

### Boy Life.

What a book could be written on boy life, and what an important part it is in every man's career in this world. Boyhood is, in a sense, more to every man than all the rest of his life. Take a man of sixty; he looks back to his boyhood days, say from five to fourteen years of age—just a period of nine years; that nine years seems to him a longer time than the forty-six years he has lived since he was fourteen. More pleasant circumstances and more remarkable events of his life seem crowded into that nine years than into all the rest, and they also appear more vivid, and are more indelibly impressed on his memory. A day then appeared as long as a week now, and to look forward a year was like the looking towards the end of time. When it wanted two months to holidays, how slowly that time passed. I remember it wanting one month till my holidays. I marked the number of days in pencil on the white-washed wall at the head of my bed, one stroke for each day, and every morning when I awoke I crossed over one mark. How slowly those marks were crossed out. I thought the last stroke would never be made, and when I had them all crossed the picture made on the wall was better to me than anything by Reubens or Landseer. There is no period of our lives that we remember so well, and that our minds revert to so often as the days of our boyhood. How often, when alone, and no one to speak with or talk to, and nothing to do, will our minds go back to our boyhood days; how vividly certain events which happened to us are portrayed, how plainly we can see the happy faces of our playmates and hear their merry laugh—we can actually imagine it is ringing in our ears now. The fields, the woods, and the lanes (if we were Old Country boys) where we used to go bird-nesting, are photographed on our minds to-day as plainly as the originals were then; we can see every crook in the lanes, every tree in the hedge-row, and the particular bush in which we took the thrush's or blackbird's nest. We could now walk as straight to it as we can to the front door of the house we now live in, and yet we have not put eyes on the scenes of those pleasant memories, perhaps, since we were boys. But absence and time makes no difference, nothing can erase the memory of those happy days, long, long gone by.

There is no mistake about the true, unalloyed happiness and utter indifference to all worldly cares of a boy. See him march into the house an hour too late for dinner; everybody else in the family have done; the dirty plates may be still on the table, and his place is waiting him; he throws his hat down on the floor, sits down and commences pitching in. No matter to him though

everything is cold; his appetite is of the most ravenous description. His mother scolds him because he was not on hand in time. He wards off her scolding words with as much skill as a prize-fighter does the blows of his antagonist. His excuses, although of the most flimsy character in the eyes of his parent, are perfectly satisfactory to himself; in fact he is complete boss of the situation. No Kean, Booth, or Irvine could begin to mimic that boy as he sits there, his hair unkempt, the perspiration standing in beads on his face, his hands not washed (he had no time for that), a perfect specimen of boyish indifference to anything outside his present business, and the game he is engaged for with his pals, just as soon as he can eat his meal, and bolt.

I have a picture in my house, representing a boy standing on a rock in a stream, barefooted, with his pant legs rolled up, one brace only crossing his shoulder over his hickory shirt, an old straw hat, with part of the crown gone, on the back of his head; his hands in his pockets—or pocket holes, perhaps the bottoms are out,—and a smile on his face—a splendid picture of happiness, carelessness, and abandon to all the troubles of this world. No man ever lived, or ever will, whom the affairs of this world troubled as little as one can believe it does the subject of this picture. One can't possibly look at it without envying the original his undisputed joy and pleasures.

It is well that boys are boys, and that they have these pleasures when boys, for we all know that unless we get them at this period they never come to us when men. We, as men, should do all we can to make our boys happy. We should always remember we were once boys ourselves, and that the greatest men that ever lived were all once boys—there never was but one man in this world who never was a boy; that was Adam, and he was a dreadful failure. Perhaps the reason was because he never was a boy.

I am afraid many men do not study to assist and encourage their boys in their little fancies, pleasures and amusements. I am one who believe that ten boys are ruined by harsh treatment from fathers to one who is spoiled by too much indulgence. If a boy cuts a hole in the gable of the barn for his pigeons, and spoils the look of it, do not scold or berate him as if he had pulled the building down. Laugh at him if you like for being a poor mechanic, but go and help him to make a more sightly hole of it. If he wants a hutch for his rabbits, and is not man enough to build one, make one for him. Indulge him in such things all you can. Always try to be an active partner, but in a very unobtrusive manner, in all his investments in these kinds of things. Always re-