

fond of you, Ronald: he said you were a noble Roman. I heard him call two or three people he is fond of 'noble Romans.' I wonder is a 'noble Roman' what we call a 'brick?'"

"I dare say it is," said Ronald, adding, "but now say your prayers and go to sleep, for you must be very tired."

"Let me say my prayers at your knee, Ronald," asked the child, "and then I feel as if mamma was here. Some of the boys laugh at little chaps for saying prayers, but I know it's right."

Ronald's papa had said he might have a room to himself, and Ronald had asked to have a little bed put into it for Philip; that was granted, and it was great joy to the lame boy.

Ronald was a brave lad, and tender as brave. I think all brave men are gentle and kind to the young and helpless, as well as to the old and feeble.

After Ronald had heard Philip pray he returned to the school room. The boys were laughing and "chaffing" each other. Ronald was asked by one "if he had put his baby to bed?"

Ronald said he had. This was followed by a remark that Ronald gave his baby care but never gave him cake. O no, Ronald was too stingy to give anything that cost money!

Much as most of the boys liked Ronald, his best friends could not deny that he was greatly changed; it was so strange, this change in a boy who, "last term," was the hero of the school; so free to give, and now so close: there were many who grudged him the prizes he had fairly won; grudged him his place in the first class; grudged him the master's kind words and looks. There had been an ugly fight in the school, and the master had given strict orders against fighting, with a promise of punishment to whoever struck the first blow.

It had more than once come into the head of a boy, who, I am sorry to say, was a very bad boy indeed, that he would try to provoke Ronald to strike him; he would have done anything or borne anything to get Ronald into trouble.

It was Tom Massey who was so wicked, and he chose this evening to provoke Ronald. He set others on him, and Ronald's friends began to gather round him, not knowing how long he could bear the jeers and taunts that were cast at him. At last Massey said that any fellow who could bear all that must be a coward. The word had hardly flown from his lips when Ronald seized him by the throat, held him in his grasp for a minute, then flung him down and sprang on the table.

"I call you all," he said, "to bear witness that I am not a coward! I hate a coward, and thus must hate him who called me so. There is not a weak boy, there is not a boy smaller than himself whom Tom Massey has not fagged and trampled on by day or night; and he would not have used that word to me had he not seen the master enter the room and thought I dared not touch him in his presence. Before you all I beg our master's pardon. I have borne your taunts as to my stinginess, because I knew I must seem mean to you, though I do not deserve the reproach."

Ronald sprang from the table, walked up to Mr. Downs, and said:

"I have broken your command in your presence, sir, and now give myself up to be dealt with as you please."

O what an uproar there was! I cannot describe it. Ronald had never before been seen in a passion. Massey, who was really a coward, clung as it were to the ground; the big boys rushed over him, and the little ones were glad to keep him down: they had what they called "the best of it" for once, and knew it. He was the worst boy in the school, and Ronald was ashamed at being provoked to forget the school law, and degrade himself by a quarrel with such a fellow.

The teacher's decision shall be given in your next paper.



THE GARDEN.

For the Sunday-School Advocate.

TWO LESSONS FROM THE GARDENER.

"THESE trees will not have any fruit on them," said the gardener as we walked through an orchard of fine young trees.

"How can you tell that?" I asked; "this is not the time for fruit; it is only March, and these trees look strong and handsome."

"Ah, yes," said the gardener, "*but the buds are dead*, and there can be no fruit without buds."

And then he showed me how the buds were all black in the center because the frost had killed them. It was a pity, I thought, but then I knew the trees were not to blame about it, and another year they would undoubtedly be full of fruit. But as I went home I saw a poor drunkard staggering along the streets with his red bloated face and bleared eyes, and I wondered if the buds of temperance and virtue in his heart didn't get killed somehow when he was a boy. I dare say he used to be a bright, noble little fellow, and people used to say of him, "He's a promising boy; he'll make his parents proud of him some day," just as we say of a tree that it promises a full crop of fruit. But the buds got frozen. Perhaps at first it was the evil example of others; that is, like a cold, icy wind upon the buds of virtue; and then the boy began to do wrong things himself, so that the sap that fed the buds came to be impure and poisonous, and by and by the poor things withered up and died.

When I hear boys swearing and using coarse, vulgar language it makes me feel sad. The sin itself is bad enough, but the *present sin* is not all. You are killing all the buds of goodness in your hearts, and by and by, instead of growing up into a noble manhood and bearing fruit that will bless the world, you'll be poor, stunted, crooked creatures, and society will cast you out of its garden because you only injure and disgrace it.

And that is not all. Instead of the buds will grow out *thorns*; great ugly, dangerous thorns. So take good care of the buds, for our great Gardener, who planted us here in this garden of the world, meant to have *every one of us* bear good fruit, so that by and by he can transplant us into his garden of life above.

Another thing the gardener showed me was the most beautiful plant you can imagine. It was perfect in form, every leaf was green and glossy, and the rich crimson blossoms were just beginning to burst.

"I have taken more pains with that plant," said the gardener, "than with anything else in my collection. It is to be sent to the President, and I meant to have it *perfect*."

"It is really perfect," I said; "but, after all, the President will only look at it once, and forget all about it afterward, and he will never know how much pains you have taken with it."

And then I thought of a poor cripple who spends all his days in a little dingy attic, earning just enough to keep him alive by making small baskets. This old man is a Christian, and he used to feel sometimes as if it was very hard that he could not do anything for Jesus.

"But after a while," says the old man, "I thought that my Master must know what kind of work he needed most from me, and if he wanted me to serve him by making baskets and being thankful, why I'd try and do that *just as well as I could*. It's all for Jesus, and it's a comfort to think that he knows all about it, and counts it for something."

What do you think of that, boys and girls? Wasn't that a Master worth working for? Doesn't it pay to try and do our very best with all our little homely duties, when we know that this is just the very work Jesus wants at our hands, and that he will count it all as *done for him*?

In his eyes one duty is just as great as another; it makes no difference what, if it is only *duty*; something he wants us to do.

So whatever he gives you to do, whether it is learning lessons now or preaching his Gospel by and by, be sure that he counts one just as important as the other, and gives you credit for all the care you bestow upon it. EMILY HUNTINGTON MILLER.

For the Sunday-School Advocate.

THE LITTLE COLPORTEUR.

BY MRS. H. C. GARDNER.

LITTLE JOHNNY has taken his father's great hat,
His traveling bag and his cane,
And has left his home by the back-yard gate
That opens upon the lane.

Down the lane till he gained the crowded street
He scampered with all his might,
And never stopped till he knew the roof
Of the house was out of sight.

The hat kept slipping down over his eyes,
And rude little boys would laugh;
The traveling bag *would* drag in the mud,
And the cane was too tall by one half.

The people all turned to look at the child
Who wore such a queer-looking rig,
And a kind old gentleman stopped to ask
Why his hat and his cane were so big.

"Tell me where you are going alone, little one;
You'll lose yourself here, I am sure."
"I have got some nice books in my bag, Mr. Man,
And I *is* a colporteur."

"Indeed! Let me look at your books, if you please;
But tell me first, what is your name?
And where does your father live when he's at home?
Can you point out the way that you came?"

"No! I *is* a colporteur," Johnny replied;
"Will you look at the tracts and the books?"
Then he pulled an old almanac out of his bag
Half full of directions for cooks.

"Here's another," said he, "but I mustn't sell that;
My papa writes in it at night;
But I'll sell you my jack-knife, my old one, I mean,
If you'll wait till I've sharpened it bright."

"Let me look at the book; ah, here is a name;
So you're the new minister's son;
Now, what will *he* say to his young colporteur
When he finds out what you have done?"

"O don't you mind that, *he* never will know;
I'm not going home any more;
I like the gay street and I'm almost a man;
Next September I shall be four!"

"That is true." 'Twas another voice close by his side.
"O, papa, now what *made* you come?"
"Because poor mamma cannot find her dear boy."
Said Johnny, "I guess I'll go home."

A BROTHER offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle. Prov. xviii, 19.