

## OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

### HOW BOYS GROW INTO MINISTERS

BY THE REV. MONSIEUR H. WILLIAMS.

"WHAT are you going to do for a living when you are a man?" said Clarence's father one day to his son.

Clarence was not yet six and a-half years old, and his father asked him the question just to see if the little fellow had any idea that, in this work-day world, boys grow very soon to be men who will have a work to do.

"I guess," was the answer, "that I'll be a minister, and get a big salary and a long vacation."

"Most ministers get small salaries and short vacations, and you might be one of that kind; but that need make little difference if you really feel how sweet it is to tell people about our Saviour, and how they may find him."

It was several months after this talk that Clarence asked one day:

"Papa, how do men learn to be ministers?"

"They go through 'a course of study' as it is called. That is, after they have learned the common branches at school, they begin to 'fit for college.' This takes some three or four years. Then they study four years in college. After that they spend three years in a theological seminary. So you see it requires ten years, at least, of special study, to fit a minister for his work."

"What do they study?"

"Latin, Greek, Hebrew, mathematics, natural science, history, philosophy, rhetoric, and a great many other branches of which you do not know even the names."

"I don't see how those have anything to do with preaching."

"You will understand that better some time. You know how many hours a day Uncle John has to practise on the piano. He is training his fingers and eyes and brain for music. So a man needs to have his mind, and every faculty and power, thoroughly trained for preaching."

"Well, I don't see that I can do anything now to make myself a minister."

"Yes, you can do a great deal. The first thing is to be one of Christ's boys, doing always just as you think Jesus would like to have you. If you want to be a good minister, you can begin by being a good boy."

"Was you a good boy, papa, when you was little?" broke in the golden-haired, five-year-old Carrie, who had been listening with a puzzled look to this very wise talk between papa and brother.

It was harder to answer this question than to talk about Latin and Greek, but finally he thought of a reply.

"Ask your grandma, my child. You know I was her little boy."

This was a safe answer to make, since grandma was two hundred miles away, and Carrie certainly would not see her until the summer vacation. And, more than that, this ministerial son knew that the mother's fond heart would make her think of him *now* as a good boy.

"What else can I do?" said Clarence.

"Learn all that you can about the Bible. That is to be the minister's one book. Learn

too about everything else that is good. If you hear or read a good story, or think of anything that you think would be good for a sermon, remember it. Some ministers have a book in which they write down such things; and then, when they want an illustration, or a thought, they read over the book, and may find there just the thing needed."

"I will have a book, too, just as soon as I am big enough to write well."

About a week after this talk, Clarence went, one afternoon, with his father, to call upon a very godly and a very aged clergyman. When they were going away, the good old man, put his hands upon the boy's shoulder, and said: "I hope, my son, that you will be a minister of Jesus Christ, and if I am living then, I will hope to hear you preach; but if I have gone to heaven, perhaps I shall know it up there."

Clarence somehow felt a big lump coming up his throat, and for a minute he almost cried,—not that he was afraid or sorry, but it seemed such a solemn thing to hear that feeble old man talk so lovingly to him about Jesus and about heaven. Perhaps he felt it more now because one of the six grandparents he had known, his great-grandfather, whom he loved very much, had gone to heaven only a little while before.

However, in five minutes more he was on the pavement, bouncing his marble as hard as he could on purpose to break it, so that he might find out whether it was real "china" inside.

It did not take him long to find out. He brought the two halves to his father, saying with some disgust. "See, it is not 'china' after all, but only that black stuff."

When there was not a fragment of the marble left large enough to bound he walked along quietly for a minute. Then he broke out with, "Papa, I have got something which I think would fit into a sermon pretty well, if I only knew what text to put it to."

"Tell me, and perhaps I can find a text for you."

"One time I went over to grandpa's to get some sods for mamma's flower-garden. They were so heavy that they broke my wheelbarrow down, and I didn't know what to do. If I left the wheelbarrow, I was afraid somebody would steal it, and if I took out the sods and laid them beside the pavement, I was afraid they would steal them. So I had heard that if little boys prayed to God He would help them, and I prayed."

"Did God help you?"

"I don't know; but I got home all right."

"What did you do?"

"Why, I dragged the things along the pavement until I was most tired out. Then I got near to where grandpa was and called to him, and he came right over and helped me."

"Well, you did just the right thing, after thinking what you should do, and praying to God to help you. Did not God help you to decide? And then, in the providence of God as we call it, grandpa was there just when you needed him. When we come out of a trouble all right, after asking God to help, we may believe that he has helped us. And that story would do very well in a sermon to show that God's little children may pray to Him in their troubles."

"What would be a good text for that?"

"How would, this, do? It is from the Thirty-fourth Psalm: 'The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.'"

"Did any of these men expect to be ministers when they were little boys like me?"

"I remember to have read that the Rev. Dr. Samuel Finley, at one time President of Princeton College, determined to be a minister from a sermon which he heard when only six years old."

Whether Clarence will ever become a minister, only the God who called little Samuel, and who calls all other truly appointed ministers, knows. But at any rate, being one of Christ's boys, and learning all that he can about the Bible and all good things, will be a helpful preparation for whatever work the Lord has for him to do.

### JOE WHITE'S TEMPTATION.

DEACON JONES kept a little fish market. "Do you want a boy to help you?" asked Joe White, one day. "I guess I can sell fish."

"Can you give good weight to my customers, and take good care of my pennies?"

"Yes, sir," answered Joe, and forthwith he took his place in the market, weighed the fish and kept the room in order.

"A whole day for fun, fireworks and crackers, to-morrow," exclaimed Joe, as he buttoned his white apron about him, the day before the Fourth of July. A great trout was flung down on the counter.

"Here's a royal trout, Joe. I caught it myself. You may have it for ten cents. Just hand over the money, for I'm in a hurry to buy my fire-crackers," said Ned Long, one of Joe's mates.

The deacon was out, but Joe had made purchases for him before; so the dime was spun across to Ned, who was off like a shot.

Just then Mrs. Martin appeared. "I want a nice trout for my dinner to-morrow. This one will do; how much is it?"

"A quarter, ma'am," and the fish was transferred to the lady's basket, and the silver piece to the money-drawer.

But here Joe paused. "Ten cents was very cheap for that fish. If I tell the deacon it cost fifteen, he'll be satisfied, and I shall have five cents to invest in fire-crackers."

The deacon was pleased with Joe's bargain, and when the market was closed each went his way for the night. But the nickle in Joe's pocket burned like a coal; he could eat no supper, and was cross and unhappy. At last he could stand it no longer, but walking rapidly, tapped at the door of Deacon Jones' cottage.

A stand was drawn out, and before the open Bible sat the old man. Joe's heart almost failed him, but he told his story, and with tears of sorrow laid the coin in the deacon's hand. Turning over the leaves of the Bible, the old man read: "'He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.' You have my forgiveness, Joe, now go home and confess to the Lord, but remember you must forsake as well as confess. And keep this little coin as long as you live, to remind you of this first temptation."—*Child's World.*