

TRUTHFUL.

A story of the childhood of Abu-Said, a Persian saint revered by the Sufi sect, recalls a virtue that distinguished the ancient Persians, but which their descendants do not practice. When a child, Abu had a vision, which prompted him to ask his mother's consent to his going to Bagdad, and devoting himself to the service of God. She gave him forty dinars, his inheritance, and made him swear never to tell a lie.

"Go, my son," said she, through her tears, when bidding him farewell. "I consign thee to God. We shall not meet again till the Judgment Day."

The boy joined a small party of travellers. On their journey sixty horsemen plundered them, and one robber asked Abu what he had got.

"Forty dinars are sewed under my garments." The robber laughed, thinking the boy was joking.

"What have you got?" asked another robber, and the boy gave him the same answer. They brought him to the chief who was dividing the spoils.

"What, my little fellow, have you got?" he asked.

"I have told two of your people already," replied the boy. "I have forty dinars sewed up carefully in my clothes."

The chief ordered the clothes to be ripped open, and the money was found. "How came you, O boy," asked the surprised chief, "to declare openly what has been so carefully hidden?"

"Because," answered the boy, "I will not be false to my mother, to whom I promised that I would never tell a lie."

"Child," said the robber, "hast thou, at thy age, such a sense of duty to thy mother, and am I insensible, at my age, of the duty I owe to my God? Give me thy hand, that I may swear repentance upon it!"

Taking the child's hand, the chief, in the presence of his band, swore to amend his life. His follower were so impressed by the scene that they said to the chief: "Thou hast been our leader in crime, be our leader in virtue."

Instantly, at his command, they made restitution of their spoil, and on the truth-telling child's hand vowed repentance.

SCANDAL.

"Do not slander others, either by raising or repeating a report which may do them irretrievable injury."

A whisper broke the air—
A soft light tone, and low,
Yet barbed with shame and woe;
Now, might it perish only there,
Nor farther go!

"Ah me! a quick and eager ear
Caught up the little-meaning sound;
Another voice has breathed it clear,
And so it wandered round
From ear to lip, from lip to ear,
Until it reached a gentle heart,
And *that* it broke!"

NEVER SWEAR.

1. It is mean. A boy of high moral standing would almost as soon steal a sheep as to swear.

2. It is vulgar—altogether too low for a decent boy.

3. It is cowardly—implying a fear of not being believed or obeyed.

4. It is ungentlemanly. A gentleman, according to the dictionary, is a genteel man—well-bred, refined. Such a man will no more swear than go into the street to throw mud with a chimney sweep.

5. It is indecent, offensive to delicacy and extremely unfit for human ears.

6. It is foolish. "Want of decency is want of sense."

7. It is abusive to the mind that conceives the oath, to the tongue which utters it, and to the person at whom it is aimed.

8. It is venomous, showing a boy's heart to be a nest of vipers; and every time he swears one of them sticks out its head.

9. It is contemptible, forfeiting the respect of all the wise and good.

ARGUING WITH A SCEPTIC.

"The Bible the word of God!" exclaimed a young sceptic in the hearing of a friend. "No, it is the invention of men."

"The Bible claims to be God's word, does it not?" asked the Christian.

"Yes, the men who wrote it pretend that they 'spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.'"

"If the Bible, then, is not what it claims to be; it is, you think, an imposture, and its writers liars?"

"Yes, that is what I believe."

"Good men would not lie and deceive, would they?"

"Of course not."

"Then the Bible, you are sure, could not have been written by good men?"

"I feel certain that it was not."

"Now, answer me candidly. Does the Bible condemn sin, and threaten bad men with punishment?"

"Yes," rather reluctantly.

"Does it condemn lying and deception?"

"Yes," a little sharply.

"Would bad men—deceivers and liars—make a book that condemns their own sins?"

"They would not be likely to do so, certainly."

The young sceptic felt the ground giving away under him, and changed the subject.

THE Sunday schools of the Diocese of Pennsylvania not only unite in the Children's Lenten Offering for missions, but they give especial attention to the general missionary work in the season of Advent also. This year they are undertaking to build a chapel in Liberia, Africa, to help the work of Bishop Ferguson, and the Advent offerings of the Sunday schools of the diocese are to be devoted to that purpose.