

morality when observance of these seems likely to result in, for example, poverty and privations.

Surely the outspoken Atlantic article is profoundly right in declaring that such views carried into practice produce "failure of nerve,"—sap the very root of the virile determination that sets itself to accomplish any task that needs to be done, whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, and hinder the development of the self-mastery and self-respect that will endure any physical suffering a thousand times over rather than do a moral wrong.

To the Sunday School teacher comes the opportunity of counteracting, in no small measure, the ill effects of so defective and badly balanced a view of child training. No book is so full as the Bible of inspiring examples,—men and women, boys and girls, who have deliberately turned aside from the easy, but wrong, things, to do the things that were difficult, but right. No generation has ever needed the presentation of such examples more than ours.

How to Tell a Story

By Rev. A. J. Wm. Myers, Ph.D.

The first requisite is to get into the proper mood and spirit. This can best be done by association with little children, to learn their ways and catch the secret of how their minds work. This may be supplemented by reading books that reveal the characteristics of a child, such as Elizabeth Harrison's, *A Study in Child Nature*, and by not simply reading, but making one's own, some of the great child stories. One should read over and over such classics as *Alice in Wonderland*, *Peter Pan*, and such collections of stories as were mentioned in the article in the January *TEACHER'S MONTHLY*, *What Stories to Tell*.

It should never be forgotten that stories must be told from the child's point of view, as all these that appeal have been; but not in a childish way. This requires more than an intellectual grasp of the subject. The imagination must range freely, and the heart and emotions be touched. Therefore the stories that spring from one's own experience and are largely of one's own construction, grip,

even if not in the best form, as a good story merely repeated cannot do. If a story from a book is to be used, it should be read and then thought out until it becomes part of one's own experience. To tell it even to an imaginary child will help to make it real.

Little homely incidents—chattering sparrows, a little foal and its mother in the pasture, a boy with trailing shoe-lace splashing through the mud of the streets, the growth of a rose (see *The Little Pink Rose* in Sarah Cone Bryant's, *Best Stories to Tell to Children*)—if touched with imagination—may be used with success.

There are a few simple rules that are a great help in adapting or preparing stories:

1. Prepare the pupil's mind by arousing his interest in the truth you are teaching. When so prepared, with the point clear cut, tell the story. Jesus' stories taught truth; so must ours. They are not to be used as ornaments.
2. Begin at once. Use clear, simple, direct language. Have few characters, but let each one count, and make the characters themselves speak. With this bright crispness there must be movement. See, for example, Jesus' story of the Prodigal Son.
3. Use the repetition of phrases or a sentence in the very same words.
4. Keep to one simple theme. The story must be a unity, and make the point, or climax, so clear cut that there is no mistaking it.
5. Do not tack on a moral. If the story is not the embodiment of the truth you want to teach, do not tell it. It is told to make the teaching clear and concrete. There is some fatal weakness if it itself must be explained in abstract terms and if it is so devoid of truth that a lesson must be artificially added. If the story makes the pupils' minds active so that they ask further questions about the essential point (and not about an incidental event) it has accomplished a great thing in teaching.

It is helpful to think of the telling of a story and the telling of a joke. The latter depends for its effectiveness on the situation,—whether the minds are prepared for it, on its terseness, on its point, and is no joke if it requires an explanation.