

CHILDREN'S CORNER.

PICKING OUT THE PLUMS.

By E. B. SMITH.

He put it in his thumb,
And pulled out a plum,
And said, "What a great boy am I!"

It was little Jack Horner who did that, as you all know. But I want to tell you of a child who acted very much like him.

It was a little girl who was visiting another, not long ago. She was standing before a well-filled book-case, handling the books, and, as I must say, pushing them all out of place, as if there were not enough books in the room.

"I wonder," said she, "if these books are the same that we have in the Sunday-school library. I never can find a good book in the library now!"

Dear me! One would have thought—being in another room as I was, where the speaker was out of view—that it was some sage, gray-headed, person, who had had time to read a great deal; or else that the library spoken of must be a very small one indeed.

But, no; the fact was, about the library, that it contained some two hundred and fifty books, which had been carefully culled over not long before the time and worthless ones taken out, and many new ones added.

And the speaker was a child of some nine or ten years, perhaps, who could not have many years experienced in reading. I feel quite certain that she had never read one half the books in the library, small as she seemed to consider it.

What did she mean by "a good book"?

"Ah, there is the secret! This little girl, like many other Sunday-scholars whom I have seen, had doubtless picked out most of the attractive looking stories, and books with plenty of pictures, and now she fancied that she had read all the books that were worth reading.

Isn't that just like little Jack Horner, and other babies?"

Have you not often seen a little child do just so with a piece of cake? pick out all the plums, and eat them, and then waste and crumble the cake, sweet and light though it may be, and much better for the little child than the plums.

The child of whom I am telling you was like Jack Horner in another point: See, what a great boy am I!" For, from the tone of her voice, she evidently thought it was something very fine to have read through all that was good for anything in the Sunday-school library.

What do you think about it, young friend? Is it not rather babyish to pick out the "plum" books, and pass over those which, as your teachers and friends will assure you, are really good, instructive, and interesting too, to any sensible child? And I think it is rather ungrateful, too, when the friends of a Sunday-school have taken pains to select a set of books that will benefit you, to turn them over in that ungracious way.

Do our little Sunday scholars always remember to be grateful to their kind teachers and friends?

And, one more question. What would you say to a baby who picked out all the plums from his cake and then asked for more? Churchman, (Hartford).

JOHNNIE'S POLICY.

Johnnie was always in great haste to do anything that gave him pleasure. I am sorry to say that sometimes the same feet that ran so eagerly to the coasting-place dragged slowly one behind the other when there was an errand to be done. But when there was a cry of fire, or a band of music playing on the square, no boy could reach the spot quicker than Johnnie. He did not always stop to shut the gate; and unfortunate people who chance to stand in his way had their toes trod on, and any package they held in their hands was quite likely to illustrate the law of gravitation by falling to the ground. Of course nobody liked this: so Johnnie had a rather unenviable reputation, much to the sorrow of his mother, who wanted her little boy to grow up into a thorough gentleman.

One day Johnnie, standing by the kitchen window, spied the red-coats and gilt-trimmed caps of the village band. No sooner did he see than he rushed out, giving the door a swing behind him. Back it came against his mother's elbow, making her dash the milk she was carrying over the new calico dress of Mrs. Baldwin, a neighbor who had just come in to give her a recipe for pickling plums.

"Johnnie! Johnnie!" called Mrs. Liston; but Johnnie was already halfway down the street.

When he came back, his mother talked to him very soberly about the trouble these careless habits of his made those around, and ended by saying she wished he would go and ask Mrs. Baldwin's pardon. Johnnie did not like to ask pardon any better than some other little boys you may know; besides, Mrs. Baldwin was not a favorite with him.

She always looked as if she thought him the worst boy that was ever made. Naturally, he did not receive his mother's suggestion with favor.

"It mortifies me," continues Mr. Liston, "to have people think I don't bring up my boy as a gentleman. What a rude unladylike woman people must judge me to be when they see you act so roughly!"

"But, mother," protested Johnnie, "you're not to blame. You try to make me nice and quiet, but I forget."

"People don't know that they judge mothers by their children. I want mine to be an honor to me."

Johnnie had grown so used to being called rude and careless that he did not mind it much; but he loved his mother dearly, and the thought that he was bringing disgrace upon her cut him to the quick. He studied the tea kettle for a long time, and then he said, "If I should go to Mrs. Baldwin and apologize, do you suppose she would think I had a polite mother?"

"I think she would," replied Mrs. Liston.

Johnnie kicked the wood-box until the copper-toes of his shoes were as bright as newly coined gold dollars.

Suddenly he said, "I'll go, but I bet she'll say something hateful."

"If she does you must remember how much trouble you have given her, and make no impudent reply."

Johnnie walked slowly down the garden to the gate, which he latched behind him. This was one of the errands on which the feet went slowly.

"I am sorry, Mrs. Baldwin," he began, "Mother always tells me to be quiet, but I forgot and . . ."

You ought to be sorry," interrupted Mrs. Baldwin.

Mrs. Baldwin had a brand-new calico that I never had on but twice before but run right home and tell you ma that it is three pounds of sugar to seven of plums, instead of five, as I told her; and shut the gate after you, for the last time you went out you left it open, and Mr. Smith's brindle cow got in and tramped all over the garden. I don't see why you can't remember! If you were my son—though I am glad you won't—I reckon I'd make you! But hurry back before your ma gets those plums in."

Johnnie felt a great desire to tell Mrs. Baldwin that he did not want her for a mother any more than she did him for a son. But he thought of his newly-formed resolution of proving by his conduct that his mother was, as he expressed it, "the most polite" woman in the village; so he shut up his lips tightly together and ran home.

"Well, what did Mrs. Baldwin say?" asked his mother.

She said that I ought to be sorry and that there were three pounds of sugar to seven of plums, and that if I was her boy she'd make me behave, and she was glad I wasn't her boy; and I wanted to tell her that I was glad too, but I thought it wouldn't be polite, so I didn't. She wasn't very nice, and I don't like to apologize; but I ain't sorry I did, for—Johnnie drew his plump little figure to its utmost height "I mean to be a gentleman if she ain't; and, mother, I am going to try and be an honor to you."

Mrs. Liston was peeling onions; perhaps that was the reason why there were tears in her eyes, when, kissing Johnnie, she murmured, "God help you, my boy!"—Visitor.

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