

You'll Have to Avoid the Saloon.

BY LAURA G. GIBBONS.

You stand on the threshold of youth, boys,
Your future lies out in the years;
You're learning your parts for life's work, boys,
You're planning your future careers.
You'll have to fill places of trust, boys,
Your fathers will pass away soon;
And if you'd be trustworthy men, boys,
You'll have to avoid the saloon.

If you would be honoured in life, boys,
If joy and contentment you'd know;
If you would have plenty of cash, boys,
And bask in prosperity's glow;
If you would enjoy robust health, boys,
That priceless, but much abused boon;
If God's benediction you'd have, boys,
You'll have to avoid the saloon.

You'll have to avoid the saloon, boys,
Or sorrow and shame you will share,
And poverty's crust you will eat, boys,
And poverty's rags you will wear.
Your future will end in disgrace, boys,
Your life be cut off at its noon,
Both body and soul will be lost, boys,
Unless you avoid the saloon.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

Rev. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY 10, 1894.

THE CHILD JESUS.

BY THE LATE DEAN STANLEY, LONDON.

And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him.—Luke 2. 40.

This day is called the day of the Holy Innocents, because it calls upon us to remember the death of those little children who were killed in Bethlehem at the time of our Saviour's birth, when he was a little child like them. It is also a day famous in this Abbey, because it was on this day, more than eight hundred years ago, that this great church was finished by its first founder, King Edward the Confessor, who was himself an innocent, guileless man, almost like a little child. We have thought, therefore, that it might be good to mark the day by gathering together here as many children as could come, and putting before them the example which our Saviour set to all children, he having been himself a child and a little boy, such as those who are here to-day.

"The child"—that is the child Jesus—"grew." He grew in stature and he grew in character and goodness. He did not stand still. Although it was God himself who was revealed to us in the life of Jesus Christ, yet this did not prevent him from being made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted. It has been reverently and truly said—

"Was not our Lord a little child,
Taught by degrees to pray;

Address to children in Westminster Abbey.

By father dear and mother mild
Instructed day by day?"

Yes, he was; we need not fear to say so, and in this lies the example for us. Each one of us, whether old or young, must remember that progress, improvement, going on, advance, change into something better and better, wiser and wiser, year by year—this is the only condition, the only way of becoming like Christ, and, therefore, like God. Do not think that you will always be, that you must always be as you are now. No; you will grow up gradually to be something very different; you must increase and grow in mind as well as in body, in wisdom as well as in stature. The world moves, and you and all of us must move with it. God calls us and all ever to something higher and higher; and that higher stage you I and the whole world must reach by steadily advancing towards it.

And then come three things especially which the text puts before us as those in which our Lord's earthly education, in which the advance and improvement of his earthly character added to his youthful and childlike powers. First, it speaks of his strength of character. It says he "waxed strong in spirit." Strong! What a word is that for all of you, my dear children. You know—little boys especially know—how you value and honour those who are strong in body. The strong limb, the fleet foot, the sturdy arm, the active frame! you do well to value these things; they are God's gifts. The body which can endure blows without flinching, and which can toil without fatigue; which can win the race, conquer in the game, or vanquish in the struggle; these are what you all wish to have. But what this strength is to the body, that strength of character is to the mind. A stout heart, that is what you want—a stout heart which will be able to resist all the temptations to do wrong, which seems to tell a lie, which will never consent to be betrayed into doing what is wrong; a strong, hardy conscience, which fixes itself on matters of real importance, and will not trifle, will not waste its powers on things of no concern. Therefore, I say, be stronger and stronger every year. Be stronger in spirit, be strong in mind, be strong in character, be stout in heart, for this does come by trying to have it. It comes by being always reminded that it will come if you strive to get it. It comes to those who are determined to seek it. Be strong, therefore, and very courageous.

And the next thing which the text speaks of is wisdom. It says the child was "filled with wisdom." Wisdom, as it were, was poured into him, and his mind opened wider and wider to take it in. He drank in whatever wisdom there was in the knowledge of those about him; he drank in the heavenly wisdom also which comes down from the fountain of all wisdom. You, too, have this to gain day by day. Those especially who are at school are sent to school for that very purpose, to have your minds opened—to take in all that your teachers can pour into them—to be ready for this instruction whenever it comes to you from books, from conversation, from experience, as you grow older in life. You need not be old before your time, but you must even now be making the best use of your time. These are the golden days which never come back again to you, which if once lost can never be entirely made up. Our great King Alfred used to regret in after years nothing so much as that, owing to his long wanderings and troubles when he was young, he had not had the opportunity of regular instruction at school. Seek, therefore, for wisdom; pray for it, determine to have it, and God, who gives it to those who ask for it, will give it to you. Try to gain it as our Lord gained it when he was a child, by hearing and by asking questions. By hearing; that is by being teachable, and humble, and modest, by fixing your attention on what you have to learn. And also, as he did, by asking questions; that is by trying to know the meaning of what you learn, by cross-questioning yourselves, by inquiring right and left to fill up the blanks in your minds. Nothing is more charming to see than a boy listening—not interrupting, but eager to hear what is taught. Nothing is more charming than to see a child asking questions. That is the very way in which we are able to know whether you take in what has been taught you.

And the next thing is the grace or favour of God, or, as it says at the end of the chapter, the grace, or favour, of God and man; the grace, the goodness, the graciousness of God, which calls forth grace and goodness and graciousness in man. Our blessed Lord had this always; but even in him it increased more and more. It increased as he grew older, as he saw more and more of the work which was given him to do. He felt more and more that God was his Father, and that men were his brothers, and that grace and loving kindness was the best and dearest gift from God to man, and from man to man, and from man to God. He was subject to his parents; he did what they told him; and so he became dear to them. He was kind and gentle and courteous to those about him, so that they always liked to see him when he came in and out amongst them. So may it be with you. Look upon God as your dear Father in heaven who loves you, and who wishes nothing but your happiness. Look upon your school-fellows and companions as brothers, to whom you must show whatever kindness and forbearance you can. Just as this beautiful building in which we are assembled is made up of a number of small stones beautifully carved, every one of which helps to make up the grace and beauty of the whole, so is all the state of the world made up of the graces and goodnesses, not only of full-grown men and full-grown women, but of little children who will be—at least if they live—full-grown men and full-grown women. Remember, then, all you who are parents—remember still more especially all you who are children—remember this day; and if ever you are tempted to do wrong, or to be idle, or to be rude and careless, or to leave off saying your prayers, then think of your Saviour's good example which has been put before you this night in Westminster Abbey.

A PLAIN TALK WITH THE BOYS.

Do you want to know where a boy usually begins to be fast? With a cigarette. It is the lad's first step to bravado, resistance of sober morality, and a bold step in disobedience. Just now take the matter on the scientific side. Tobacco blights a boy's finest powers, wit, muscle, conscience. Nations are legislating against it. Germany, with all her smoke, says: "No tobacco in the schools." It spoils their brains and makes them too small for soldiers. Knock at the great military institutions of France; "No tobacco" is the response. Try West End and Annapolis—"Drop that cigarette," is the word. Indeed, smoking boys are not likely to get so far as that.

Major Huston, of the marine corps, who is in charge of the Washington navy barracks, says that one-fifth of all the boys examined are rejected for heart disease, of which ninety-nine cases in one hundred come from cigarettes. His first question is: "Do you smoke?" "No sir," is the invariable reply. But the record is stamped on the very body of the lad, and out he goes. Apply for a position in a bank. If you use beer, tobacco or cards the bank has no use for you.

Business life demands fine brain, steady nerve, firm conscience. Watch the boys. See one sixteen years in age, twelve in size, twenty in skin, and he smokes, probably chews and drinks. Babes of seven and eight are at it. The vice increases. I could pile up statistics by the hour, testimony from the highest medical authority, of the misery preparing and already come.

A PRETTY INCIDENT.

The most beautiful thing I saw at the Fair was an old woman in one of the wheel chairs, her son pushing it. Her white hair and care-furrowed face showed she had waited more than three-score and ten years for one of the happiest days of her life. The plain dress proved neither was rich in purse; but she was rich in joy, richer than Gould in making his mother happy. I shall forget many wonderful things I saw at the Fair, but never forget the little old woman in black, resting so cozily in that rolling chair, her joy-lit face under the aureole of white hair, as her stalwart son bent over and told her some new wonder they were coming to. "Are we almost there, son?" she asked in her eagerness.

"Yes, mother," he said, smiling at her child-like enjoyment, "and it will take your breath this time sure." And she laughed like a girl and he chuckled like a delighted boy as they passed on, not knowing that anybody noticed them. Perhaps no one else saw their happiness, but he was the one man on the grounds. Oh, the proud step as he pushed the chair of the queen of all the world to him! Ah! her proud look as she rode through the throng, attended by the kingliest of men—the man who honours his mother. How much better to spend the money in this way than to wait till mother died in a round of monotony, then to spend it chiselling the epitaph death wins from human selfishness!

SYRIAN PROVERBS.

HERE are a few Syrian proverbs, of which Walter Besant says the fourth is full of wisdom and the third more suggestive than any other proverb he ever met:

A thousand curses never tore a shirt.
According to thy carpet stretch thy legs.
The sieve is not hurt by a hole more or less.

When you hit, hurt. When you feed, fill.

Beat the water, and it is still water.
On God's day, God's help.

The borrowed cloak never warms.
He who wants the dog says to him,

"Good morning, oh, my uncle."
Lying is the salt of man, shameless only to him who believes.

What is the bitter to him who has tasted the more bitter?

Let not the eye discover what pains the heart.

The hand that you cannot bite, kiss it and pray that it may be broken.

How many generations of Turkish rule did it take to perfect and crystallize the sentiment of the last four sayings—especially the last? One sees embodied in them the submission of the subject race.

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION.

ONE of those good-natured persons who are always bent on imparting information was humiliated not long since.

A negro was seated on a rail fence in Arkansas, intently looking at the telegraph poles. A gentleman passing said,—

"Watching the wires?"

"Yes, sah."

"Waiting to see a message go by, heya?"

The negro smiled and said, "Yes, sah."

The gentleman kindly told him that

messages were invisible, and explained the

work of the electric current to him at

length. Concluding, he said,—

"Now you know something about it."

"Yes, sah."

"What do you work at?"

"I'm a telegraph operator at the Hazel

Switch Station, sah."

TOBACCO USING DESTROYS FINE-NESS OF FEELING AND SENTIMENT.

TOBACCO using exerts a most destructive influence upon the physical senses, often quite obliterating four or five great avenues of sensibility. Its influence is still more insalubrious upon the far more delicate organs of emotion and sentiment, which are so readily affected by physical changes of the body. Alcohol is bad enough; but it only temporarily perverts the imagination and judgment. Tobacco does more. Its influence is constant and accumulative. It not only perverts, but weakens and paralyzes. It changes a kind-hearted, sympathetic man into a selfish, irritable, repulsive, unappreciative despot, who will never hesitate to sacrifice the comfort, convenience, health, even life, of his wife or child to the gratification of his debasing appetite.

A YOUNG lawyer talked four hours to an Indian jury, who felt like lynching him. His opponent, a grizzled old professional, arose, looked sweetly at the judge, and said: "Your honour, I will follow the example of my young friend who has just finished, and submit the case without argument." Then he sat down, and the silence was large and oppressive.