



## HEED WELL YOUR CHILD.

B. WAUGH IN "SUNDAY MAGAZINE."

Heed well your child! Great is its share in things to come:

The sapling of a future tree,  
For you its crop of good or ill,  
As now you influence its will,  
To eat eternally.

Heed well your child! All bitterness to man has grown

In youth by some one's fireside,  
Untended, selfish, and forlorn,  
A pleasant toy, or thing to scorn;  
Ennobling loves denied.

Heed well your child! A holy or an evil fate

Was born when its young life began;  
A fate to dry or bring the tears,  
To awaken or allay the fears  
Which shall outlast Time's span.

Heed well your child! Live life before it kind and pure,

Surround its educating hour  
With lights to childhood's instincts sweet,  
And warmth in which its heart may beat  
And throbb with heavenly power.

Heed well your child! 'Tis folly deep, and deeper shame

To leave to gaze on godless gloom  
Its little understanding eyes,  
Be you its sun, be you its skies;  
And save you both the wicked's doom.

Heed well your child! As that is God's most clear command,

So with the word the help is given  
To penetrate its being's core,  
Inspiring life for evermore,  
To make a child of heaven.

## A LAY PREACHER.

BY ROSE TERRY COOKE.

(Continued.)

In a week comparative comfort reigned in the parsonage. "Dee," as the children called her, was no eye-server. What she knew how to do was thoroughly done. If she could not learn the nicer arts of cooking, she could at least bake and broil by the clock, could knead and scrub and wash with good will, and was devoted to the children. At first she regarded "the minister" with awful reverence; a respect he did not notice, being absorbed in the state of his soul and the state of his stomach; both of which would have been the better for a little wholesome letting alone. But after a while Dee began to understand that the minister was not perfect, and to bring "Bible" to bear upon him accordingly. She had astonished Mrs. Styles one morning when that poor little woman, worn out by a wakeful night with baby and snapped at by her lord and master because breakfast was late, sat down on the doorstep to have a good cry, and was aroused by Dee with—

"Bible says: 'Rejoice always, and again I say unto you, rejoice.'"

"But, Dee," replied the startled mistress, "I can't always rejoice."

"Bible says so, marm. Don't cry! 'The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice.'"

Now it is a curious and involuntary testimony to the vital strength and truth of the Bible that, whereas, in general, no abstract truth offered to a personal anguish soothes or heals that anguish in the least, the greatest propositions of this wonderful volume adapt themselves to the tiniest human capacity, even the vast atmosphere fills with the breath of life the smallest insect, that the Lord reigned actually offered peace to Helen Styles, whose life was restless because of those little daily tortures—a cross husband and a teething baby! She wiped her eyes and went into breakfast with a placid face. Not long after the Reverend Samuel was invited to preach a sermon on some great occasion, and resolved to make a sensation thereby. In order that he might write, silence was inflicted on the whole house—the children sent out to the barn to play, the baby coaxed to sleep, and Mrs. Styles set to her darning, an endless, still-renewing labor; when all of a

sudden loud screams were heard, and Eddie came howling in from the barn, with a bump like a purple hen's egg and a bleeding nose. He had fallen off the mow and hit his forehead. Sympathy and arnica increased his grief; bawls and sobs penetrated into his sacred study where the father of the family sat knitting his brows over a very original exegesis of a hitherto obscure text. This was too much. He burst upon the scene, pen in hand, his dressing-gown awry, his hair on end (with running his fingers through it), his tongue loosed, and his dyspepsia (?) rampant.

"Eddy, you naughty boy, hold your tongue! I can't stand this noise."

"He's badly hurt, Samuel," put in pitiful mamma.

"I can't help that. He couldn't make more noise if he were killed. There's no need of such an outcry. Stop this minute, sir, or I'll box your ears."

Eddy stopped. The words and the angry glare of his father's eyes compelled silence. Mr. Styles turned to go back to his sermon, and found Dee in the doorway, staring at him with all her eyes and an expression of mournful indignation. She did not move, but said slowly and wonderingly: "Bible says: 'Like as a father pitieth his children.'"

"Pshaw!" retorted the Reverend Samuel putting her aside with one hand. But as he entered into his study, both her words and his own followed him and disturbed his exegesis a good deal, though at last he managed to get hold of the broken clue again and forgot Eddie's howls and bruises. But the sermon was long in coming to perfection. Voxing interruptions occurred. Three days after the first disturbance, Deacon Parker jogged up to the door with an urgent request that the minister should go directly to Mrs. Johns, a poor young widow, ill this long time, to-day dying, and anxious after our poor human fashion, to have a human hand aid her down into the unknown darkness before her. Dee carried up the request and opened the study door, upon the very keynote of a mighty argument just built up in the minister's mind for his sermon—an argument conclusive enough to have knocked down the whole edifice of heterodoxy and crush all the Philistines under it; but this aggression of pastoral duties put the argument itself to flight, and the minister's stomach got the upper hand of his soul. He stormed at Dee in a very ill-regulated way, indeed. A layman would have sworn; but Mr. Styles recoiled from such language. He only scolded, and Dee received it all with the calm remark: "Bible says, 'Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt.'"

This was exasperating; but be it recorded to the honor of our friend's real honesty, that he accepted the rebuke, or at least

shifted his ground thereafter, for all he said was, "Tell the deacon I can't go, possibly. I don't believe Mrs. Johns is so ill. She's been sick a great while, and I can't leave my sermon."

The deacon heard these words from without, for the day was still and hot, as sometimes September days are, and the study windows wide open. It did not occur to Mr. Styles that he might have heard more; if he did, his own anxiety made him forget it. He called out loudly now—

"She's a dyin' sure, Mr. Styles. She's dreadfully on 't to see ye."

And the unfrightened Dee put in: "Bible says, 'Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these,'—she stopped here, as if the alternative was too awful; but the minister's memory and conscience supplied the rest. He rose quietly, reached his hat, and in half an hour was praying by the widow's bedside like one who saw the heavens open.

"Never heard such a prayer in all my born days," said Deacon Parker to his wife that night. "Seemed as though he see the Lord a-standin' right there and jest put Dely's hand right into his, so 's to pass across Jordan."

Had Dee brought this learned man nearer to his Lord than the wise and studied sermon could do? Certain it is that when that discourse came to be delivered, it had a glow about it, an earnestness that made the fathers of the church open their eyes with more interest than ordinary, and one man asked another if there was not something unusual in that sermon for Mr. Styles, but neither could define it. Nevertheless the Reverend Samuel told his wife that Desire was altogether too intrusive; that she seemed to have no respect for him or for his office, and said she must speak to the girl and reprove her.

Mrs. Styles was not surprised, but she was grieved. She hated to hurt Dee, and contrived a thousand ways to make the matter pleasant, ending, as we all do, by speaking the plain facts to the girl, though in a kind voice. But it was in vain. Dee could not understand. "Bible said" was as far as her intellect could manage and Mrs. Styles gave up the matter.

The children received this unintended education differently. Their childish souls were nearer Dee's level. She loved them so tenderly; she was so kind to them; she fed their hungry little hearts with such sweet words and caresses; such patient hearing and such prompt redressing of their small injuries; she was so true that they both respected and loved her, and what she said was for them authoritative. Children are logicians by instinct; it is all in vain to preach to them unless you also practice. It is idle to demand their love unless you are yourself lovable; there is no law of gravitation more cogent than the instinct of a child which draws it toward whatever is good, lovely, gracious, and sincere in its surroundings, and repels it from the evil, unkind, and untrue. When I hear a woman complain that her child does not love her I blame that woman and not the child. After a while it went home to the minister's heart that his children ran to Desire and away from him; that their religion was of her culture not his. He heard, from his study window, many a colloquy between the little flock and their quaint teacher that opened his eyes slowly but surely. Once he would have forbidden these talks, as a great disturbance; now he listened to them eagerly.

"Eddy," said Joe, one Sunday noon, as they ate their pie and cheese on the kitchen piazza, "papa said this morning God don't love wicked people. Dee says he loves everybody. Don't you, Dee?"

"I guess Dee knows," replied Eddy, between the mouthfuls. "Dee talks Bible all the time, and papa don't. Dee acts Bible, too."

"Honor thy father and thy mother," broke in Desire. "Bible says that, Eddy."

"But how about God, Dee?"

"Bible says God loves sinners; it says sin is an abominable thing. Guess he loves the people, Joe, and don't like their doin's. I love you, but I don't love to have you plague Kitty and pull Ed's hair."

"O—h! that's it!" breathed the relieved little theologian, but went on: "What does God let people be wicked for, Dee?"

Mr. Styles pricked up his ears. Here was the awful problem of all theology, over which men had labored and prayed and

striven and gone mad, offered by one child to another. It was like seeing the stars brought down for a game of marbles, to the shocked yet curious divine. He did not just then remember who it was that set a little child in the midst of the disputing disciples and bade them become as such themselves.

Dee's face did not move from its Sunday calmness, as she said—

"I don't know, Eddy. Bible says, 'What thou knowest not now thou shalt know hereafter.' Dee can wait."

The Reverend Samuel Styles drew his head back from the window with a certain abashed expression. He had preached at least ten excellent sermons on the subject of faith; but he had never seen into it before, it seemed to him. His honest soul stood rebuked in the presence of his servant. Had he but recalled it, here was the old story of the little captive maid who preached the virtues of the Jordan to her Syrian master.

Nor did Desire use the Bible alone for admonition. It was her one resource, her ever ready friend in trouble, and she offered its help to those she loved as one child brings another to its own mother for aid or consolation.

She found poor Helen Styles in deep perplexity one day. Nothing went right with her; it was one of those days women have when their small world is all tangled and they can only say: "Oh, dear what shall I do?"

It was to such an overheard exclamation that Dee offered her sole remedy.

"Bible says: 'ask and it shall be given unto you.'"

And Helen remembered that in the day's confusion, her husband's absence precluding family prayer, she had herself hastened down-stairs without her own brief resort to God. He who bade us pray knew well how often prayer is its own answer, how the perplexed and storm-beaten soul, folding its wings for a moment in the higher region of eternal sunshine, becomes tranquil and self-possessed, acquires a keener vision, a more dexterous poise of weapons, a loftier courage.

To rise beyond self, to have our eyes opened; and see the arm of God on our side, is often as powerful an aid as a miracle would be; and after Helen had so rested and calmed her soul the day lighted up, the skein unravelled, and she achieved all that lay before her.

There are many people who regard prayer as a solemn act and ceremony only, a worship so uplifted that into its awful heights our daily woes and wants should never intrude; but these are they who do not accept the fatherhood of God. Dee knew him better; no want assailed her simple soul that was not uttered in her prayers, and so she taught the children. It startled the Reverend Mr. Styles, when one night, his wife being ill, and Dee gone on an errand that was long in doing, he must needs see his boys to bed and hear them say their prayers, to have Eddy begin in this wise:

"Our Father up in Heaven, I am sorry I struck Jack Roe to-day. Please forgive me and help me to be good to-morrow. Please put it into Joe's head to give me half his marbles, and don't let Mr. Parker get vexed with me for nothing. Bless us all in this house and make everybody in the world good. Oh! and make mamma well, please. For Christ's sake. Amen."

(To be Continued.)

## NOT A HERMIT LIFE.

The carrying of another's case to God may be the most effectual way of carrying our own to Him. The springing-up of right spiritual affections in regard to other human souls may be the first step in the way of right affections toward God. The same word of God that bids us look to him for salvation bid us "look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Here is the true solution of many a difficulty which individuals have with their own hearts. They forget that they are not simply individuals in the world, having a God to please, a heaven to win for themselves, and a single soul to care for and to save. The word of God knows nothing of a hermit life in religion, or a selfish and isolated piety.—*Owen Street, D.D.*