

Two Visions.

Where close the curving mountains drew.
To clasp the stream in their embrace
With every outline, curve, and hue,
Reflected in its placid face—

The ploughman stopped his team to watch
The train, as swift it thundered by.
Some distant glimpse of life to catch,
He strains his eager, wistful eye

The morning freshness lies on him.
Just wakened from his balmy dreams;
The travellers, begrimed and dim,
Think longingly of mountain streams.

Oh for the joyous mountain air
The fresh, delightful autumn day
Among the hills! The ploughman there
Must have perpetual holiday!

And he, as all day long he guides
His steady plough, with patient hand,
Thinks of the flying train that glides
Into some new, enchanted land.

Where, by day day, no plodding round
Wearies the frame and dulls the mind;
Where life thrills keen to sight and sound,
With ploughs and furrows left behind!

Even so, to each the untrod ways
Of life are touched by fancy's glow,
That ever sheds its brightest rays
Upon the path we do not know.

—Century

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, JULY 16, 1898.

A TALK TO BOYS.

A recent address on Sunday evening at Upper Canada College was by the Principal and had for its subject—

Ecclesiastes 9:10 "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

You boys can understand perfectly from your games, for instance, what a capital test of men or boys a test like this supplies. What does the captain of the hockey or football team consider when he is selecting the fellows who are to play on the college team? He watches for boys who put out all that is in them—those who take trouble and learn to play skillfully and then when they are in the game do not spare themselves—in short those who, in the Bible phrase, do "with their might" what they have taken in hand.

You will find this same test applied to you all through life. When you get situations in banks or merchants' offices, when you begin to practise professions of your own, as lawyers, doctors, teachers, or whatever it may be, your employers, your clients, will be watching you. They will be saying, "Is this a man who puts his heart into his work—who does with his might what is given him to do?" And in nine cases out of ten your success or failure in life will depend on the day this question can be answered. "Seest thou a man diligent in his business," the Bible says in another place, "he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men." How constantly in actual life do we see this fulfilled. A young fellow starts in life with little to help him, neither wealth nor position nor friends; and

simply by industry and energy, by doing "with his might" what his hands find to do, comes to be a man of weight and influence, a leader of his fellow-men, mingling easily and naturally with the highest in the land, which is what is meant in the Proverbs when it is said "he shall stand before kings."

Indeed, you will find the moment you go out into the active work of life that men at once begin to get divided into two great classes—the efficient and the inefficient, the energetic and the indolent, the busy workers in the great hive of human life who store up what is useful for themselves and others, and the drones, who are thrust aside as useless and whom society scarcely misses when they perish. So you see that the facts of daily experience bear out the advice given in our text as to the conduct of our lives.

Now there is a very special reason why boys of your age, particularly, should have this truth put strongly before them.

SCHOOL LIFE

represents a transition period, probably the most critical period through which you will ever have to pass. It is the period when you pass from childhood, when play is the chief business of life, to manhood, when work is its chief business.

Only a few years ago and your parents were quite happy if you were only playing with all your might—if you raced around the fields, played ball till you were tired, got thus a good appetite, slept well by night, and so grew stout and strong and simply enjoyed life. It was easy enough then to follow out the injunction of the text, and do with your might what your hands found to do. But not one of you wishes to remain a little child. You want to be men—most of you, I imagine, are in a hurry to be men. That at least is usually the case with boys. But if you are to be men then you must learn to lay aside the childish condition in which play is the main occupation of life. Our business as teachers is to help you over this period of change, to help you to mingle hearty work with hearty play, and so gradually prepare you for the serious work of life.

Now, do not for one instant let yourselves think that when you pass away from the childish stage you are giving up the chance of keen enjoyment. It is largely a question of skill, which also means taking the trouble to acquire skill.

DO SOMETHING WELL.

You all know what a delight it is for a boy to do something in which he excels; to skate well, to ride a bicycle with safety and speed, to manage a horse, to run rapidly, to take a long jump or a high one. Nature has planted in us this desire to excel. On the whole I doubt if a man has any recollection of unalloyed happiness greater than the memory of what he has felt when a boy in the mere sense of physical activity and energy.

Now, the delight which you thus feel in physical activity and skill, you may, here at school and as you grow to manhood, feel in things of the mind. The student who has mastered his subject, the orator who holds the ear of a great listening audience, the writer who feels that he can command the deep attention of his readers, the keen man of business who knows his facts and how to use them, the engineer who plans great structures—all such people have for the most part a keen delight in the exercise of their powers. The moment you learn how to do anything well and easily, then doing that thing becomes a pleasure instead of a pain. So, if you will do "with your might" what you have to do in life, you have an excellent chance of getting from it much keen pleasure.

There are two other reasons—perhaps one may call them higher reasons—which I think I ought to urge upon you for doing with your might what is given you to do.

First, your duty to your parents. I suppose there is not a boy in this hall who has not had something said to him as he left to come back to school, either the strong, hearty advice of a father, or the loving counsel of a mother, or of others dearest to him—urging him to do his best at his work this term. This ought to mean a great deal to you. Parents do not ask or expect that you shall all be brilliant or clever—they simply wish you to do "with your might" the business of schoolboy life. Your doing so will make them happier than almost anything else. This ought to be a great inspiration to a boy.

Then there is your duty to God. God gives us our powers of mind as well as our powers of body. It is impossible to believe that these powers should be given us without a duty going along with the gift—the duty of using them.

If we give way to laziness—if we are willing to grow up in ignorance, we are despising the best gifts of God. "Not slothful in business—fervent in spirit—serving the Lord." That is the spirit which St. Paul believed should be in every Christian. So when you are tempted to idleness or carelessness brace up your minds by thinking of this text: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

THE MOTHER'S BOYS.

How natural it is for the mother to speak of her sons as "boys," even though they are grown up and stalwart men in the world. "I wonder why the boys don't come," said a silver-haired mother, as she went to look out of the window to see if her sons were coming in sight to take the promised tea with her.

"Boys!" exclaimed a young girl, with a merry laugh. "Do you call those big men 'boys'? Why, auntie, they are over forty years old!"

The dear old mother turned and looked at the young girl, and said, in gentle tone:

"They will always be boys in the mother's heart, no matter how large and old they are. You cannot understand that now, but perhaps, my dear, sometime you may."

Long after that silver-haired mother and her "boys" had all "passed on and up the heights," the young girl, a silver-haired mother herself, remembered and understood.

The Tribune tells this sweet story of one mother's three "boys":

"A dear old lady, whose home is in Brooklyn, has been an invalid for many years. She is confined nearly always to her wheeled-chair, and her usual station is in a deep bay-window that looks out on a quiet street shaded by maple trees. The pleasure of her life is the green tossing foliage, and its chief annoyance the slingshots of the small boys hunting sparrows. On the window-ledge in front of her lie three heaps of postal-cards and, when she is not watching the trees and the sparrows, she is fingering her mail.

"The three heaps are always of equal height. There are just as many cards in one pile as in another. And the likeness between the heaps doesn't stop there. What one postal card says all the others say. The only differences are in the date lines and the signatures. All the cards in one pile are signed 'Ned,' in the next 'Guy,' and in the third, 'Richard.' Every morning the postman's whistle brings three cards, one for each pile.

"Each postal card says: 'I am well and doing well.' Never anything else, and never anything more. The white-haired lady in the arm-chair has three sons who are in 'leather.' They travel for their firms. Each trip lasts a fortnight. Every other Sunday they are together at home. Every day they are away from home they send their mother the message she looks for. The date-line tells her where each boy is, the five words that nothing has gone wrong with him. The 'boys' are nearly of middle age. They are unmarried, and are giving their lives to the invalid in the arm-chair."—The Evangelist.

HAL'S EXPERIENCE IN THE CHERRY TREE.

"No, I'm not going a step! It's hotter than Africa here! Besides, I know all about it, anyhow. Wasn't I listening when that missionary was here to tea?"

Mamma only said, "Very well," and went upstairs so quietly that Hal tried to think of a better excuse, and had just about decided to add that his mite box was empty when he heard her bedroom door shut. So he began to whistle, and went out to climb into the old cherry tree, his favourite resort; stretching himself out on the largest limb, he looked up at the fleecy clouds, and watched the sunlight and shadow chasing each other in and out among the green leaves. He did not know that he had shut his eyes, but, opening them suddenly, he saw a queer mud hut at the foot of the tree. And the tree itself seemed different; the leaves were larger than they had been a moment before, and so odd shaped! His clothes were gone, and his skin looked brown, and, oh, how much hotter it had grown in these few minutes! A strange noise seemed coming nearer, he heard the sound of hurrying feet, mingled with cries of pain; he slid down from the tree just as a throng of dark-skinned men, women, and children were passing by. "The slave traders!" He tried to hide, but it was too late. Soon he was bound, and being driven on, on, over marshes and through jungles, hungry and weary,

no kind hand to help him, until at last the sea came in sight.

Poor Hal! his little brown feet were more tired than his white ones had ever been; his head ached, and he trembled all over with fear. Oh, if somebody would only come and help him! If he only lived in a land where such dreadful things were unknown!

"Nobody cares," he said. "It's pleasanter to sit up in a tree than to go to meeting, and the mite box is empty, 'cause it's just whiptop time"—and Hal was getting mixed in his dreams. But he felt the air grow suddenly cooler, and he saw somebody with kinder eyes and a more grieved look than mamma; and a voice said, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

Hal's eyes were opened very wide now, a cloud had come over the sun, a soft breeze was swaying the branches of the tree, and he sat very still for a minute. Then two drops fell—not from the skies—and he climbed down quickly and ran to find mamma.

Next Band Sunday Hal and his mite box went to meeting.

JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

JULY 24, 1898.

HINTS FOR DAILY LIVING: HOW TO BE HELPFUL.

(Gal. 6:2; Matt. 20:26-28.)

The spirit of true religion is one of helpfulness. "Bear ye one another's burden," says St. Paul, "and so fulfil the law of Christ." Each of us has a burden of some sort—even boys and girls. Sometimes their burdens are as hard to bear as those of older persons. They often have difficult lessons, heavy tasks, perhaps grievous sorrows.

We should help one another. Older children may help the younger brothers and sisters to learn their lessons. They may help them in their games and sports. Nothing is more beautiful than to see this spirit of helpfulness in family life, and nothing is more painful than the spirit of selfishness. Let us ask what Jesus would do under such circumstances. The verses from St. Matthew tell us what he did. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. So should we also seek to walk in his footsteps. The greatest man is he who helps men most. Even boys and girls may share that greatness and goodness by being kind and loving and helpful in the home, in the school, in the church, and in the world.

PLEASANT WORDS FROM ENGLISH LIPS.

The London Engineering, an authority in the British navy, while commenting on the destruction of the Maine in the issue of April 22, 1898, says:

"Whatever may have been the cause, one fact stands out with prominence. The conduct of the whole ship's company was worthy of the best traditions of the American navy.

"The suddenness of the catastrophe, the rapidity with which the vessel sank, the darkness, the succession of explosions after the great outburst, and the fact that many of the crew were asleep all tended to put the morale of the ship's company to as severe a test as could well be imagined; but not a man failed in his duty."

The same paper recalls a circumstance which may be forgotten by our readers. In the great hurricane at Samoa in 1889, in which six warships were lost, the English steamer Calliope was able to escape, and reached the open sea. She passed close by an American war-ship which was being driven helplessly on the rocks to destruction. The crew of the doomed ship manned her sides and rigging, and as the English vessel passed them to safety, they gave her a hearty cheer of congratulation. The band struck up "The Star-Spangled Banner," and as they played the ship struck a reef.

The English paper says, "The Americans had death staring them in the face, yet with a heroism characteristic of the nation, they were able to send a message of encouragement and goodwill to those who were able to find the safety denied to themselves. The incident never should be forgotten by either nation, least of all by England."

Every worthy action is a fruitful seed. That single cheer given on the other side of the world in the face of night and death no doubt has brought forth in many an English mind the feeling of kinship with which Great Britain has now come forward to stand side by side with America.—Youth's Companion.