

Our Young Folks.

BUD AND BLOSSOM.

"I wonder if it's time to wake up! The air seems so mild and all the warm coverings are off. I must try to open my eyes."

Just then a cold wind came along, and told the little pansy that she need not waken yet; spring was here, but the snow and the cold would once in a while yet come back. She gave a sigh of relief, and said: "I'm glad that I can sleep a little longer, and dream over the happy summer." For flowers must sleep as well as children.

Soon the few warm days changed to chilling cold, and the wind and snow whizzed and danced over the frozen ground; but the pansy dreamed that the bees were buzzing, and butterflies flitting overhead.

We do not always think, when we look out in wintry weather, of the thousands of little lives tucked away in their warm beds. Besides all the animals and insects which doze the long winter away, there are all the seeds and roots and buds waiting for spring to call them up.

Not only are they lying quietly in the ground; myriads of them are swinging and rocking in every keen, strong wind that blows; on the tops of the tall trees, and on the low bushes by the fence corner. Wrapped in folds of silk and wool, these little buds rest as warmly as babies in their cradles.

If you will break off a twig from an apple-tree, and put it in a glass of water, in a sunny window, you will see some of these little buds grow and grow, and perhaps blossom long before those out of doors; but they will not be so beautiful and perfect as their later brothers and sisters who wait till the sun and rain and warm breezes coax them out.

You may watch them very carefully, but they will always surprise you some morning by changing into pink and white beauties that nod and smile at you.

Then others come in green satin, which are not so pretty, but make up by staying all summer.

Do you not think these lovely flowers and leaves should have plenty of time to grow?

I took a walk along a country road one cold morning just after a fresh fall of snow. Nothing was to be seen but white, white fields, and dark fences and trees and woods climbing the hills, and here and there a farmhouse. By and by I came to a brook that danced out for a little way from under the ice and snow,—the only thing reminding one of summer, for it sung the same song that it did when the air was warm and the fields were green, making it pleasant for the dreamers near.

There a comforting thought came to me. Surely it cannot be so dreadful to lie under the pure snow and green earth, waiting for the time when perfect buds shall blossom into perfect flowers, in heavenly gardens, when the eternal summer comes.

THE CHILD IN THE HOUSE.

There was something pathetic in the appeal which a little boy made to his father when he cried: "I often do wrong, I know, and you scold me, and I deserve it; but, father, sometimes I do my best to do right! Won't you let me know when I do please you?"

In many families there are sensitive children, diffident and easily intimidated, who need, above everything else, encouragement; while there are others pert, forward and offensive, that need any amount of repression. Even in the same family, children are so unlike in temperament and disposition as to require very different training. Solomon's family regulator is out of fashion now, but it had its use in his day, and can find occasion for practical application in ours. When discipline was stricter than it is now parents received more honour. It was so in the days of the Apostle, for he says: "Our fathers corrected us, and we gave them reverence." There are round-about ways of reaching the heart of a child, and the rod of correction may be one of the indirect methods of stimulating the better nature. But quite different is the case with children of a highly nervous organization, often with that pensive, plaintive air about them that touches our pity. Even their own parents do not know how such natures are injured by the stern, well-intended but mistaken discipline to which they are often subjected. They little know how such

spirits are blighted by harshness, and how traits of character which under the influence of tender, fostering care would have developed into grace and beauty, never unfolded at all for the want of it. Such discipline to the child is what a dark, cold cellar would be to a delicate, exotic plant, craving light, air and genial warmth. What children of this temperament need is kind words of encouragement and the little tokens of appreciation with which the ingenuity of parental love should ever surround them.

SUNNY BROW AND FROWNIE FACE.

Dear Sunny-brow is a winsome elf,
Sweet-natured all day long;
She always greets you with a smile
Or snatches of a song.

She whispers in the children's ear
Bright things to make them glad,
And always has some pleasant thought
To woo them when they're sad.

She helps them when they're cross and bad,
To smother naughty words,
And murmurs "Sing instead of fret,"
And points them to the birds.

She loves her Master, Christ, you know,
And always tries to take
The "Whisper Motto" for her guide,
Which says "For Jesus' sake."

Now Frownie-face is a wicked sprite
Who loves to pout and fret,
Who says the Summers are "too hot,"
The Winters are "too wet."

There's not a thing that suits his mood;
He pines for "something more,"
And claps his hands when children fight,
And pout and slam the door.

He tells them things to make them cry,
And frets them all day long;
And never yet one saw him smile,
Or heard him sing a song.

Dear little pansies (girls and boys),
Now tell me frank and true
Is Sunny-brow or Frownie-face
The elf that stays with you?

If Frownie-face, pray bid him go,
And on him shut the door;
If Sunny-brow, O hold her fast,
And love her more and more!

HOW LONG IT TAKES.

"Oh, I'm so hungry!" cried Johnny, running in from play. "Give me some bread and butter quick!"

"The bread is baking; you must be patient," said his mother.

Johnny waited two minutes, and then asked if it was not done.

"No," answered his mother, "not quite, yet."

"It seems to take a long while to make a slice of bread," said Johnny.

"Perhaps you don't know, Johnny, how long it does take," said his mother.

"How long!" asked the little boy.

"The loaf was begun in the spring,"—Johnny opened his eyes wide—"it was doing all summer; it could not be finished till the autumn."

Johnny was glad if it was autumn, if it took all that while, for so long a time to a hungry little boy was rather discouraging.

"Why?" he cried, drawing a long breath.

"Because God is never in a hurry," said mother. "The farmer dropped his seed in the ground in April," she went on to say, partly to make waiting time shorter, and more, perhaps, to drop good seed by the wayside; "but the farmer could not make them grow. All the men in the world could not make a grain of wheat, much less could all the men in the world make a stalk of wheat grow. An ingenious man could make something that looked like wheat. Indeed, you often see ladies' bonnets trimmed with sprays of wheat made by the milliners, and at first sight you can hardly tell the difference."

"Put them in the ground and see," said Johnny.

"That would certainly decide. The make-believe wheat would lie as still as bits of iron. The real grain would soon make a stir, because the real seeds have life within them, and God only gives life. The farmer, then, neither makes the corn nor the corn grow; but he drops it into the ground, and covers it up (that is his part), and then leaves it to God. God takes care of it. It is He who sets Mother Earth nourishing it with her warm juices. He sends

the rain, He makes the sun to shine, He makes it spring up, first the tender shoot, and then the blades, and He makes May and June and July and August, with all their fair and foul weather, to set up the stalks, throw out the leaves and ripen the ear. If little boys are starving the corn grows no faster. God does not hurry His work; He does all things well."

By this time Johnny had lost all his impatience. He was thinking.

"Well," he said at last, "that's why we pray to God, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' Before now I thought it was you, mother, that gave us our daily bread; and now I see it was God. We should not have a slice if it weren't for God; would we, mother?"

THE INFLUENCE OF A NURSE.

The home into which the late Lord Shaftesbury was born was such as to discourage the growth of true piety. His father was an able man, and of keen sense, but engrossed in public life; his mother, daughter of the fourth Duke of Marlborough, was a fascinating woman, and attached, after a certain manner, to her children, but too much occupied with fashion and pleasure to be very mindful of their religious training. Occasionally his father asked him a question from the Catechism, but for the rest he was left to grow up in the cold, formal religion of the time.

But there was in the household a simple-hearted, loving Christian woman named Maria Millis, who had been maid to young Ashley's mother when at Blenheim. She loved this gentle, serious little boy, and was wont to take him on her knee, and tell him stories from the Scriptures. Throughout his life, it seems to us, can be traced the effects of these teachings, which, growing with his growth and strengthening with his strength, ripened into a firm and intelligent but childlike faith. She taught him the first prayer he ever uttered, and which, even in old age, he found himself frequently repeating. He promised Mr. Hodder, before his fatal illness, to put this prayer into writing, but he was never able to fulfil this promise.

DANGER OF KEEPING BAD COMPANY.

The crows, one spring, began to pull up a farmer's young corn, which he determined to prevent. He loaded his gun, and prepared to give them a warm reception. The farmer had a sociable parrot, who, discovering the crows pulling up the corn, flew over and joined them. The farmer detected the crows, but did not see the parrot. He fired among them, and hastened to see what execution he had done. There lay three dead crows, and his pet parrot with ruffled feathers and a broken leg. When the bird was taken home the children asked:

"What did it, papa? Who hurt our pretty poll?"

"Bad company! Bad company!" answered the parrot, in a solemn voice.

"Ayl that it was," said the farmer. "Poll was with those wicked crows when I fired, and received a shot intended for them. Remember the parrot's fate, children. Beware of bad company."

With these words the farmer turned round, and, with the aid of his wife, bandaged the broken leg, and in a few weeks the parrot was as lively as ever. But it never forgot its adventure in the cornfield; and if ever the farmer's children engaged in play with quarrelsome companions, it invariably dispersed them with the cry, "Bad company! Bad company!"

MOSES, A GENTLEMAN.

A class of boys in a London board school were asked what sort of a man was Moses? In reply they said he was "meek," "brave," "learned," and at last one little fellow piped up, "He was a gentleman." The surprised official asked: "What do you mean?" "Please, sir," was the reply, "when the daughters of Jethro went to the well to draw water the shepherds came and drove them away, and Moses helped the daughters of Jethro, and said to the shepherds: 'Ladies first, please, gentlemen.'"

I will tell you a proverb. I wish you would remember it. "God has given us eyelids as well as eyes." Do you understand it? What are eyelids for? Not to see. Your eyes are to see with. Your eyelids, not to see. Remember, there are a great many things in life—bad things—and God has given us eyelids that we may not see them, as well as eyes to look at the good things. Use your eyelids. Do not see bad things. Do not see them.