

here and there, and receive visitors from this and that home, and you hardly know the people by sight? You are losing precious hours, and the comfort you ought to take is flying fast away on those wings of time that are never overtaken.

IF I HAD KNOWN.

Nor long since we met a lady whose sad face told the story of great mental suffering. Entering into conversation with her we found her bowed down beneath the weight of a sorrow from which there seemed to be no relief. She said:

"The Lord has laid His hand very heavy upon me. He has taken from me the light of my eyes and the staff of my old age."

And then, in a few words, she told of the death of a son, a promising lad, after an illness of only a few hours, and concluded by saying:

"Oh, if I had only known that he might die, how differently I would have trained him! He received no religious education. I have been so absorbed in gaining the meat that perisheth that I have neglected the more important eternal things. O; if I had only known!"

This experience speaks for itself. We need add but a word of warning to all who have in their hands the training and welfare of young immortal souls. O, see to it, dear friends, that your children are early taught the way of life through Jesus, the only Saviour. Seek first the riches of the kingdom above for yourself and them, and God will provide for the meaner things of this earthly life.

CHILDREN OF LIGHT.

How eagerly the sun-flower turns to the sun! When the sun sets, and night falls, it folds up its leaves. But when the morning light comes once more, it opens up its bosom to its sweet soft touch. Nor is this all it keeps inclining towards the sun all day, following its course through the sky. And so it is not enough that the light is falling around you. You must open your heart to the light of God's glory in the face of Jesus. You must keep it open. You must let the light chase the darkness away. So will you be children of the dawn and children of day.

I once spent a whole night on the deck of a little Highland steamer in the Crinan canal. It was a long night. I had read Longfellow about "the cold light of stars," and I experienced it then. At last the day began to spring up in the east; and with the first rays of the sun how agreeable was the change! "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun."

Have you ever read of Memnon's statue? It is said that when the morning rays fell on it they produced a sweet strain of music. Whether it was so or not I cannot tell; but the earth is itself a great Memnon's statue, which the sunrise wakes into harmony. Joy cometh in the morning. With the morning light, thousands of birds make the woods vocal with their melody; the sea begins to sparkle; the rivers gleam like threads of silver; and men go forth to their work with new light in their eyes, and new hope in their hearts. This is true of the Sun of Righteousness; when He rises, it is not with light, but with healing under His wings. And the same is true of the children of light; they carry sweetness and gladness wherever they go.

Naaman's home had light in it,—the light of wealth, the light of power, the light of honour; but it wanted the true light,—the light of the knowledge of God. With all its splendour it lacked happiness: Naaman was a leper. In that Syrian home was a captive maid. Away from home and kindred, she was not away from God. Him she loved and served in her captivity; and her master's wife she strove to love and serve too. One day she spoke to her mistress about a certain cure for her master. There was a man of God in Samaria; no disease was too hard for him; he could heal the leprosy. He had done greater than that; he could do greater still. At length Naaman set out for Samaria; he saw the man of God; he washed seven times in the Jordan; he came back completely cured of the leprosy. And now his Syrian home was bright and happy; it had the light and knowledge of the true God. There was not only light, there was warmth. And what brought about this great change? It was the little captive maid—her faith, her love, her dutiful service. She was a child of light, and she had warmed and brightened the home with her own sunny light and warmth.

Let us be ever willing to do a good action: we may never be called on to do a great one.

When your spirit is heavy and cast down with despair, prayer will make it rebound from earth to heaven.

Children's Department.

TAKE A DRINK?

TAKE a drink? No! not I;
Reason's taught me better
Than to bind my very soul
With a galling fetter.
Water, sweet and cool and free,
Has no cruel chains for me.

Take a drink? No! not I:
I have seen too many
Taking drinks like that of yours,
Stripped of every penny.
Water, sweet and cool and clear,
Costs me nothing all the year.

Take a drink? No! never;
By God's blessing, NEVER
Will I touch or taste or smell,
Henceforth and forever!
Water, sweet and clear and cool,
Makes no man a slave or fool.

THE ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

"No, I will not lend you my sled, Willie; I want to use it myself, so you needn't beg any longer," said little Charlie Albertson, as he and Willie Miller were standing on the village hill one winter's afternoon. "If your father is too poor to buy you one," he continued, "I can't help that, so move out of the way now, for I want to ride down hill."

The little boy moved away, and watched the flying sled with longing eyes. Charlie was right, though he did not know it. Willie's father could not afford to buy his son a sled; for it took all his hard-earned money to purchase clothes and food for the many little ones at home, and Willie had tried to make one, but in vain.

It was a trial for him to see the other boys coasting, and he could not help thinking that Charlie was unkind to refuse him "just one ride." But he brushed away the tears and ran home, trying not to feel so very sorry.

Did the ice melt after Willie left, or were the sled runners out of order? What is the reason that Charlie did not enjoy coasting as he had done before? There was no one now to beg for "just one ride," no one to stand in the way, then why was it the little boy so soon left the hill and dragged his sled into the house?

In the evening just as Charlie had finished studying the last lesson, his father looked up from a book he had been reading, and asked the little boy if he could say all the commandments.

"Yes, indeed, papa," replied Charlie. "What a question? I knew them all years ago."

"Very well, repeat them," returned Mr. Albertson. "Charlie commenced and ended the tenth exultantly, without missing one word.

"Go on," said his father, "I want to hear the eleventh."

"The eleventh, papa!" exclaimed the child, "I never heard of it. There are no more in my Bible, at any rate;" and Charlie brought his little Bible, open at the twentieth chapter of Exodus.

"Suppose God should give us a new commandment wouldn't you call that the eleventh?" asked his father.

Mr. Albertson then turned to the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel of St. John, and asked him to read the thirty-fourth verse.

"A new commandment I give unto you. That ye love one another as I have loved you, that ye also love one another," read Charlie.

"Now, when I tell you," said his father, "that I passed through the woods on the hill this afternoon, I guess my little boy will know why I wanted to hear if he remembered the eleventh commandment."

Charlie blushed; for he knew that his father must have heard his cross words to little Willie, and he felt very sorry indeed that they had ever been said.

"I wonder if my little son knows how hard Mr. Miller has to work in order to buy even bread and clothing for his many children," said Mr. Albertson. "I wonder if he saw the tears that filled little Willie's eyes as he turned away from the hill this afternoon. If my little boy had seen how sadly the poor child looked, I do not think he could have enjoyed even coasting afterwards."

"And I'm sure I didn't enjoy it at all, papa," said Charlie, trying in vain to dry the tears which would come, as he thought of Willie, "I am very, very sorry that I was so unkind; but what can I do now?"

"Think for yourself, Charlie," said Mr. Albertson, "and try to find some way to show your love for poor little Willie."

Charlie thought a long while, and then springing up, clapping his hands, exclaimed, "I know what would be splendid, papa; I will take some of the money that you gave at Christmas, and buy a sled for Willie: wouldn't he be pleased?"

"That is a capital plan," replied his father, "and to-morrow we will go and select one."

Very early the next morning Mr. Albertson and Charlie started out, and bought the prettiest sled in the village store, and before school commenced, Charlie asked Willie if he would like to try it. The poor boy was delighted, and after having rode down the hill several times, brought the sled back again to Charlie, with many thanks.

"Keep it," said Charlie, so excited that he did not know what to say; "I don't want it; it's yours; I didn't mean to be so cross."

Willie could not understand what was meant, and it was some time before he could realize that the beautiful sled with a prancing black horse painted on it, was really his own, "to keep for ever and ever," as Charlie said. Then how happy he was, and how happy they both were together, I cannot begin to tell my little reader.

"I mean to write the eleventh commandment in large letters and hang it in my room," said Charlie, after he had told his father how happy the sled had made Willie. "Wouldn't that be a good plan, papa?"

"Yes, my darling," said Mr. Albertson; "but do not forget to ask God to write it on your heart as well, and give you strength to keep it always."

"Yes, indeed, I will ask Jesus to help me," said Charlie, "for I never could keep it all alone."

Now I wonder what the little boy is going to do who has just finished this story. Will he lay the paper aside, and forget the beautiful new commandment Christ has given him, or will he not rather think of the great love Jesus showed for him, when dying on the cross that he might live, and pray God to help him shew forth his love for that dear Saviour, by keeping the new commandment?

A SONG FOR THE NURSERY.

WHY do all the daises go?
I know, I know!
Underneath the snow they creep,
Nod their little heads and sleep,
In the spring-time out they peep—
That is where they go.

Where do all the birdies go?
I know, I know!
Far away from winter snow,
To the fair, warm south they go,
There they stay till daises blow—
That is where they go.

Where do all the babies go?
I know, I know!
In the glancing firelight warm,
Safely sheltered from all harm,
Soft they lie on mother's arm—
That is where they go.

ABOUT A TAME PIGEON.

WE have two pets in our house. One of them, a pigeon, belongs to me; the other is a dog, and is my brother Jim's pet. We had a cat also, but we gave away the cat when I got the pigeon. You see the pigeon was then very young, and Pussy might have eaten it up, so it was thought best she should go. The dog and pigeon are friends. They do not play with each other, but they sometimes feed together, and often the pigeon gets on to the dog's back and sits there until the dog gets restless.—MARY W.

Mary W. must not suppose that all cats would do as she was afraid hers would when the pigeon was brought home. In his "History of Birds," Dr. Stanley tells us a very interesting cat and pigeon story. He states that the pigeon had made her nest in a loft much infested with rats, which had more than once destroyed her eggs or devoured her young ones. These losses caused the pigeon at length to select another nesting-place, and she went to a part of the loft where a cat was rearing three kittens. Cat, kittens, and pigeon agreed splendidly. The fed from the same dish, and when Pussy took a ramble the pigeon was sure to be hovering near her. The pigeon's new nest was close to the straw bed of the cat, and then she succeeded unmolested by the rats, because protected by the cat, in rearing more than one brood. I return for pussy's kindness, the pigeon used to attack one who touched the kittens while the mother was away.