

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

CREEPING UP THE STAIRS.

In the softly falling twilight
Of a weary, weary day,
With a quiet step I entered
Where the children were at play,
I was brooding o'er some trouble
Which had met me unawares,
When a little voice came ringing,
"Me is creepin' up the stairs."

Ah! it touched the tenderest hearts strings
With a breath and force divine,
And such melodies awakened,
As no wording can define.
And I turned to see our darling,
All forgetful of my cares,
Whom I saw the little creature
Slowly creeping up the stairs.

Step by step she bravely clambered
On her little hands and knees,
Keeping up a constant chattering,
Like a magpie in the trees;
Till at last she reached the topmost,
When o'er all her world's affairs,
She delighted stood a victor
After creeping up the stairs.

Fainting heart, behold an image
Of man's brief and struggling life,
Whose best prizes must be captured
With a noble, earnest strife;
Onward, upward, reaching over,
Bending to the weight of cares,
Hoping, fearing, still expecting,
We go creeping up the stairs.

On their steps may be no carpet,
By their sides may be no rail;
Hands and knees may often pain us,
And the heart may almost fail.
Still above there is the glory,
Which no sinfulness impairs,
With its rest and joy forever,
After creeping up the stairs.

"WHAT O'CLOCK IS IT?"

When I was a young lad my father one day called me to him that he might teach me to know what o'clock it was.

He told me the use of the minute-finger and the hour hand, and described to me the figures on the dial-plate, until I was perfect in my part.

No sooner was I quite master of this knowledge than I set off scampering to join my companions in a game of marbles; but my father called me back again.

"Stop, Willie," said he; "I have something more to tell you."

Back again I went, wondering what else I had got to learn; for I thought I knew all about the clock as well as my father did.

"Willie," said he "I have taught you to know the time of day. I must now teach you the time of your life."

I waited rather impatiently to hear how my father would explain this further lesson, for I wished to go to my marbles.

"The Bible," said he "describes the years of a man to be threescore-and-ten or fourscore years. Now, life is very uncertain, and you may not live a single day longer; but if we divide the fourscore years of an old man's life into twelve parts, like the dial of a clock, it will give almost seven years for every figure. When a boy is seven years old, then it is one o'clock of his life, and this is the case with you. When you reach fourteen years old, it will be two o'clock with you, and when at twenty-one, it will be three o'clock, at twenty-eight it will be four o'clock; at thirty-five, it will be five o'clock, at forty-two, it will be six o'clock, at forty-nine, it will be seven o'clock; should it please God to spare your life. In this manner you

may always know the time of your life, and looking at the clock may remind you of it. My great grandfather, according to this calculation, died at twelve o'clock, my grand father at eleven and my father at ten. At what hour you or I shall die, Willie, is only known to Him who knoweth all things."

Seldom since then have I heard the inquiry "What o'clock is it?" or looked at the face of a clock, without being reminded of the words of my father.

PLAYING STAGE-COACH.

"All wanting the same place makes a good deal of trouble in this world," said mamma, thoughtfully. "Shall I tell you a little story about it—something I know is true?"

"O yes, do!" chimed the children.

"It is a very sad story, but I will tell it to you," she went on, "and the next time that you are tempted to be selfish, stop and think of it. Once, long ago, there were four children playing stage-coach, just as you have been doing now, and, just like you, they all wanted the first place. Instead of playing on a log, however, they were in the spreading branches of a willow tree.

"I want to drive," said Lucy, getting in the driver's seat.

"No, let me drive," and Harry climbed up beside her, "Let me sit there."

"But Lucy did not move.

"Let me sit there," repeated Harry, giving her a slight push and crowding his way on the same branch where she sat. "You must let me drive."

"A moment more, a sudden crash, and they were on the ground. The branch had broken.

"Harry was on his feet instantly, trying to raise his sister, but there was a sharp cry of pain, then she lay very still. Mother and father came running out of the house and gently lifted the little fainting form, from which the arm hung limp and broken. There was sorrow and crying, but it was too late; nothing could turn aside the weeks of suffering and pain that must be borne before the little girl could take her place again among the other children. I think they all learned a lesson of loving unselfishness in those weary days, each trying who could bring the most brightness and happiness into the dreary hours. I was that little girl, and I learned to appreciate little kindnesses as I had never done before. It was then that I learned something else; too,—something I want you all to remember," and mamma looked at the little group. "It is, "Even Christ pleased not himself."

THE STORY OF KING MIDAS.

A great many years ago there lived a very rich king. But he wanted all the time to be getting richer. It took him many weeks just to count his gold pieces. No matter how much he had, he wanted more.

One day, when he was counting his gold and looking very sad, a stranger appeared before him. "Why do you look so sad?" asked the stranger. The king answered, "Oh, if I could only turn everything I touch into gold."

Now the stranger had a wonderful power which he could give the king. So he said, "From to-morrow, everything you touch shall become gold.

That night the king could hardly sleep for joy. In the morning he raised his purple robe to place it on his shoulders. Instantly every thread was a golden thread. He sat down to fasten his sandals. In a twinkling the chair in which he sat became golden. His sandals, too, the instant he touched them, changed to pure gold.

When he went for his morning walk, every flower became a golden flower. The path, and even the grass he trod on, became gold.

But even a king will get hungry. So Midas went back to the palace for his breakfast. He asked for water. A glass was given him the moment he put it to his lips it turned to gold. The poor king could not drink gold. All the money in the world could not buy him a drink of water.

He sat down to eat, but every mouthful became gold the moment he put it to his lips. So he could eat nothing. With all his gold, he would yet have to starve to death.

Then the stranger again appeared. The king, with tears in his eyes, begged him to take away the touch that turned everything to gold.

"Are you not happy, King Midas?" asked the stranger.

"I am most miserable," groaned the king, "I beg you to take away this hateful touch."

Then the stranger told the king to bathe in a stream near by, and the golden touch would leave him.

Midas lost no time in obeying. The water washed away the golden touch. He was a happier king then than he had been before.

GOOD MANNERS.

Good manners are very cheap; they do not cost money, and they will come if you call for them at any time and in any place; they only require a little care.

Salute your acquaintance when you meet them. A cheerful "Good-morning" or "Good-evening" gives pleasure. Avoid rudeness to passers-by in the street; do not stare at them; do not run against them. Always make way for aged and infirm people, and never stand on the footpath talking to others, so as to stop up the road. In the eagerness of your play at ball, hoop or marbles be careful not to annoy others. Never deface walls or door-steps by writing on them, and the benches in the parks or other public places, as rude people do by writing or cutting their names on them. If in a steamer, a railway-carriage or any public conveyance, be always observant of your fellow-travelers, and do not in any way annoy them. Do not selfishly look out for the best seat, or refuse to accommodate another; at the same time, if you find any person who offers you civility, be careful to acknowledge it. Do not annoy others with your boxes, baskets or parcels, or lean on your next neighbours, sit on their clothes or tread on them. Be courteous at all times and to everybody.