exterior moisture from penetrating to them, so they can no longer receive supplies to maintain growth.

— The strawberry-bed we were setting could not yield its delicious fruit for more than a year, but wife said: "You can get a lot of old tomato-cans, melt off the tops, push them down in the ground so they will take up last year's plants without disturbing the roots and set them here from a neighbor's plot. This will give us a good fruitage this year, the same as from potted plants." By my usual deference to the better half, we are now in a fair way to a large yield the present season.

— Dear women obliged to make your own kitchen garden: Do not do without the great luxury of pole-beans because you cannot pole them. Plant east, south and west of every little building about the premises. Close by the fence stand tall brush in the ground; the brush and fence together will be abundant support; then buy some binder twine or wool twine, string up the buildings as you would morning-glories—the string will do for next year; thus you will have quarts of choice limas or creasebacks without a single pole.

—Whitewash on fruit-trees is unsightly and less effective for repelling borers than common soft-soap; washed with the soap three or four weeks after blossoming they will show the treatment speedily in greater thrift and vigor. I have often used the following, which I think even better for trunks and large branches of fruit trees than soft-soap: Heat to the boiling point 2 gals. water and 1 gal. soft-soap. When the soap is all dissolved add one-half gal. good, strong, crude carbolic acid and stir until all is thoroughly and permanently mixed. This applied with cloth or brush kills bark-lice, keeps off borers and invigorates the trees.

— "Scarce as hens' teeth" are interesting bulletins from State experiment stations. The work may be excellent and the results valuable, but such a dull way of laying the facts before the public! The tired farmer whose brain almost whirls from effect of labor, sun and wind, should not be expected to study for facts which he pays to have presented him. After wading blindly through pages of matter one sometimes comes to a terse statement of results. Would it not make the bulletin more interesting if this summary were printed in the first few lines, letting a bright explanation of the experiment follow?—*N. Y. Tribune.*

— Hens might be made very useful in the garden as insect-eaters if they would not scratch. Several impediments are in use for this purpose. The rooster is booted (as well as spurred), and the hens are provided with stockings. Another is to hobble the legs so that scratching is impossible, while walking is not difficult. Or hang a stout peg to each leg, which trails as the bird steps, but when the leg is brought forward to scratch, sticks in the ground and sends the fowl ahead a step; in this way, if the hen persists, she is walked out of the garden. A scientific person suggests that the adoption of these devices may in time tend to breed the scratching habit out of the fowls.

Pasture Experience—Against Orchard-Grass and Ploughing.

BY E. S. GILBERT.

Orchard-grass affords an early bite—if an animal can be induced to bite it. Let any champion of this plant lead out a horse, watch him as he feeds, and see him dodge the orchard-grass. He will eat other grasses, clover, etc., all round it clear to the ground with no more thought of touching the orchard-grass than he has of knawing a stone. When I mowed some (just heading out) and gave it to my stabled horses I found they preferred going hungry to eating it. "It does well in company with other grasses"—which means, I suppose, that it grows in tufts and never would make a sod of itself. If your soil enforces orchard-grass you would better emigrate. The pasture on my place has been used as such about sixty years. It has never been ploughed or manured, and I think never was better than last year. Four years ago it grew vast quantities of yarrow (Achillea millefolium). I never saw so much at once before. I was told, "It is all run out; you will have to plough it," and I began to think so. But the two last wet summers have killed the yarrow and brought back the grass; there were acres tinted with white clover bloom, and it was not easy to see in June where any grass had been eaten. There is a stratum of black mould two to three inches thick all over it, and if not overstocked I see no reason why it should not endure 1,000 years. I suspect that when such land is ploughed large amounts of this carbonaceous matter are eaten up by oxygen, and carried off as carbonic acid gas, or carbon dioxide, as we say now, which, with the grass growing over it, would have been preserved to the soil. Reseeding, top-dressing, weed-digging, etc., are better for pasture land than ploughing, in the long run. Do not suppose it ruined because transient weeds have got a foothold. They may have been born of drouth, like my yarrow.—*N. Y. Tribune.*

— Hardtack—How are you getting along with your new clerk? Is he a good man? Clambake—He works like a charm. Did you ever see a charm work? Hardtack—I never did. Clambake—Well, that's him.

—"Was very bad with Costiveness and one bottle of Burdock Blood Bitters cured me. Would not be without it."
Mrs. Wm. Finley, Jr., Bobcaygeon.

Sacrifice for Country Schools.

A friend sends me a tiny slip containing these words only: "No question before the farming community is more important than that of education in the country schools." And as they stood thus detached and impressive, they strongly excited the thought, What may be the fate of our country if the increasing decay of rural schools continues? For education is as a two-edged sword—it cuts both ways—it increases the subject's ability for evil as well as for good; and if the out-of-school influences preponderate for evil, so much the more dangerous will be the full grown product—wanting in honor, patriotism and human or Christian principle—a destroyer instead of a builder. Such a one having the down-grade in his favor can do more harm than ten good men can obviate or repair.

Town schools, supplemented by street lessons, are by far most apt to turn out graduates in skilled vice. Country schools, on the contrary, are, as they always have been, but now, in their minority, more than ever, the main hope of the country; and no sacrifice on the part of property-owners, whose property depends on general welfare for its value and its permanence, should be too great for their support and improvement. Beneficiary gifts and legacies may do good bestowed in cities, but they may do vastly more general good if wisely used in the country, where not only the springs of our life-giving waters, but also the life springs of moral strength and integrity, which alone can preserve us as a peaceful and prosperous nation.—*W. G. Waring, sen.*

Why he Chose Ralph.

"That Ralph Risley was always a lucky dog!" said Walter, savagely. "There's no reason in the world why I should't have got that place, as well as he—I can't understand it?"

The two boys had applied for a desirable situation, and Ralph had been the favored one. As the gentleman who engaged him was a friend of mine, I had enough curiosity to go to him and say: "Will you tell me why you chose Ralph Risley instead of Walter Garret for that vacant situation?"

"Certainly," said he at once. "I confess I should have been puzzled to choose between them but for one thing, for they are both fine fellows, of good family, good scholarship and good habits; but I spent an evening at Mr. Garret's not long since, and soon after I came in Mrs. Garret said:

"'Walter, we shall need more coal for the grate soon—you'd better get it now.'

"'Yes'm!' said Walter; but he went on reading and never stirred.

"In about half an hour the last of the coal was used.

"'Walter,' said his father, 'why don't you fill the scuttle, as your mother told you?'

"'I will in a minute—just want to finish this page,' he returned, hurriedly.

"Our conversation continued, Walter's reading continued and the fire burned low.

"'Walter,' said his mother, sharply at last, 'got some coal this minute.'"

"With angry frown he slowly rose, reading all the time, laid his book on the table, still open, and loitered by it until another sharp 'Walter!' from his father at length started him.

"A week later, Mrs. Risley and Ralph were at our home for a call. He had just become wonderfully interested in the bean game with my girls, when his mother rose and said, 'Come my son, I'm sorry to hurry you, but I don't like to leave the children any longer, Kate is so careless.'

"Instantly Ralph's bean-bag was dropped, and with an 'All right, mother, if the girls will excuse me,' he stood cheerfully ready at her side. We merchants know that straws show which way the wind blows and learn to be quick at observing. Nothing annoys us like a laggard, and nothing makes business relations so pleasant and satisfactory as courteous treatment on one side, and prompt, cheerful obedience on the other. I knew Ralph would suit me, and I haven't been disappointed."—*Fannie E. Newberry.*

— There are some patent medicines that are more marvelous than a dozen doctors' prescriptions, but they're not those that profess to cure *everything*.

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— Look upon the success and sweetness of thy duties as very much depending upon the keeping of thy heart closely with God in them.—*Flavel.*

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