

Boys and Girls.

A PERSIAN LEGEND.

It is related of a Persian mother, on giving her son forty pieces of silver as his portion, that she made him swear never to tell a lie, and said: "Go, my son; I consign thee to God, and we shall not meet here again until the day of judgment."

The youth went away, and the party he travelled with were assaulted by robbers. One fellow asked the boy what he had, and he answered with a candor that surprised his questioner:

"Forty dinars are sewed up in my garments."

The robber laughed, thinking that the boy jested. Another asked him the same question and received the same answer. At last the chief called him and asked what he had. The boy replied:

"I have told two of your people already that I have forty dinars sewed up in my clothes."

The chief ordered his clothes to be ripped open, and the money was found.

And how came you to tell this?"

"Because," replied the boy, "I would not be false to my mother, whom I solemnly promised never to tell a lie."

"Child," said the chief, "art thou so mindful of thy duty to thy mother, and I am insensible, at my age, of the duty I owe to God? Give me thy hand, that I may swear repentance on it." He did so, and his followers were struck with the scene.

"You have been our leader in guilt," they said to the chief; "be the same in the paths of virtue." And taking the boy's hand they took the oath of repentance on it.—*Selected.*

THE FATAL DOOR.

The Chevalier, Gerard De Kampis, was a very rich and a very proud man. Soon after the completion of his magnificent castle, he wished to have a house warming, and, accordingly, all his great neighbors were invited to a great feast. At the conclusion of a sumptuous repast, his guests made speech after speech, in which the host was lauded to the skies, and told that he was the most fortunate man alive. As the Chevalier loved flattery, we can imagine how proud and delighted he was.

One among the guests, however, said nothing for a time. When each man had made his speech, he uttered the following singular observation upon the happiness of the host.

"Sir Knight, in order that your felicity should be complete, you require but one thing; but this is a very important item."

"And what thing is that?" demanded the Knight, opening wide his eyes.

"One of your doors must be walled up," replied his guest.

At this strange rejoinder, several of the guests began to laugh, and Gerard himself looked as much as to say, "This man has gone mad." Wishing, however, to have the clue to this enigma, he continued—

"But which door do you mean?"

"I mean that through which you will one day be carried to your grave," replied the other.

The words struck both guests and host, and made the latter reflect most seriously. The proud man remembered the vanity of all earthly things; and from henceforth he no longer thought only of the perishable treasures he had once gloried in. He was completely altered, and made good use of his riches.

MINDING THE STOPS.

A country schoolmaster, who found it difficult to make his pupils observe the difference, in reading, between a comma and a full point, adopted a plan which he flattered himself would make them proficient in the art of punctuation. It

was this: In reading, when they came to a comma, they were to say tick; when they came to a semicolon, they were to say tick, tick; to a colon, tick, tick, tick; and to a full point, tick, tick, tick, tick. Now, it so happened that the worthy master received notice that the parish minister was to pay a visit of examination to his school. As he was, of course, desirous that his pupils should show off to the best advantage, he gave them an extra drill the day before the examination. "Now," said he, addressing his pupils, "when you read before the minister to-morrow you may leave out the ticks, though you must think them as you go along, for the sake of elocution." So far, so good. The next day the minister was ushered into the school-room by the master, who, with smiles and bows, hoped that the training of the pupils would meet his approval. Now, it so happened that the first boy called up by the minister had been absent the preceding day, and in the hurry the master had forgotten to give him his instructions how to read. The minister asked the boy to read a chapter in the Old Testament, which he pointed out. The boy complied, and in his best accent began—"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying tick, speak unto the children of Israel, saying tick, tick, tick; and thus shalt thou say unto them, tick, tick, tick." This unfortunate exhibition acted like a shower-bath on the poor master, while the minister and his friends almost died of laughter.—*Youth's Companion.*

DIED THAT HE MIGHT LIVE.

In a dreadfully cold winter, many years ago, an army was flying from Moscow, a city in Russia. With this army there was a German Prince and some German soldiers. One by one the marching soldiers fell down by the way, and perished of cold and hunger. At length, at the end of one day, when only a mere handful of them were alive, the prince and a few common soldiers, and these were nearly all spent, came up to the remains of a hovel, once built to shelter cattle, now ruined by storms which had blown it all to pieces. But in the wild, snow-covered waste they did not despise it; even a prince was glad of a little shelter from the sleet and wind of the coming night which this tumble-down shed could afford. And there, hungry, cold and weary, he and his men lay down to sleep. The men were rough, stern-looking fellows, yet the sight of one so delicately brought up, used to comforts they never had known, spent heart and body, come to such want, glad to sleep in such a wretched place, touched them. The sight of him asleep, no bed, no covering, probably sleeping his last sleep, was more than they could stand. They took their own cloaks off, and laid them all on him, gently one by one, lest they should awake him. He should be warm with these. Then they threw themselves down to sleep.

The night passed. The prince awoke. "Where am I?" was his first thought. "Am I home in bed? I am so warm!" and he turned over, and raised himself up to look about. He was not at home. All around was snow, and all was silent save the wind, which whistled through the planks of the broken shed. Where were his men? He stood up and looked, when lo! there they lay, huddled together to keep warm, yet not awake. He spoke, but they answered not. He advanced to touch them—they were dead! Without their cloaks too! Where were their cloaks? Another glance toward where he had lain, and all was plain. The prince burst into tears. His men were dead to save him alive. Now, was not the deed, these rough soldiers' deed, a noble deed? Their hearts were gracious hearts: they graciously took upon themselves the death another should have died.—*Sunday Magazine.*

THE CHOKED LIFE.

"That which fell among thorns are they which, when they have heard, go forth and are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life."

Notice here, not merely that Christ tells how the soul, like the body, may be choked or suffocated to death, but most of all that those things which are aptest to accomplish this dreary and ruinous result are things in themselves absolutely and unequivocally innocent. Cares, riches, pleasures—there can be no such thing as life without having something to do with each one of them. Every faculty within us pleads trumpet-tongued to ply itself, somehow in connection with either the toil, the treasure, or the enjoyment of life. Nay, more, no healthy career can be lived quite through without needing for its right ripening that at some point or other it bend under cares, or be tested by the stewardship (larger or smaller) of treasure, or quickened by its impulse and refreshed by its experience of enjoyment. To live truly, at all, is to have every one of these things educating us somehow by our daily and familiar contact with them into a larger life and loftier; and to renounce them utterly and run away from them into the pseudo-privacy of any hermit's cave or convent cell, is at once an act of cowardice and a crime!

But because all this is true, is there not, nevertheless, very real danger lest these innocent things, innocent enough in themselves considered, even as a weed is innocent, should domineer so aggressively in a man's heart, as ultimately to smother or stifle its *inmost life* to death?

Take, for instance, what we ordinarily call the cares of life. It would be, verily, a deplorable thing if any one among us were left free to live without cares. And, practically, care of various forms, so absolutely environs every ordinary life that to be free from it is simply impossible. But it, by no means, follows that he who gives the most time and thought and toil to the matter of grappling with these cares is living the highest style of life. On the contrary, it is entirely possible for a man to give himself so absolutely to his daily calling, that every added thoroughness in it is only an added evil, bought at a price so exorbitant that it had better never been bought at all.

I know very well that such a doctrine as this is in direct contravention of all the noisier teachings of our age. I know that its utilitarian spirit clamors that the highest work of a man in this life is to do his work, diligently, thoroughly and well. But I take issue with any such teaching, absolutely. I affirm that the highest aim of man is not to do any work whatsoever, save as it upbuilds and enlarges and ennobles himself! It is not to be wondered at, that when one sets himself to any task in life he should long to perform it completely and symmetrically. That longing is an echo of the divine impulse toward perfectness in every man, which is the signature of the Being who made him. But to be so absorbed in the daily round of business or house-keeping, of traffic or care-taking, that the mind has no strength nor desire to rise above it, this is not manly service, but ignoble slavery.

And yet how many men are galled by its chain! As the world stands apart and watches them, it cries in noisiest enthusiasm, "What splendid devotion to one's business." See how the plans that the man has hatched in his restless brain fly out of them, thought out and articulated in every least detail! See how this schemer knows how to use men and make them supplement himself! What masterly foresight in his calculations; what more than magical swiftness in their realization! Look, ye beginners in life, at the truly successful man and take pattern from his energy and his achievement, Aye, success and achievement, but in what? Come closer to this tireless toiler, this penetrating thinker, and

see how it fares with himself. Verily, the man's work is the very perfection of achievement; but how is it, meanwhile, with the worker? Will he never learn that a man is greater, in God's account, than his work, and that in the final analysis of human achievement the supreme and crucial question will be not "What have you wrought in life?" but "What has life wrought in you?" What matters it if you have originated the cleverest schemes, and conducted the most brilliant perfection? What matters it if a man has planned and engineered and carried to completion some gigantic highway of commerce that binds two hemispheres in one, if, when it is done, we find him chained to one end of his work and revolving there in ceaseless devotion to its drudgery, like any beast of burden in a treadmill?

It is, verily, a brave thing to bend steadfastly and courageously to one's task, but to stoop down till one can no longer stand erect, to let your work drive you as if you were the veriest galley slave; to be so full of the fret and worry and burden of a thousand pestiferous cares that they sting and torture you like gnats; and call this anything less than a despicable and degrading bondage, is a libel on our Maker and himself. If He has called me to hew wood or to draw water, to hew wood or to draw water, to hew the scales that tremble on the humblest counter, or to hold the other scales in which are weighed the conflicting interests of men—whether He has bidden me to be a judge on the bench, in other words, or a clerk in a shop or a journeyman on the wall, I will do what my hands or brain find to do, and as the Apostle bids me, "do it heartily." But to be so eager in one's work as to have no eagerness that rises above it, this no matter what the world may say, or what the work may be, is not success, but failure.

There are men whose career is like a miner's digging and delving in a shaft. Time was when the man felt the sun, and heard the birds, and looked up and saw the stars. But every blow of his pick, and every spadeful of earth that he throws behind him only carries him farther and deeper down, away from light and warmth and life. Time was with many a man when he heard a voice which rang in his ears with the sound of a trumpet, saying, "Son, give thy heart!" He hears it still, sometimes. But it is as when one standing at the mouth of a mine calls down into its cavernous depths. Such an one may suddenly have awakened to the peril of the solitary and self-absorbed toiler below. There is water rising in a neighboring shaft. The man alone there may be cut off, and perish without warning. And the thought of all this thrills in his friend's voice as he cries with all his might down the long black-throated abyss which yawns wide open before him. But, when the sound reaches the toiler below, it is only a faint murmur, an indistinguishable sound, and if he hears it at all, he hears it only to disregard it. Just so, to-day, and right here among us are men and women whose whole life has been a process of digging down, and now they are so far buried and walled over with their cares that they are in danger of being smothered or stifled to death.—*Henry C. Potter, D.D.*

It is declared that the French have extended a "protectorate" over the island of Raiatea, on the west of Tahiti, and it is complained that this is in opposition to engagements entered into by France in a convention with England signed 19 June, 1847, whereby both parties recognized the independence of that island, and promised neither to annex, nor to proclaim a protectorate over it.