OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

A Clever Bird

A gentleman brought with him from Mexico a parrot named Jocko. It happened that the bird's perch stood for several days close beside an electric bell. When this was touched and the servant immediately appeared, Jocko would give a croak of astonishment. After a time it was evident that Jocko began to see some connection between the button and the servant. At last, after studying it for a long time and running his beak softly around it, Jocko discovered the connection and pressed the button. As the servant appeared the little schemer said, "Jocko's hungry." The laughter of his mistress and the astonishment of the servant did not disconcert him in the least. He had rung for what the wanted, and be insisted upon having it. The scheme worked well, to Jocko's manifest delight.

Charity.

A beautiful illustration of Christian charity is afforded in the following incident. An eminent painter was requested by Alexander the Great to sketch his likeness. Alexander had a scar upon his brow of a sword-thrust. For a time the artist was perplexed as to how he might make a good likeness of the king, and yet show this deformity. He finally hit upon the expedient of having the monarch seated on the throne with his head slightly resting upon his hand, thus concealing the scar. When we sketch the character of others, let us kindly lay our hands over the scars, and when others come to sketch us perhaps they also will lay the hands of charity over our scars, for we have them, too. Thus shall each preserve and set forth the beauty of the other, and forget the deformity that more or less mars us all.

A Boy With a Brush.

Ludovico Cangiagio, a famous Genoese painter, worked equally well, it is said, with both hands. By this unusual power he executed more designs and finished more great works by himself, in a much shorter time, than most other artists could do with the aid of several assistants.

At the age of seventeen Cangiagio was employed to assist at painting in fresco the front of an elegant house. On beginning his work, the other artists, who were Florentines, observing his youthful appearance, concluded he could be nothing more than a grinder of colors—"a boy with a brush,"—and wondered at his presumption. As soon, therefore, as he took up the palette and set to work they became apprehensive that he would spoil everything; but after a few strokes of his pencil, they had reason to be of a very different opinion, and paid tribute to his uncommon abilities.

A Boy's Diary.

A mother describes in the Interior how she came to look upon the rubbish in her boy's drawer as his unwritten diary and the basis of his autobiography. She said to him one day:

"My son, your bureau drawer is full of rubbish. You had better clear it out."

Yes, that would be his great delight; so we began.

"This horseshoe is of no use—"

"Oh yes, it is; I found it under grandpa's corn-crib, and he let me have it."

"These clamshells you'd better break up for the hens—"

"Why, mamma, I got them on the beach, you know, last summer!"

"And this faded ribbon—burn it up."

"Oh, no! That was our class badge for the last day of school, and I want to keep it."

"Here is that old tin flute yet! Why do you heap up such trash?"

"That is a nice flute that Willie gave me two Christmasses ago. Didn't we have a splendid time that day?"

"Well, this bottle is good for nothing—"

"Oh yes, it is. That is the bottle I used for a bobber when we went fishing at Green's Lake. A black bass pulled that bottle away under water!"

Then the mother thought that to destroy these historical relics would be to obliterate pleasant memories.

A Little Queen.

The snow is lying out in the street. It has been swept from all the sidewalks, and that makes good sleighing. The butchers and grocers have been going about with jingling bells, and the boys have been snow balling. Just now a little queen passed. She sat in a rocking-chair that was tied securely on a pretty red sled. An old shawl had been put on the chair first, and then she sat down and it was tucked all about her. On her lap was a coat; she wore a jacket, and over the jacket a white flannel shawl that must have been hers when she was a bady. A tightly fitted hood and a veil over her face completely hid the little queen. Her horse is her papa. He has no gloves on, and no overcoat, and his shoes are quite old, but he is prancing and kicking in the most violent fasbion, and when the little queen nearly falls from her throne laughing, the horse starts off at a comfortable trot, and the bell on his neck jingles gayly. Here they come back again. I hear them laughing. The horse is prancing and arching his neck, and generally behaving in a reckless manner. How the little queen laughs! and, strange to say, so does the horse. Away he goes down the hill at a safe trot, and the little queen is sitting back with great dignity.

The little queen lives in two small rooms, probably, with a great many other people living in the same house. There may be no carpet on the floor, but the little queen does not care; she has her papa, who plays horse with her, and a mamma who sings lullabies, and the only world she knows is full of love, and she is the queen who received it all.

Reading.

It goes without saying that a book worth reading is worth re reading. But it may be that all parts are not equally worth re reading. Thus it becomes important to mark those parts deserving more careful and considerate attention. In reading a book or any article in the magazine for the first time, read rapidly to get the sense and general purport. In this rapid first reading, mark with letter A such passages as seem quite striking and as challenge your attention for more careful examination.

In re-reading give careful thought to these parts, and if they seem on reflection to have a growing, valuable meaning attach the figure "2" to the A marked before, so it will stand as when expressing the square of A; thus A2. But if on reflection they lose in value and your former judgment is not sustained by the second reading, then attach the radical sign to the A.

Keep three things in mind:

1. The value of thought.
2. The beauty of thought.
3. The manner in which the author has brought out its value or beauty, or both.

Now, when you come to read the book for the third time, the wheat being separated from the chaff, your time will not only be saved, but the Beauty of the selection will stand forth with increased distinctness.

A book so marked has an added value for all subsequent time; the wit, wisdom, pathos, or grandeur of the author may be gained without the commonplace.

In addition to this, make a brief index naming pages marked by A or the more striking ones so marked. If a friend wishes to puruse your book, request him to mark likewise, only using a pencil of a different color. The passages on which you agree in the marks should then be re-read, and the more striking ones committed to memory for ready use. In this way you will fix the thought, as also the good expression of the thought, as a part of the mind's available content.

In re-reading the passages you determine to have enter your mind and hereafter dwell with you, the character of the guest should be scrutinized. The more prominent words should be examined in a good dictionary, and a growing meaning should attach to them. Words have a growth in mind. —Of them it may be said, as the mother to the babe:

"Ever, evermore shall it be mine
To mark the growing meaning in thine eyes.
And catch with ever fresh surprise and joy
Thy dawning recognitions of the world."

Reading aloud should also be attended to. Read not for imitation but for inspiration. Reading aloud with the inspiration born of the understanding aids the memory, increases pleasure, and ssmetimes arouses the intensest feeling. It gives an ardor and zest which aid continuity of thought. It awakens the mind to a more active condition; comparisons are more promptly made, and it causes the mind to reject much to which it silently assents when the mind is not so aroused.

The Moss-Rose.

There is, so an old legend tells us, an angel whose duty it is to care for the flowers by day and to sprinkle them with dew at night. One day, being tired, he lay down in the shade of a rose-bush and slept through the summer hours. When he awoke he said to the roses: "Most beautiful of my children, what reward shall I give you for this delightful odor and refreshing shade?"

"Give us a new charm," answered the roses. And the angel, in gratitude, gave each a garment of softest moss.

The origin of the snowdrop, as told in folk-lore, is quite as poetic. Eve, the story runs, was morning because after her fall the flowers faded. But as she wept the snowflakes fell; and an angel, pitying her, breathed upon them and turned them into blossoms. —Ave Maria.

PRAYER.

What is prayer? It is not to talk to God? Begin by putting yourself into God's presence. Say to yourself: "I am going to speak to the Great and Eternal Creator—to Him on whom I depend for every breath I draw. He, the immense, the All Holy God, is looking at me now: all the saints and angels are looking at me, pleased that I am going to speak to Him, interested in what I am going to say. And who am I before so glorious a God? A poor, little, weak, helpless creature, wholly dependent on Him for even the breath with which to speak to Him; and, more than this, I have sinned against Him, and not once, or twice, but again and again." Be real in what you say to God. It is no use to read pages and pages out of your prayer books, and not mean one word of what you have to read. God does not care for that sort of prayer. You must not treat Him as you would be ashamed to treat a neighbor, turning away even while you were greeting them. They would say, "Are you speaking to me?" You must look at God and speak to Him in His presence. Take pains to mean what you say. When you read your prayer book, stop from time to time and ask yourself, "Do I really mean what I am saying?" If you do this you will soon begin to love prayer, and God is more pleased with ten words from your heart than with ten pages read, perhaps not one word meant. St. Teresa saw in a wonderful vision the glory of the soul of a poor old woman who had said daily one Hail Mary really well. There are things I want you to take home to think about. First, prayer is necessary for you; it is easy; there is neither happiness nor salvation without it. Second, prayer must be read in the presence of the All Holy God; you must mean what you say. Third, it must be humble—From Conferenee given by Father Dignam, S. J.

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

An Irreparable Loss.

Lost wealth may be replaced by industry, lost knowledge by study, lost health by temperance or medicine, but lost time is gone forever.

No Time Wasted.

"But I haven't a cent to start with," said a young acquaintance of Daniel Drew, who had called upon the great financier for advice as to his future career.

"Lucky fellow!" exclaimed Drew, "you'll not have to waste time losing an inherited fortune before you commence to make one of your own."

Strong Through Resistance.

The young man cannot be strong until he has been tempted and has learned to resist, but he will gain the strength of every temptation that he does resist. St. Bernard said: "Nothing can work me damage except myself; the harm that I sustain, I carry about with me, and never am a real sufferer but by my own fault." When a young man fully believes this many things will be easier for them.

To Double its Membership.

A young men's society has formed a "get one" club. Each member of this club agrees to secure at least one new member for the association before May 1. The names are posted in a prominent place, each having a blank space for the name of the new member secured. This in itself will be an incentive to the workers, as no man will like to have that space remain vacant very long. The club has fifty members thus far, and bids fair to prove a successful venture. This plan is said to be good for smaller associations.

Desultory Reading.

Dr. Johnson said: "Snatches of reading will never make a Bently or a Clarke. They are, however, in a certain degree advantageous. I would put a child into a library, where no unfit books are, and let him read his choice. H child should not be discouraged from reading anything that he takes a liking to, from a notion that it is above its reach. If this be the case the child will soon find it out, and desist; if not, he, of course, gains the instruction which is so much the more likely to come, from the inclination with which he takes up the study."

The Young Man's Room.

That clever writer, Ian MacLaren, says: "When a young man's room has nothing in the shape of reading material beyond a fourth-rate novel and an evening paper, it is not a promising interior. It does not follow that its inhabitant plays the fool, but there is no visible barrier against low vices. His mind is empty and ready for any visitor—the first to come may be sin. What leads many a man wrong is simply the deadly dullness of life and his craving for variety. Let me describe another interior life. Here is a hanging cook-case of two shelves with forty volumes, the beginning of a library. The Bible (a mother's gift) is supported by a good Shakespeare, a pocket edition also of some favorite plays for a walking tour; do you notice dear old Don Quixote, who jests at the dying chivalry with a tear in eye, has a place, and he is supported on right and left by Lowell and Kingsley. A felicitous idea, for more than any other poet has the American taught us to do our duty by the oppressed, and the English parson was most truly a knight of God. Two or three Scotts one now expects, and "Henry Esmond," of course. Charles Lamb—but that is enough. One is satisfied, and is introduced to this man before he enters the room. It were an unpardonable gaucherie to warn this man against the danger of idleness and folly. His armful of books have naturalized him in another world."

Have A Purpose in Life and Keep at it.

The most dangerous thing in life is drifting. Like the ship the man who drifts is hopeless and helpless. He lacks ambition. He has no aim. He takes up with the first work that offers, regardless of his fitness for it, and then shifts from employment, to employment or stagnates in some obscure corner. So the first essential thing to do is fill our sails with a masterful purpose.

There have been and are great geniuses in the world who seem to go to the front not so much by effort as by native momentum which overcomes through its own innate force.

But it is not with the genius or with men of great mental endowments that we have to do. In the voyage which the most of us are sailing, commanding ability is not the safest or surest element of success. Where many able men fall there are many more of ordinary natural ability who succeed by virtue of an enduring passion, which triumphs over obstacles, is not easily discouraged, does not lose sight of the end for which it is working and knows no such word as "fail." Success with most of us must be attained, if at all, by force or arms. Those who are older can all recall successful men who, when boys, were considered of less than ordinary ability and who have succeeded by sheer force of will. History is full of the names of men who have conquered over the most discouraging circumstances. Think of Alexander H. Stevens, who was a dwarf in body but did a giant's work. Think of Chief Justice Chase, who in his boyhood gave little promise of his future great career. He was, we are told, near sighted, had an impediment in his speech and was stoop shouldered, shambling and slouchy in his appearance and gait. Think of Milton, who wrote inspired poetry when he was blind; and of Beethoven, who composed music of unearthly beauty and grandeur when he was deaf. As one has said, "it stirs our blood to think of this strength of spirit which does not know when it is beaten, but which, like a steel spring, will rise again the instant pressure is relaxed."

Work.

That which is work for one man is play for another. No street laborer has ever worked as hard for a day's wages as a college student will to win a football game or a boat race in which he is an almost unobserved factor.

And in the world of business what differences are seen! One man goes to his daily labor like a slave to his task. He may work faithfully but without zest or ambition. His only aim is to earn the wages due at the end of the week or rather to get the wages whether he earns them or not.

His companion is a cheerful workman who thinks nothing about the wages because his mind is upon his work. He wants to do something. If, as a result of his labors, he gets paid, well and good, but the pay is not the uppermost thing in his mind. He finds such pleasure in work that it becomes play to him, and all days are days of gladness.

In a part of Hamlet's eccentric remarks at the time he was feigning insanity is a bit of philosophy that is worth considering. He has remarked that Denmark is one of the worst of prisons. Rosencrantz replies: "We think not so," whereupon Hamlet says, "Why, then, 'tis none to you, for there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so." The phrase if applied literally may easily be shown to be absurd, and yet there is in it the germ of a philosophical truth. If we brood upon the irksomeness of labor, work becomes almost intolerable; the thinking makes it so. If, on the other hand, our thoughts are turned to the results achieved, we work cheerfully; labor becomes a recreation—the thinking makes it so. Thinking cannot fill an empty stomach. We may safely make that concession to the Gradgrinds, who, being devoid of imagination, insist upon facts; but without making any drafts upon imagination we may insist on giving due consideration to the fact established by observation that the aspect of work to the individual depends less upon the character of the work itself than upon the mental attitude of the laborer toward it. In this limited sense at least Hamlet is right. Whether our daily labor shall be a wearisome task or a recreation depends almost altogether upon the way in which we regard it. We can very easily work ourselves up into a state of mind in which every fresh task appears to be an imposition, or into one wherein we become eager to have new and higher duties presented to us. Without carrying the illustration beyond the bounds of sober reason we may safely say that each worker has within his own control the elements of happiness or misery. It would be quite safe for anyone to accept Hamlet's dictum, and believing that "there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so," determine that work being inevitable he should make the best of it, doing his daily task cheerfully and accepting its results as the sum of good.

Such a worker would certainly find favor in the eyes of his employer and thus receive such reward as would make his thinking true. It is in that sense that Hamlet's words are philosophical. The action and reaction between thought and performance are such that if we think a thing to be good we make it good; if we think it bad we make it bad. Within reasonable limits this is a true philosophy, and it is one that we can apply in our daily lives with excellent effect.

SISTER AND SOLDIER.

Cardinal Gibbons Tells an Interesting Story of the Late War.

Preaching in St. Paul's Church, Washington, the other day, His Eminence Cardinal Gibbons said:

"Many a narrative and thrilling story of the sublime charity of our devoted Sisters has been cited. Let me record one here that has recently been published. Shortly before the Spanish-American war two Sisters of Charity were walking in a street of Boston, and while passing a corner of the street one was grossly insulted by a young person, who assailed her with vile langauge. She simply and silently pursued her journey. Some time afterward, when the war broke out, the youth enlisted in the army. He was wounded and taken to a hospital. The Sisters nursed and attended him with motherly care. He was deeply impressed with their attention and one day said to the Sister in charge: "I love the religion which inspires such sentiments as you exhibit and will embrace that religion. But I have committed a sin which weighs upon my conscience. I once insulted one of your companions, and would peacefully die if I knew she forgave me."

"'Let your mind be at rest,' replied the Sister. 'It was I whom you insulted. I recognized you when you entered the hospital. I heartily forgive you.'

"The man died in the faith which could inspire such divine forgiveness and charity. Dearly beloved, let us, like that sweet Sister of Charity, forgive those who have injured us, no matter how great or how small the offense, and Christ will receive us in the hour of death. If we love, we can fergive, and love is His greatest commandment.