

## FRAGMENTS.

Our way to the kingdom of Heaven lies through tribulations. Shall we then *accuse*, shall we not rather *bless* the Providence, which has made the passage short—*Hervey*.

Stand upon the edge of this world, ready to take wing, having your feet on earth, your eyes and heart in Heaven.—*Wesley*.

The Holy Bible is a spiritual paradise, and the Psalms is a tree of life in the midst.

Every dispensation of God, every day's mercies and changes, look at Heaven, and intend eternity.

**PLAYING TRUANT.**—We never knew a boy in the habit of playing truant, and wasting the golden hours of youth, to become a great and distinguished man. Most often the idler of early life is the laggard in the world's race. Truly happy is the boy whom parental or friendly care saves from this alluring danger of youthful days. The reason why truancy is so dangerous an evil is not the loss of a day or two at school now and then, or any other immediate or direct consequence of it; it is because it is the beginning of a long course of sin; it leads to bad company, and to deception, and to vicious habits; it stops the progress of preparation for the duties of life, hardens the heart, opens the door for every temptation and sin, which, if not closed, must bring the poor victim to ruin. These are what constitute its dangers.

## GLEANINGS FOR THE CHILDREN.

## I.—ESTHER, THE LITTLE MISSIONARY.

"MOTHER, may I take a little walk down the hill?" asked Esther, as she stood before her mother, her hair neatly combed and parted, holding in her hand her blue cape bonnet.

"Is it not rather warm, my dear?" asked her mother. (It was in Jamaica.)

"O no, mother, and I will come back when the great clock strikes six at supper time; do let me go." And little Esther looked so earnestly, so beseechingly that her mother could not refuse her; so she told Esther that she might go. Then Esther looked very happy, and away she flew to the nursery, and took her little bag, already filled with something that was very heavy, and trudged down the green hill upon which her father's house was situated. She neither looked to the right hand nor the left. Of the yellow butterflies lighting here and there upon the flowers, or the birds skipping from branch to branch upon the trees, Esther took no notice, as if birds or butterflies never lived; and yet little girls love to watch them sporting among the green things of earth. She crossed the street at the foot of the hill, and then she disappeared down a very disagreeable-looking lane, filled with huts of various sizes, where very slovenly, ugly-looking people lived, some black, some white. What had the good and gentle little Esther to do down there? What would her careful mother say to find her in such company? How surprised would her father be to see his tenderly educated little daughter playing with the children of the lane? Precisely at six o'clock was Esther seen returning up the hill, ready to sit down with her parents and brothers at the evening meal. Her face was certainly flushed, and she looked wearied; but she bore a serious expression, as if she had not been in any naughty frolic; and there was something so calm and placid too on her countenance, it would seem, as if she could not have been in any mischief, if she did go down among the boys and girls of the lane. So this did all happen, not only one day, but two and three days, and a whole week together. Precisely at a certain time did Esther leave the garden, or playhouse, or books, or whatever part of the house she happened to be in, and ask her mother to take her little walk down the hill, and precisely at six did the front gate open to admit the little girl. She was such an obedient, excellent child that her mother felt she could trust her anywhere; neither did she ever wish to refuse her a simple request like this. At last

her mother began to wonder about little Esther's ever-returning walk down the hill.

"Where do you go, my dear?" asked her mother, looking at her earnestly.

"Only a little way from the bottom of the hill," replied Esther, blushing deeply.

"I hope you do not go anywhere where I should disapprove of your going, Esther," said her mother soberly.

"Mother, I do not do any thing that you or father would disapprove of," answered the child, and a very small tear-drop glistened in her mild blue eye.

Mrs Lovel felt that she would not, and yet there was surely something peculiar in Esther's walks which, she began to think, perhaps, ought to be attended to. And it happened in this wise. One afternoon Mr Lovel came to take his little daughter to walk with him.

"Where is Esther?" asked he. His wife told him Esther had gone down the hill, and, when he stood at the front door, he caught a glimpse of her turning down the lane. Very quickly then did Mr Lovel pursue his little Esther, and he thought he should reprove her very sharply for going among the children who lived there. He saw her enter a low, ill-looking house, and then she disappeared from his sight. To that house he directed his hasty and anxious steps.

There was an untidy woman washing near the door. "Is little Esther Lovel here?" asked the father, looking in at the window. The woman started at the sound of the gentleman's voice, and drew her hands from the suds.

"To be sure she is, snod's larnin' the children to read!"

Mr Lovel inquired a little farther into the matter, and then the woman took him to the back door; and what did Mr Lovel see? There sat his daughter on a high bench with a small negro boy beside her, to whom she was pointing out the letters and words of her Testament. Three other children, one white and two coloured girls, were seated on the stone steps not far off, attentively bending over their books,—books which Mr Lovel immediately recognised as belonging to Esther's library. What was Esther's surprise, too, when she looked up and beheld her father!

"Esther, how came you here, my child?" asked the parent, affected by the sight.

"Why, father, I am a missionary!" answered the child with great earnestness.

"A missionary! how so, my dear?"

"Why, father, Jimmy here and none of them know how to read, and have got no Bibles. I am sure they are the people the minister told us were heathen. So I pitied them, and thought I would be a missionary;" and the young child's face glowed with animation at the task she had undertaken.

"But, my child, why did you not tell us about it? you know we should be happy to help you," said the parent; and he felt as if he wanted to fold the little girl to his bosom.

"Father," answered Esther seriously, "don't you know the Bible says, Let not your right hand know what the left hand does? and my Sabbath-school teacher says, it means you must not go and tell every body when you want to do good. God knows it, father, because He sees me; and I told Him of it, too, in my prayers."

Then Mr Lovel sat down on the stone step, and, while he attempted to teach the little negro girls beside him, he felt he had been taught a lesson in well-doing that he should not soon forget or disregard.

Thus has this child Esther, of scarce six years, unconsciously rebuked the lukewarm piety of her father, opening his heart and his purse to the heathen wants of his own as well as other lands; and now the good and great missionary cause numbers no two warmer friends than are Esther and her father. Cannot other children look about them, and become missionaries too?

## II.—TRYING TO BE HAPPY.

"I wish you would tell me how to be happy, uncle. I have heard the saying, 'As happy as

a king', and wish I knew how I could be happy as a king, too."

"No doubt of it; but, Peter, though the saying seems to suppose the contrary, we have no good reason to believe that kings are a whit happier than other people."

"No! Why, what should make a king unhappy? Has he not every thing he can wish for?"

"Indeed he has not; for all through the World much will have more. He who has fifty pounds wishes to have a hundred, and he that has ten thousand tries his best to make it up to twenty thousand."

"But a king wears a crown and a royal robe, and is lifted up above the people."

"True; but his crown will not cure the headache, nor his royal robe drive away the heart-ache; and then his being lifted up above the people is quite as likely to make him enemies as friends. Believe me, Peter, a king has his cares, and crowned heads and peaceful hearts rarely go together. If you really want to be happy, take my advice, and on no account whatever wish to be made a king."

"Then please to tell me how to be happy."

"I will give you two or three good rules, which may help you to become happier than you would be without knowing them; but, as to being quite happy, that you can never be till you get to Heaven."

"Well then, uncle, tell me your good rules."

"The first is, 'Try your best to make others happy.' 'I never was happy,' said a certain king, 'and I began to take pleasure in the welfare of my people; but ever since then in the darkest day I have had sunshine in my heart.'"

"That was a wise and good king. I will try to remember your first rule."

"My second rule is, 'Be content with little.' There are many good reasons for this rule. We deserve but little, we require but little, and 'better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasures and trouble therewith.'—(Prov. xv. 16.) Two men were determined to be rich; but they set about it in different ways, for the one strove to raise up his means to his desires, while the other did his best to bring down his desires to his means. The result was that the one who coveted much was always repining, while he who desired but little was always contented."

"The last was right and the first was wrong. I will try to remember your second rule, uncle."

"My third rule is, 'Look on the sunny side of things.'"

"Look up, look up with hopeful eyes,  
Though all things seem forlorn;  
The sun that sets to-night will rise  
Again to-morrow morn."

The skipping lamb, the singing lark, and the leaping fish, tell us that happiness is not confined to one place: God in His goodness has spread it abroad on the earth, in the air, and in the waters. Two aged women lived in the same cottage; one was always fearing a storm, and the other was always looking for sunshine. Hardly need I say which it was who wore a foreboding frown, or which it was whose face was lighted up with joy."

"I know which it was very well, and I will try to remember your third rule, uncle."

"My fourth and last rule is, 'Fear God and keep His commandments,' and this is the best rule of all. The others without it are of little use. 'I had all things,' said one, 'but I was unhappy, for I knew not God. God took all things away, and I was at peace; for he gave me a knowledge of Himself in Christ Jesus.' My fourth rule must on no account be forgotten."

"I will try to remember it as well as the rest of them."

"All are trying to be happy, but many are trying the wrong way. Some look for it in health, some in wealth, some in friends, and some in renown; but strength fails, riches are lost, friends die, and renown is but an uncertain thing. You were wrong, Peter, in thinking that kings and great people are the happiest people in the World."