

"Is it a pretty doll?" said he.

"No," said the child, "it is not that," but her face showed that she would dearly love to have that very thing.

"Well," said Percy, "I cannot guess, but tell me, Nellie."

"Well, I will tell you; first, I should like to give mamma enough money to buy flour and coal—

"Flour and coal!" exclaimed Percy, "Goodness! what a strange thing to wish for!"

"Yes, but we cannot live without them," said Nellie.

"Now," said Percy, "I want you to have something for yourself."

"If I can have it, I should like a little doll."

"A little one! would you not like a big one?"

"Oh, yes; but you are too kind."

"Not at all! I should like to make you real happy."

"You have made me real happy already; you are a good boy!"

Percy felt a little embarrassed at the little girl's praise. "I don't think I am very good."

"Yes you are, and I wish I could do something to make you happy; but," quickly, "you must be perfectly happy now," as she spoke she glanced around his pretty room.

He knew she referred to his pleasant surroundings, and he said:

"Yes, I think I ought to be!"

His tone attracted her notice, and she looked closely at him. Then she thought of his crippled condition, and her little heart ached for him. She did not know how to comfort him, but young as she was, she had implicit faith in God.

So she said:

"I will ask the dear Infant Jesus to cure your limbs, so that you can walk."

"Oh! Nellie, will you ask Him?" The boy's very heart seemed to be in the question.

"Yes, I will; but you must ask Him too."

"Me! Oh! I do not know how to talk to Jesus. Will you tell me what to say?"

"Say: 'Oh! Sweet Child Jesus, through Thy Incarnation and Birth, I beseech Thee to restore strength to my limbs, so that I can walk.'"

He repeated the words over and over, and as he did so he felt his heart lifted up to regions unknown before. The poor boy trembled with a new-born hope. He wondered why he had never thought of asking God to cure him, but poor boy it was not altogether his fault; his parents were worldly people, and did not belong to any church, so that Nellie's words were a revelation to him.

Percy wished his mamma to see his new friend, so he called her and introduced them.

"Mamma, this is Nellie Linden, she has told me something beautiful. Oh! mamma, if it would only come true."

"Why, my love, what is it?"

"Oh, it seems so very strange, yet Nellie thinks it will happen. She is going to ask the dear Infant Jesus to cure my limbs; and she says He hears and answers children's prayers."

Mrs. Gray started though she had received a blow. She looked at the little girl, who stood with her little hands clasped before her, her cheeks flushed and her eyes shining like stars. Mrs. Gray felt as though she would give all she possessed to stand as pure and free from sin in God's sight as that little child.

So Christmas morning came, clear and cold. Percy was up early and taken to his window, where he could watch the children go to church opposite. He very slowly dropped into an easy sleep, from which he was awakened by his mother's voice, and another voice which he did not know. His door opened and his mother entered; close by her side was Nellie. The child seemed terribly moved, but she tried to control herself, and paused about the middle of the room and held out her hands towards him, saying:

"I wish you a happy Christmas, Percy, come here and wish me the same."

The boy's face turned deathly white for a moment, then flushed red, he looked at Nellie as though he did not understand her, but her look was not to be mistaken. Her hands were still held toward him, and every feature of her face seemed to say come.

Percy laid his hands on the arms of his chair; his feet touched the floor; he tried to raise himself up by the strength of his hand, but—Oh God! is it possible? the next instant he finds himself standing on his feet. He almost loses his senses for the very joy. But Nellie's voice recalls him.

"Oh! Percy, thank God! come here."

In a moment Percy is by her side, his hands clasped in hers.

"Oh, I knew the dear, sweet Jesus would not refuse my prayer; how shall we ever thank Him?"

They were on their knees the next moment, and I think the most pleasing homage the New Born King received that day, went up from the hearts of those two children. The two mothers were also on their knees, and they both felt that

### DAINGEROUS FICTION.

PARENTS should generally understand that the general output of novels embraces many books of tendencies so immoral that it is quite worth their while to supervise current literature that may fall into the hands of their children. Many young people go to book stores and buy novels innocently, because of the titles, which contain suggestions of the most unwholesome character, while in others may be found the bold advocacy of the most vicious doctrines and theories. The time is ripe for such public protest as will make the publishers of these books feel some sense of shame. A deplorable feature of the business is that some publishers who enjoy a high reputation for the excellence of their literature in the past boldly affix their imprint to the most degrading stuff. We repeat that it will not do for parents to permit their children to pick and choose of current fiction for themselves. A boy or girl, on purchasing a novel, should be required to submit it to the inspection of his father or mother, and the bookseller should be made to feel the weight of paternal displeasure if the book be unfit for the young to read.

There is a law against selling liquor to minors, and there should be a law against selling novels of the kind to which we refer to children. And such a law will surely be enacted if these authors and publishers are not curbed very soon. These books make a mockery of marriage and a jest of the most holy relations between the sexes. They instil a doctrine as absolutely fatal to the welfare of society as it is disastrous to the youthful mind.

Scarcely a day passes that the New York papers do not contain tidings of young boys arrested for stealing considerable money from parents or employers, with which to "go West" in search of sanguinary adventure. In every instance the youngsters confess to having their imaginations fired by sensational story papers. A still sadder aspect of the same evil is the number of young girls who are led to New York and to ruin by similar influences. The "flash" literature of the day leads them to think that they will meet wealth and admiration in the city. The careers of such misguided girls in nine cases out of ten lead to degradation and death. Keep these unwholesome papers out of your hands and make use of pure, entertaining literature.

### AM I DOING MY WORK.

It may be sweeping rooms or washing dishes; it may be carrying a bed or a sceptre, it may be tending a baby or writing a book—the question is just as applicable. "Am I doing my work?" not criticising somebody else, not

longing for a better chance, not waiting for something to turn up; but doing my work as well as I know how to do it?"

If one can answer in the affirmative, he has answered one of the greatest questions that he is ever called upon to face. To be in one's place and doing one's work is extremely satisfying; to be out of one's proper place will be agony, because it will take one away from God. If a man who is meant to be a physician is miserable as a lawyer; if a useful and prosperous farmer is sometimes spoiled to make an unhappy and second rate professional man, what will be the agony of living for an eternity out of one's element, or in other words, away from one's God? To be something may be the high ambition of every humble child of God, and he may be sure that at last he will certainly reach the very summit of his ambition.

Said a teacher to one of his girl pupils: "If your father gave you a basket containing forty plums to divide between yourself and your little brother, after you had taken your share what would be left?" "My little brother."



MARIE CAMILLE HONE

God was very near them that blessed Christmas morning.

Twelve years have passed and it is Christmas once more. Good Father Dean is still pastor where we first met him. His years are beginning to lean rather heavily upon him; so much so that he is to have an assistant; his curate is to be with him for Christmas. The Grays still live opposite and are good faithful members of his congregation.

Nellie Linden is one of the brightest ornaments of the town, loved for her goodness and her beauty. Her father has been fortunate, and the family are quite comfortable. They are all busy getting ready for Mass. They expect to hear the new priest, so they start in good time. After they have said some prayers, they begin to look toward the sacristy; they were anxious to see their future pastor, because Father Dean has told them that the priest who is coming is to succeed him. The candles are lighted, the organ swells out the glad strains, Gloria in Excelsis Deo, and the altar-boys appear at the sacristy door; all eyes are turned in that direction, and there is the young priest. It is Father Percy Gray.—Mrs. J. A. E.