

much to learn little texts, and "think out," as she said, what they meant.

But the one she was studying now evidently puzzled her. She whispered the words over and over again, and then looked away off into the air, as though trying to find their meaning floating about there; but there was nothing to be seen of it, so she presently said to her mother:—

"Mamma, won't you please explain this verse to me? I can't understand what Solomon means. It is in the song he wrote, you know, about Christ and the Church,—*'Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines'*—that's the one. I know it doesn't mean *real* foxes, because Mrs. Anthon explained to us once that this song was all written in figures of speech; making us understand about Christ's goodness and glory, and his love to his people, by talking of things that we know are beautiful—lilies, and grapes, and sweet spices, and doves. But I don't understand what he means by the little foxes spoiling the vines. Why should Mrs. Anthon mark that verse for us?"

Her mother, taking the book in her hand, smiled pleasantly down into her little girl's face. "Because it contains a very important lesson under one of those very figures of speech, my dear," she said. "You know what mischievous little foxes are—how they creep slyly about, and nip off the tender buds, and so spoil the promised harvest. The farmers have to look out for them very closely; for they are very cunning, hard to find and hard to catch. That is just the way with little faults—isn't it, Milly? It is comparatively easy, if we know we are guilty of some *very bad practice*, to watch for the temptation to that, and guard against it; it is the little faults which creep in all the time and spoil the good intentions which are growing up in our hearts. The little fits of passion which make children speak angry words—may be give actual blows; the sullen moods when they are required to do something they don't like; the equivocations when they are asked about anything they don't wish to acknowledge; the careless neglect of duty; all these and many more are 'little foxes' that spoil the vines, which are the graces of the Spirit in our hearts; and these we must take by prayer, and set our watch against them, remembering that they are so little and so insinuating that we must be very careful if we would not have them in our hearts before we are aware."

LET ME GET A START.

A little black-eyed girl once laid
Her book upon my knee;
And with a troubled look essayed
To learn her A B C.

But all in vain—she did not call
A letter right—not once;
At length I harshly sat her down,
And called her "little dunce."

Sad tears soon filled her merry eyes;
I'd pained her little heart;
"Aunt Fanny, do just wait," she cries,
"Till I can get a start."

And soon the dear girl "Got a start"
Each letter learned to tell,
And ere three months had past away
Could learn a lesson well.

Now, when you find some duller mind
Discouraged, sick at heart,
I say, be patient—chide them not,
But help them "get a start."

—Young Folks' Journal.

BE HONEST, CHILDREN.

I suppose some of the little boys who read this will say, when they look at the title of this piece, "That's easy enough; I am honest; I never took anything that did not belong to me in my life." Well, that is right; but there is more in being truly honest, perhaps, than you think. I will tell you a story, and then you will understand me.

In a country school—the school of which I am

the teacher—a large class were standing to spell. In the lesson there was a very "hard word," as the boys say. I put the word to the scholar at the head, and he missed it; I passed to the next, and the next, and so on through the whole class, till it came to the last scholar—the smallest of the class—and he spelled it right; at least I understood him so, and he went to the head, above seventeen boys and girls, all older than himself. I then turned round and wrote the word on the black-board, so that they might all see how it was spelled, and learn it better. But no sooner had I written it, than the little boy at the head cried out, "Oh! I didn't say it so, Miss W——; I said *e* instead of *i*;" and he went back to the foot, of his own accord, quicker than he had gone to the head. Was not he an honest boy? I should always have thought he spelled it right, if he had not told me; but he was too honest to take any credit that did not belong to him.

Let me tell you another story with a like lesson:—

One summer day a school was out at play. There were a great many children, and the boys, some of them, had balls to play with. The boys had not much playground around the school house; there was only a very small yard, and all around were high brick houses. One of the little boys threw his ball, and it went straight through a window, breaking the glass, and the pieces came rattling down on the bricks! There were so many children playing, that nobody knew who broke the window, except the boy who did it. He did not tell any one, but he was very sorry. Directly the bell rang, and all went in. The children had not much more than taken their seats, and all was still, when the door opened and a lady came in with Eddie's ball in her hand. She lived in the house where the window was broken. She was very angry, and scolded so loud and fast that the teacher could not say anything. When at last she stopped, and the teacher told her she would inquire about it, just then Eddie raised his hand. The teacher gave him leave to speak, and he rose from his seat, and said distinctly, "I broke the window accidentally, and I am very sorry; but this afternoon I will bring the money to pay for it." Was not that an honest boy?

LOVE YOUR PARENTS.

My father, my mother, I know
I can not your kindness repay;
But I hope, that, as older I grow,
I shall learn your commands to obey.

You loved me before I could tell
Who it was that so tenderly smiled;
But, now that I know it so well,
I should be a dutiful child.

I am sorry that ever I should
Be naughty and give you pain;
I hope I shall learn to be good,
And so never grieve you again.

But lest, after all, I should dare
To act an undutiful part,
Whene'er I am saying my prayer,
I'll ask for a teachable heart.

JANE TAYLOR.

THE BROKEN BRIDGE.

Hossein said to his aged grandfather, Abbas, "Oh, grandfather! wherefore are you reading the Gospel?"

Abbas made answer, "I read it, my son, to find the way to heaven."

Hossein smiling, said, "The way is plain enough. Worship but the one true God, and keep the commandments."

It will be observed that Hossein was a Mohammedan, and not an idolatrous Hindu.

The man whose hair was silver with age made reply, "Hossein, the commandments are as a bridge of ten arches by which the soul might once have passed over the flood of God's wrath and have reached heaven, but that the bridge has been shattered. There is not one amongst us that hath not broken the commandments again and again."

"My conscience is clear!" cried Hossein proudly. "I have kept all the commandments—at least, almost all," he added, for his conscience had given the lie to his words.

"And if one arch of a bridge give way under the traveller, doth he not surely perish in the flood, my son, though the nine others be firm and strong? But many of the arches of thy bridge are broken—yea, the very first is in ruins."

"Not the first commandment, *thou shalt have none other God but Me!* I have never broken that!" exclaimed Hossein, indignantly. "I have never worshipped any God but one, the Almighty, the Invisible, the All-Merciful. That arch in my bridge at least is whole and entire."

"The being whom we love above all others, and whose honour we most desire—the being whom we obey in all things—is not he the one whom we worship in the temple of the heart?" inquired the old man.

"Surely, for that being is our God," exclaimed Hossein.

He of the silver beard rose from his seat. "Come with me, O youth!" said he, "and I will show thee whom thou dost worship in the temple of thine heart."

"No man can show me Him whom I worship," cried Hossein, in indignant surprise; "for the one true God is invisible, and I worship none but Him."

"Come with me," repeated Abbas; and he led the way to a tank of water, clear and pure, in which the surrounding buildings and trees were reflected as in a mirror.

Hossein followed his grandfather wondering, and saying to himself, "Age hath made the old man as one who hath lost his reason."

When the two reached the tank, Abbas said to his grandson, "Look down into the clear water and behold him whom thou dost love above all others, whose honour thou dost most desire, whose will thou dost ever obey. O Hossein, my son! is he not to thee in the place of the one true God?"

Hossein looked down, and, behold! there was his own image reflected in the clear water!

"He who loves self more than God hath broken the First Law," continued Abbas; for is it not written, *thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment?* Hossein, this arch of thy bridge is broken; thou canst not pass to heaven upon it!"

"And can you?" exclaimed Hossein, with impatience.

"No, my son," said the old man meekly. "I have long ago seen that this, as well as the other commandments, has been broken by me, a sinner. There never was but one Man, and He the Holy One of God, with whom the bridge of obedience was perfect and entire." (Abbas was a native Christian.)

"If your bridge be broken, how do you hope to reach heaven at all?" inquired Hossein. "How can you, or any one else, escape being swallowed up in the flood of God's wrath?"

"By clinging to Him who cast Himself into the raging torrent that He might bear all those who believe in Him safe to the shore of heaven!" exclaimed Abbas, with fervour. "Thou hast looked down on thyself—thy sinful self; O Hossein! now look upwards to Christ, the spotless One, who can save thee from self and sin. My hope of heaven is firm and sure, for it is founded on this sacred word,—*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*"—A. L. O. E.

"Faith is the root of all blessing; believe and you shall be saved; believe and you must needs be sanctified: believe and you cannot choose but be comforted."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

"Do not carry your own burdens. The strain will be too great for your back. He who casts his burden on the Lord, can go easily under cares that would crush the man who has not learned the secret."

"If God makes not one exception, do not you put on a mock humility to stand and make your exceptions. You are not the law-giver, nor the grace-giver; do not then be the grace-limiter."