

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

The Boy-King.

Sixteen on May 17; by the laws of his country Alfonso XIII. has attained his majority; no longer is he "the Little King"; he is a royal man.

The young king—the youngest king in the world—has been most carefully educated to meet the responsibilities of his lofty station. He speaks, reads and writes in half a dozen languages; French, English and German are as familiar to him as his native Spanish.

Naturally delicate of physique, his slight frame has been strengthened by plenty of open air exercise and by plain, wholesome diet. He is a masterly horseman, a crack shot and an expert fencer.

The writer of an article in "Benign's Magazine" says that the king at sixteen is a well-grown boy, with brown eyes full of vivacity, naturally curly chestnut hair and an expression at once serene and willful.

Although the Queen has striven to make him thoroughly modest, the little King had from his earliest days an instinctive notion of the respect due him. When he was four years old his governess, Senora Tacon, felt it necessary to reprove him.

"I am the King," replied this small embodiment of the dignity of the Spanish throne. When he was eight he rebuked sharply a court dignitary who addressed him as "Bubi," his mother's little pet name for him.

"I am Bubi to mamma," he said, "but to you I am the King."

The godfather of the young King is no less a personage than the venerable Pope Leo XIII. When Alfonso was but six weeks old his godmother had him consecrated to the Blessed Virgin.

His first morning duty is prayer, and hitherto he has at his desk ready for study at 9 o'clock every morning. He was taught French and English on alternative days, and every day at 10 he went for his riding lesson; under a fine teacher, the royal boy is already an expert horseman.

Seven splendid creatures constitute his stable. Frequently Alfonso XIII. rides with his mother in the park instead of taking his exercise under cover, and then the crowd around the gates may see their young King and the Queen mother returning in triumph from their rapid gallop.

while Paul raked the beds she occupied herself among the flowers. They were still busily engaged when the slow, clear strokes of a bell sounded upon the air.

He put up his rake at once, kissed his mother good-bye, and was soon walking briskly on his way to church, stopping for a moment at the Widow Brown's to give a greeting to her lame boy, Bertie.

Poor Bertie, who was just getting over a wasting fever, was recovering so slowly that seemed as if he would never be well again.

Bertie's eye followed him out of sight. Then he turned to his mother with a sad little sigh, and said wearily: "Mother, I would like to be like Paul Kenyon. I want to be well and strong and able to run about as he does."

He overheard the doctor say one day that he was afraid there was something the matter with his spine, and that he might have to sit in this chair all the rest of his life.

You are so poor, mother, and it would be such a trouble for you to have a useless son, I think I shall ask God, if it is so, to let me die soon. It would not be a sin, would it?"

Tears were streaming down Mrs. Brown's poor thin cheeks, but she dried them carefully before she turned her face toward her son, and her voice only trembled slightly as she answered: "You could never be a trouble to me, my darling boy, and no matter what we suffer here, none of us must ask to die until God's good time."

When the good priest made a promise to anyone, he put it uppermost in his mind, and there was no danger of his forgetting it. After Catechism he walked home with Paul Kenyon for a look at the wonderful strawberry beds, and he lingered for a talk with Paul's mother.

In the after days, what delight was Paul's as his berries grew and ripened. What rapture thrilled his heart as he picked the first dish of luscious fruit and carried it to his mother.

"Thank you, Paul. I appreciate your gift with all my heart, but there is something I would like better than eating them myself. I would like to give them to a little boy, one who is not strong and well like you."

To lame Bertie? Yes, he can have them; let us take them to him right away.

My generous boy, you are making me very happy," said Mrs. Kenyon, as they set out on their short walk.

Bertie was just taking his supper when the Kenyons came in with their gift, and Paul handed him the basket. "Here are some strawberries for you, Bertie. I raised them myself. Mother says you might like them; they are very nice."

Steel Company, just before the billion-dollar combination was formed, the partners of the "Great Scot" were mostly all young men; there were thirty of them, who had come up from the ranks of the mechanic, or foreman, or trusted clerk in the employ of the company.

The president of the great trust, Mr. C. M. Schwab, is himself one of these brilliant young men. The stories of their successes read like chapters in a continuous fairy tale.

Surely it is the age of the young people! Their expansion is mightier and more impressive than that of empire, which reaches out to grasp the remote islands of the sea and corner the markets of the world.

There was published a short while ago a novel which had some vogue; it was of the ultra-realistic school, in which the decadent hero was represented as too old for any new hazard of fortunes, because he had arrived at the advanced age of forty-two years!

The young author—he was under thirty—made his chief character sit down and helplessly go to seed because he had not left in him the strength, the courage, the vitality to strike out in any new path, or even to pursue the old one in which he had some measure of success.

The idea that this could be a picture of real life is truly saddening to those of us who cherish the notion that a man between thirty-five and fifty-five is really at his best.

To take another instance: I read the other day a newspaper account of a clergyman of a metropolitan church resigning his charge because he was fifty-two, and therefore counted too old to carry on his work with the energy and spirit that it required.

Nothing was said of ill health; he was just too old. These may be extreme cases, yet it is unquestionably true that this is the age when youth seems to be more in demand than ever before.

There are many occupations to which the man who has passed forty-five is no longer welcome. I do not know whether we have reached the time when our neighbors will choose their doctors, lawyers, teachers and even clergymen, because of their youth, and pass by the elders with their stores of experience and wisdom.

What is to be done in the face of a condition which, to say the least, is distressing? Let me confess that I do not know what can be done so far as those are concerned who have already taken up the burden of life, and are in middle age. But I do believe that very many of the coming generation can be saved such an experience if they are trained to meet the requirements of the age.

All-round men are no longer in demand. A few generations ago a man who could turn his hand to anything and everything was an invaluable assistant. There is no place for the all-round man now. He walks superfluous on a darkened stage.

The man who is in demand now must be able to do excellently well some one thing that the world needs to be done. It is a time of specialization. There is the key to the future. The boy or girl who is turned out of high school or of college with no more idea of what his or her life's work is to be than to do anything that turns up is accepting an invitation to failure.

This spoke at the age of twenty - one a poor lad, who had been brought up in a mechanic's shop, and who became afterward one of the most eminent men of his time. He was great and honored because of his noble character and high mental attainments.

His opportunities were not better than those of the average young man of his or our day. Not one of us who cannot, if we will, build up and strengthen our character; not one of us who cannot cultivate and enrich our mind, if we only set ourselves earnestly to do so.

There are thousands of men to-day prominent in the affairs of state, distinguished in the various professions, successful in business, filling the highest offices in Church and State, especially here in America, who have risen from the humble walks of life. Neither the accidents of birth, nor power, nor wealth, which belong only to the few are required.

All that is needed are character and mental culture, which may be attained by everybody. Character in a country like ours, where every man votes, makes and unmake parties and policies, is everything.

And if a man has a cultivated mind, with a strong character, he can scarcely fail to succeed. It is hardly necessary to call attention to which men have risen to the very highest positions through the careful and thorough development of mind and heart; the training, to be sure, is oftentimes a slow and difficult process; but we must submit ourselves to it if we are desirous of success.

We need not be deterred by the obstacles that, in most instances, arise at the very start. There is no gain or victory which does not cost labor and sacrifice. The French have a proverb that says, "It is the man who makes the land." How true this is? We have sometimes seen the richest soil grow poor and barren in the hands of the ignorant or idle farmer, while we have also witnessed a farm that was accounted sterile and almost worthless yield an abundant crop through the intelligent and unceasing cultivation of the active and busy husbandman.

So it can be made to bring forth a rich and immortal harvest of Godlike virtues and merits. What is required is this: that we cultivate the faculties of mind and heart that the Author of our being has implanted within us. And of what base ingratitude are we not guilty in the sight of Him who made us "little lower than the angels" if we make no use, and worse still if we put to bad or wicked uses, those high and noble gifts? There is a life work for each of us to do. Woe to us if we are faint hearted; woe to us if we have lost patience and quit the work.

One day we shall have to give an account of all that we have omitted or left undone. The talents we have hurried away in the ground, the opportunities, the precious moments and hours and days of youth that we allowed to glide by unprofitably, the good we could have done in life if we had only strengthened our minds and character—all this will be scrutinized by the divine Giver.

The dignity, then, of our nature demands that we cultivate our minds and hearts so that we fit ourselves for membership in that society of which Wordsworth speaks: "There is one great society alone on earth: The noble living and the noble dead."

Who would not wish to be admitted into this choice company? It is within the power of any one of us to be associated with these noble spirits. And, the promptings of our higher nature urge us on in the pursuit of what is true, beautiful and good. We can educate and train ourselves to so run in the race of life, that if we do not "command success," we'll do more; we'll deserve it.

The most important truth, then, for us to remember is this: that the formation of a great character and the attainment of knowledge depend on our helping ourselves.

Our chief duty is to continue through life that education begun in school. How abundant are the means, and with in the reach of all, for carrying on in our day this work of self-education! The best books can be secured at a trifling cost; many cities have splendid public libraries; the magazines are filled with the choicest productions of our best writers and artists; special agencies are provided in our day to assist those who are aiming to reach that "higher life," that may be secured by nobility of character and sound mental culture.

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PENITENTIARY SUPPLIES. CEASELÉ TENDERLETS addressed "Inspectors of Penitentiaries, Ottawa," will be received until Monday, 19th of June, inclusive, from parties desirous of contracting for supplies, for the fiscal year 1902-1903, for the following institutions, namely:

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