

help, and is almost incinerated. Who (for twenty-four hours) after this, could play with fire or hoax a parent?

In "The Boys and the Apple-tree," disaster is indeed averted, but so skillfully that we experience a thrill as intense as if the catastrophe had really occurred. Tommy and Billy see apples hanging over a wall. Tommy would steal some, but Billy, the blameless Billy, says No—"To steal is a sin." They call on Bobby, to whose father, it seems, the garden belongs, and he, in the course of the afternoon, shows them a man-trap guarding the identical apples which Tommy had coveted, a weapon of peculiar horror.

Cried Tommy, "I'll mind what my good mamma says,

And take the advice of a friend ;
I never will steal to the end of my days ;
I've been a bad boy, but I'll mend !"

We are to suppose that he did mend. The sisters Taylor were wise not to carry their histories too far.

"Greedy Richard" has a fine aristocratic flavor :—

"I think I want some pies this morning,"
Said Dick, stretching himself and yawning ;

So down he threw his slate and books,
And saunter'd to the pastry-cook's.

There, of course, he ate too much. To this day, if any one were to say to me suddenly, "Quick, tell me who is your ideal among millionaires," the figure that would jump to my mind would be Greedy Richard. I should not think of Mr. Barney Barnato until afterwards. And not only is there his wealth to admire, but look at the splendid liberty of the boy—he could fling aside his slate and books whenever he wished !

One does not realize how admirable was the work of Jane and Ann Taylor until it is compared with that of inferior writers. They had a rival in Louisa Watts, whose efforts—to be found in a volume pathfully entitled

"Pretty Little Poems for Pretty Little People"—attempt to cover the same ground. Her style lacks the vigor of that of her exemplars ; but none the less the book attained very considerable popularity, among parents and instructors, in the forties and fifties. She seems to have considered narrative less her strength than the popularization of science, a large portion of the book being occupied by lessons, presented in the most distressing doggerel, in astronomy, mineralogy, botany, and other branches of learning. The lecturer is mamma, and the audience, consisting of Ann, Julia, Harry, and others of a strikingly considerable family, are always disproportionately grateful for the information tendered to them. Thus :—

One evening very fine and clear,
Ann and Eliza walking were,
And being very near the sea,
They viewed it each attentively.

Curious Eliza very soon
Said, "Dear mamma, pray is it known
What water is ? If you can tell,
Ann and myself would like it well."

Mamma delighted to be drawn, breaks off at once, at a hand gallop :—

The element of water is
Composed of only two gases ;
One part of hydrogen is there,
Four oxygen, or vital air,

and so on.

But Louisa Watts's highest achievement was the ballad entitled "The Benefit of Learning and Good Behaviour." In this poem the progress of a virtuous and industrious child from penury to wealth and position is narrated with convincing spirit. In the hope that we all may profit by her example, I will quote the lines. In reading, mark how inevitably one incident follows another :—

There was a little cottage girl,
Once forced from morn till night to whirl
The spinning-wheel, to earn the bread
With which her mother might be fed ;
But though she had so much to do,
She learn'd to read, and spell and sew.