



Don't Play Rude Jokes.

Don't like sermons, eh? I know it. Young folks never do. They think of sermons as being prosy and fault-finding. And who wants to be always hearing of their faults? Not fun loving, mischievous boys and girls, surely. One may praise them, tell them how bright and pleasant they are, without the least danger of giving offence. But touch their faults, and see if it is not a little like throwing gunpowder into fire. But for all that, we older heads have to risk the danger of the explosion, or rather, of giving offence, for the sake of saving our bright boys and girls from falling into rude, harmful ways.

A few years ago, when the writer was attending school, one day at recess a bright healthy girl of thirteen was walking in the aisle of the school-room, when a mischievous boy, to have a little fun, thrust his foot into the aisle in front of her. The girl did not see it, tripped over it, fell headlong, striking her back on the sharp edge of a desk. Oh! what a change from that instant in that bright, young life! Gone health, gone pleasure, gone all the brightness from life! Her spine received a fatal injury which made her an invalid as long as she lived. A suffering body and darkened sick-chamber were her portion in life thereafter. Ah! but at what a cost that boy secured his fun!

About four years ago, a young nephew of the writer was playing with some boys, when one of the number, in reckless sport, threw a stone with great vim into the midst of his companions. It struck my little relative's knee, and fractured the bone. From that day to this he has never walked. A helpless cripple, four years of suffering, and hundreds of dollars spent in treatment, has been the result of that one rude act.

Not long since, two boys placed some gunpowder under an old pan. Close to the powder was an apparatus (with a string attached which extended out from under the pan) for striking a match, which caused the powder to explode. The joke lay in having an innocent boy pull the string. The first boy who did so was made blind by the explosion. All through life he will grope in darkness and suffering, a victim of his playmates' rude joking.

In a female boarding-school was a girl, who was very unprepossessing in person; was frail, and of a highly nervous temperament. She was so eccentric as to be disliked by the students. Her room was connected with one occupied by two thoughtless, mischievous girls. The door between the rooms was kept locked, and the key removed. But one night the two girls procured a key which unfastened the door, dressed themselves in sheets, and covered their faces with ghastly looking masks. When the lone girl was asleep, they went to her bedside and awoke her. In the dim light she saw two spectral forms standing by her bed. She gave one scream, which echoed throughout the building, then fainted away. When the preceptress and others reached her room they found only the unconscious girl, and it was only after a thorough investigation that the guilty ones were discovered. They were speedi-

ly expelled. But their victim went into a nervous fever, which lasted for many long weeks, and caused her to lose a term of school.

Now, young friends, how do you like these pictures? Do you think you would enjoy having such jokes perpetrated on you? Does there not seem something almost fiendish in a spirit that can find pleasure in what gives pain or fright to another? Would you like the thought weighing on your conscience that you had blighted the life of a playmate? Don't you know that the planning and perpetrating of such jokes stimulates a coarse, cruel spirit, which should be checked instead of encouraged? Have you ever thought that the only difference in your being liked or disliked, in having friends or being friendless, lies wholly in your actions toward others?

It is no palliation to your act to say: "I didn't mean any harm," when evil comes of your rude jokes. It doesn't lessen your victim's pain in the least. And an injury produced by the foolish sport of a friend is harder to bear than though it was inflicted by the most bitter enemy.

Freddie's Star Thoughts.

We sat and watched the stars come out
In the dark blue evening skies,
And Fred gazed at them earnestly,
With wonder in his eyes.

"Mamma, what are the stars?" he asked,
His brow, beneath the crown
Of shining hair that wreathed his head,
Bent in a puzzled frown.

She could not tell this questioner,
Whose years were only three,
That they were other suns that light
Worlds wrapped in mystery.

And while she paused, "I think I know,"
Said Fred, "and I'll tell you:
There's some holes in the clouds, and so
The gold of Heaven shines through."

Then as we smiled, though Freddie's face
Showed not a sign of mirth,
A brilliant, flashing falling star
Shot quickly down to earth.

And, with a light in his brown eyes,
Most lovely to behold,
The laddie shouted, "Oh! mamma,
There fell a bit of gold."

