

TALES FOR THE YOUNG.

LESSON FOR LIFE.—VIII.

Our story opens in a sweet, quite convent in the "sunny South," where the flowers crown even Winter's brow, and laugh defiance at his cold caresses. The kind nuns were, indeed, gentle and tender in their guidance; like fragrant lilies, the perfume of their sanctity sweetened the surrounding atmosphere; but "home love" is still the deepest, and the groups of girls chatting here and there at the recess hours were all talking of the coming Christmas holidays, which most of them would enjoy in their own homes.

"Mamma is going to send for me," said one; "and for me, too," added a second; "and I am going home also," said another; and so the gay crowd chimed in,—all but Amy Hilton, who had only joined them a few minutes before. She was a very intelligent looking girl of about twelve years of age. Her highly arched brow gleamed bright and smooth amid the brown ringlets, and her soft blue eye held rather a sweet dreaminess than anything of childish brightness.

"And what about you, Amy,—aint you going home?" asked one of them, curiously, as she observed her companion's silence.

"I don't know," answered Amy; "that is, I am not quite positive, but I think so; it all depends—"

"On what?" interrupted half a dozen merry voices.

"On my record. If I haven't any errors in deportment for this month, papa has promised to take me home, and, I reckon, as we've only a few days more, I can keep good, for I haven't one bad mark yet—not one."

"And I hope you won't get any, Amy," observed one of her companions; "but I think if your mamma was living she wouldn't be so particular. My mother says she couldn't spend a Christmas without me."

"It will be a terrible, terrible disappointment to me if I don't go home," said Amy, thoughtfully: "I do so love my papa."

"Of course you won't get an error these

two or three days," remarked another in a very decided tone; "so don't worry over imaginary trouble, but let us all have a game of hide-and-go-seek; come, girls."

Suddenly the soft bells of the noon-day Angelus rang out, and the girls hushed their talk, and the sound of laughter ceased, and the bright eyes were drooped as they recited the Angels' words; and then they started to play, little thinking of the wonderful work that moment of prayer had wrought in their souls, little knowing the beautiful graces those whispered words had won for them from God, through their Virgin Mother's hands.

Ah, those happy days of childhood's prayer! how golden they gleamed in the after years, set as they were in the dark frame of the future's sorrows! How many of those happy girls looked backward to them, and rested their breaking hearts upon their holy sweetnesses!

But another girl had joined the gay party, Ruth Lenore, a pretty burnette, with a clustering array of black, glossy curls, and with pretty, rosy lips, the curvings of which formed a lovely, but haughty mouth.

As Ruth joined them there was a somewhat uneasy look in her eyes, but the wild, frolicsome glee of the game soon banished it.

To soon, to the gay young merry-makers, came the school-bell announcing the round of lessons to be resumed. But there was no disobeying it; so, with the impetuosity so natural to youth, each raced swiftly into the school-room, determined to be first in her place.

But this day there was a rather stern look on Sister Angela's face as she called them to order, a rather sad tone in her voice as she began what even the light hearted girls knew was the beginning of a reprimand.

"Children," she said very gravely, "I am so pained to have to reproach you, but one among your number has certainly been guilty of prying into the school records; one amongst you have seen examining the papers in my desk. Now,