

THE CHILD WITNESS.

In one of our courts, a little girl, nine years of age, was brought forward as a witness against a prisoner, who was on his trial for felony committed in her father's house.

"Now," said the counsel for the prisoner, "I desire to know if you understand the nature of an oath?"

"I don't know what you mean," was the simple answer.

"There, my lord," said the counsel, addressing the bench, "is anything further necessary to demonstrate the validity of my objection? She does not comprehend the nature of an oath."

"Let us see," said the Judge. "Attend, my child."

Assured by the kind tone and manner of the Judge, the child turned toward him, and looked confidently up in his face, with a calm, clear eye, in a manner so artless and frank, that it went straight to the heart.

"Did you ever take an oath?" inquired the Judge.

The little girl stepped back with a look of horror, and the red blood mantled in a blush all over her face and neck, as she answered, "No, sir."

She thought he intended to inquire if she ever blasphemed.

"I do not mean that," said the Judge, who saw her mistake, "I mean were you ever a witness before?"

"No, sir; I never was in a court before," was the answer.

"Do you know that book?" said the Judge, handing her the Bible open.

She looked at it and answered, "Yes, sir; it is the Bible."

"Do you ever read it?" he asked.

"Yes, sir, every evening," she replied.

"Can you tell me what the Bible is?" inquired the Judge.

"It is the word of God," she answered.

"Well place your hand upon this Bible, and listen to what I say;" and he repeated slowly and solemnly the oath usually administered to witnesses.

"Now," said the Judge, "you have sworn as a witness, will you tell me what will befall you if you do not speak the truth?"

"I shall be shut up in prison," answered the child.

"Anything else?" asked the Judge.

"I shall never go to heaven," she replied.

"How do you know this?" asked the Judge again.

The child took the Bible and turning rapidly to the chapter containing the commandments, pointed to the injunction, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

"I learned that before I could read," said she.

"Has any one talked with you about your being a witness in court here against this man?" inquired the Judge.

"Yes, sir," she replied. My mother heard they wanted me to be a witness, and last night she called me to her room and asked me to repeat to her the commandments; and then we knelt down together, and she prayed that I might understand how wicked it was to bear false witness against my neighbour, and that God would help me, a little child, to tell the truth as it was, before him. And when I came up here with father, she kissed me, and told me to remember the ninth commandment, and that God would hear every word I said."

"Do you believe this?" asked the Judge, while a tear glistened in his eye, and his lip quivered with emotion.

"Yes, sir," said the child, with a voice and manner that showed her conviction of its truth was perfect.

"God bless you, my child," said the Judge; you have a good mother. This witness is competent," he continued; "and were I on trial for my life, and innocent of the charge against me, I would pray God for such witnesses as this. Let her be examined."

She told her story with the simplicity of a child, as she was, but there was a directness about it which carried conviction of its truth to every heart. She was rigidly cross-examined. The counsel plied her with various and ingenious questioning, but she varied from her first statement in nothing. The truth as spoken by that child was sublime. Falsehood and perjury had preceded her testimony. The prisoner had intrenched himself in lies until he deemed himself impregnable; but before her testimony falsehood was scattered like chaff. The little girl for whom a mother had prayed for strength to be given her to speak the truth as it was, before God, broke the cunning devices of matured villany to pieces like a potter's vessel.

ATHLETIC EXERCISES.

CRICKET.

You will learn more about cricket from one match played in the field, than from the best book that could be written on the subject. Still, I will try to give you some idea of the game.

You must suppose a large level field, as smooth as can be found. Somewhere in the middle of this field, three short sticks (called stumps) are set up close together, and, upon the top of them, in a niche made for the purpose, a cross-stick (called a bail) is laid. This is the wicket. Opposite, at a distance of some twenty-two yards or so, another wicket, exactly like the first, is set up. In front of each wicket, at about four feet distance, is drawn a line in the ground called the popping crease; and, beside each wicket, other lines, called the bowling crease and the return crease, mark the place where the bowler stands.

The players come on, take off coats,

buckle waist-straps tight, make ready for the game. There are eleven on each side. They toss up for innings. The side that wins places two of its men, each with a bat in hand, at the wickets, facing each other; the other nine remain quiet for the present, waiting their turn.

The outs divide their men. One is chosen bowler; he stands between the bowling and return creases. Two stand straight behind the wicket towards which he will bowl, one behind the other; they are called the wicket-keeper and the long-stop. Three others stand behind the wicket, at angles on either side; they are called short-slip, long-slip, and leg. Three more hover round the bowler, edging out into the field; and the two remaining players station themselves far behind the bowler on either side; they are known as long-field off, and long-field on.

When all is ready, the umpire shouts: play! Then away flies the ball at the wicket. If it is bowled straight, and the batsman is wide-awake, he strikes it as hard as he can, as it comes, and away it goes, bobbing, bounding, leaping over the ground. Off start both batsmen toward the opposite wicket. Every time they can reach the popping crease opposite them, before the ball is found and thrown up, counts a run; the side which makes the most runs, wins the game. Meanwhile, the fieldsmen of the outs are after the ball like the wind. If they can catch it in the air, the batsman is out, and the next man of his side takes his place. If they pick it up on the ground, quick as thought, they throw it to the bowler or wicket-keeper; if he gets it while the batsmen are running, he knocks down the wicket with it, and the striker is out. He is out, also, if the bowler can manage to bowl so as to knock down the wicket; and though this may seem to you no easy matter, when the batsman has his great bat full in the way, it can be done very quickly if the batsman is slow or unskillful. And he may put himself out by knocking down his wicket or the bail with his bat, or his leg, or even his hat.

He need not strike the ball hard unless he like. If it does not come as he would have it, he may simply stop it, and not run at all. The most difficult thing in cricket is, to know when to stop a ball and when to strike it.

After four balls have been bowled to the same batsman, it is usual for the bowler to change sides and bowl to the opposite wicket. But there is no legal enactment on the subject; and you may make any rule you please as to the number of balls. The rule is, that the bowler must bowl to each man (or his partner, if they have changed sides) until he is put out in one of the ways I have described; the other players, on the side of the innings then take his place successively, until all eleven have been put out.

Then the outs get the innings, and the