

THE CHILDREN'S RECORD.

BOY AND GIRL CHRISTIANS.

Children must begin early to become great violinists. The great violin-players of the world have generally commenced at four years of age or so. As soon as the tiny fingers can hold the bow steadily, the training commences, until the instrument becomes as familiar and as flexible to the will of the player as the very hand itself.

But how strange that many boys and girls think that the very best training, for the highest mastery of life, not only can be put off, but perhaps ought to be.

I know girls—perhaps some who will read this are like them—who believe that to be Christians it is necessary to be sixteen years old at least. They think that about that time they will have a strange kind of experience, called "conversion," and that they will then be "old enough to join the church." And they do not see that meanwhile they are losing the best chance of their lives to be really trained and excellent Christians.

For, you see, to be a good Christian means a great deal. It means a trained heart, a trained temper, a trained sympathy, a trained spiritual energy, a trained will. It is a much more difficult matter to perfectly control yourself than to control the strings of a violin or the motions of a bicycle.

To be in harmony with God's love, in harmony with his will for you, in harmony with all your fellow-men—this is a harder and higher art than merely to make a fleeting harmony upon a stringed instrument. You can never hope to be as complete a Christian as Christ meant you to be unless you begin as early as those little children whom he took into his arms and blessed, and of whom he said that "of such is the kingdom of heaven."

And how is a little girl going to begin to be a good Christian? you say. Just in the same way that she begins to love her father and her mother before she is old enough to tell them so, or tell anybody else so. You wouldn't like to be told that you must not love your mother until you were sixteen years old, I am sure. God says to each of you, "Give me thine heart," and his way is the right way.

The sweetest, the holiest, the loveliest Christians whom we meet, the saints in our churches, are those who have begun so early that love of God and love of man have be-

come second nature to them. Would you not like to be such Christians, girls? Then begin early.—S. S. Visitor.

TWO LITTLE THIEVES.

"Mamma," said Bessie, as she was undressing for bed, "this finger and this thumb have been naughty to-day."

"Why, what did they do?" asked mamma. "They took some raisins from the closet this morning," replied Bessie, hanging down her head.

"Did anybody tell them to do it?" asked mamma.

Bessie turned away, as she softly answered.

"I did not hear any one tell them."

"Did they eat the raisins?" asked mamma.

"No, they put them in my mouth," said Bessie.

"But you were to blame for taking them. Your fingers had no right to them, you know," said mamma.

"Now what shall I do to punish this little hand?" asked mamma.

"It was only one finger and my thumb, mamma," Bessie said, beginning to cry.

"They are two little thieves, then. They cannot be trusted, so we must shut them up," said mamma.

Bessie looked very sorry, while her mamma found some black cloth, and wound it around the finger, then the thumb. Her hand felt very clumsy, but she went to bed and got up in the morning with them still tied up.

"Shall I take this ugly black cloth off now?" she asked, on going to be washed.

"O, no!" said mamma. "We have no proof that they are sorry yet, so it would not be safe to trust them. They might go right away into the closet again."

"I think they are sorry," said Bessie.

"But they have not said so," replied mamma.

So Bessie went down to breakfast with the ugly black rags on. She could not eat very much, because every time she used her spoon papa looked so queer. Soon after breakfast she ran to mamma with tears running down her cheeks.

"Mamma," she sobbed, "I made 'my fingers naughty; I'm so sorry; please forgive me."

And now the black cloth was taken off, and the fingers kissed, and Bessie ran away very happy.—Examiner.