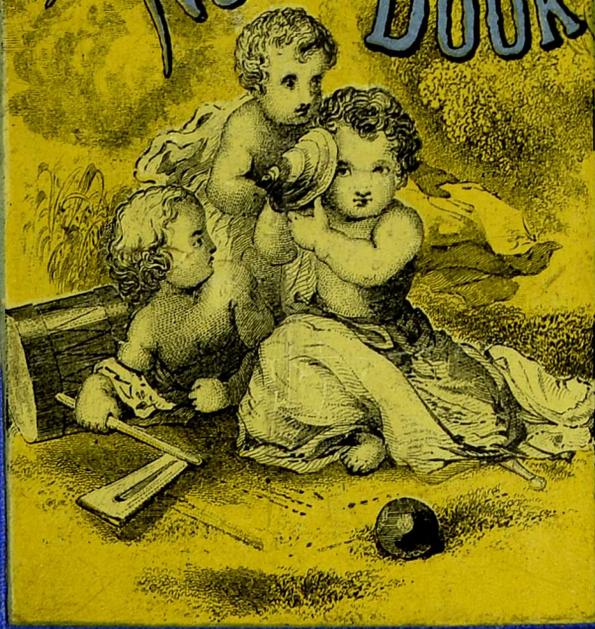


ZAIDA'S
NURSERY
NOTE BOOK



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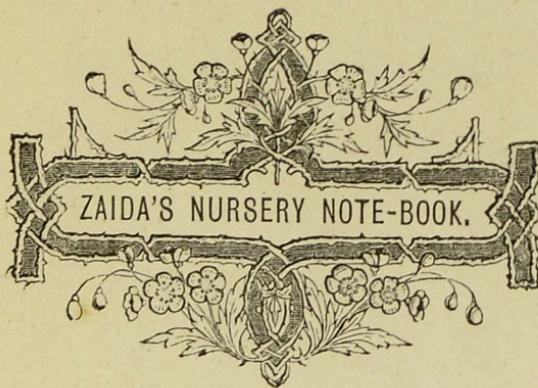
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Z A I D A ' S
NURSERY NOTE-BOOK.

For the Use of Mothers.

By

A. L. O. E.,

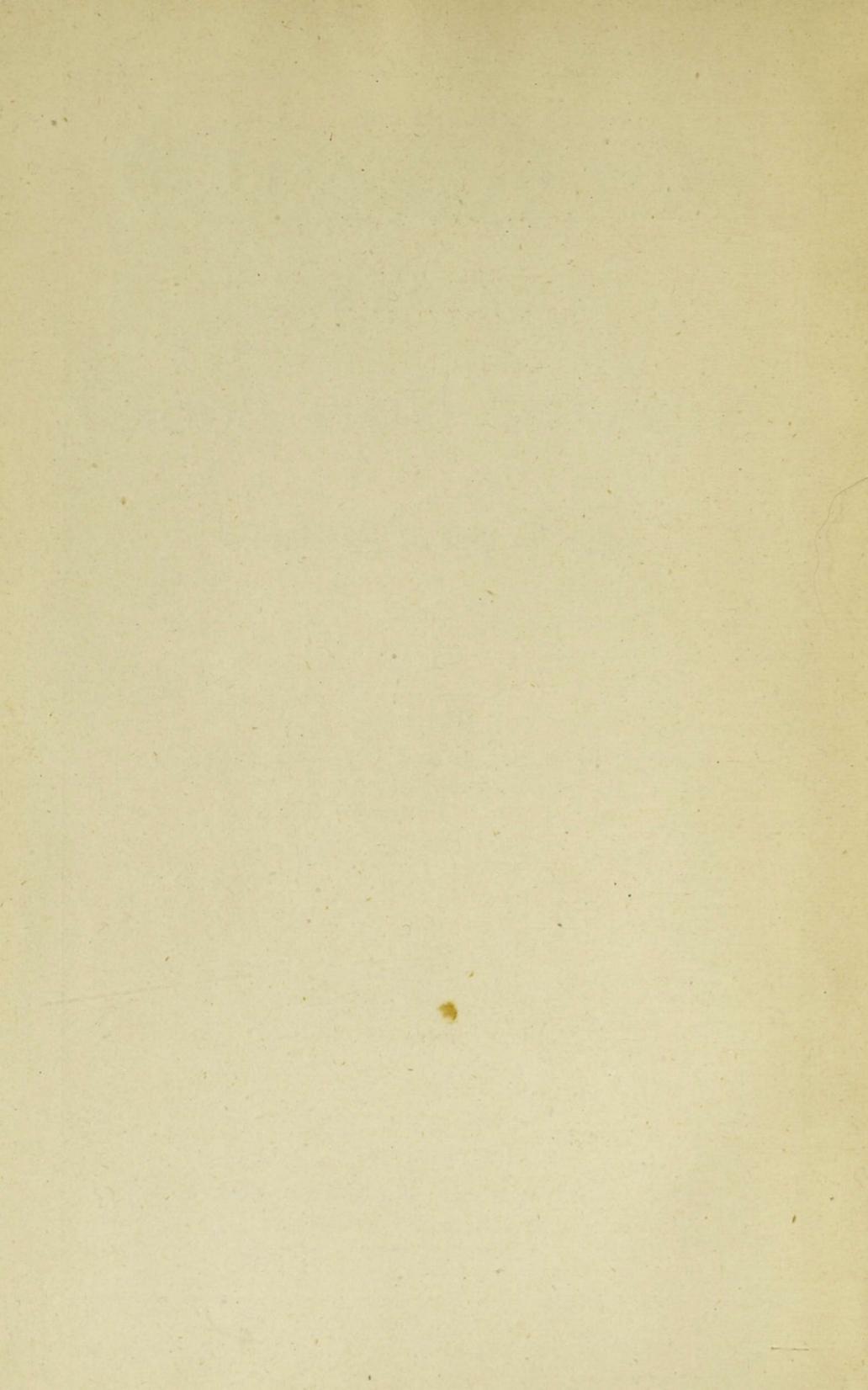
Author of "Shepherd of Bethlehem," "Rescued from Egypt,"
"The Young Pilgrim," &c. &c.

[TUCKER (Charlotte M)]



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1867.





PREFACE



THIS little work has been written for her Christian sisters by one who, though not herself a parent, has known practically some of the duties and responsibilities connected with the name of a mother. The note-book contains no stirring events; thousands of British parents could pen such a simple record of the trifling incidents of daily occurrence in the little nursery world. To any but those connected with children, such incidents may appear too insignificant to be worthy of any notice. But if "trifles form the sum of human things," this is especially the case as regards the nursery. A seed is a small, worthless object to the eye, but not to the mind when regarded

as enfolding the future plant with its leaves, blossoms, and fruit. Pride, selfishness, self-will,—the deadly foes of man,—first assail him in the nursery; and like the fabled snakes in the olden tale, may be overcome even by a child. I shall be thankful if any hints contained in my little work be made useful to Christian mothers; those to whom the Saviour has especially committed the sacred office of feeding His lambs.

A. L. O. E.



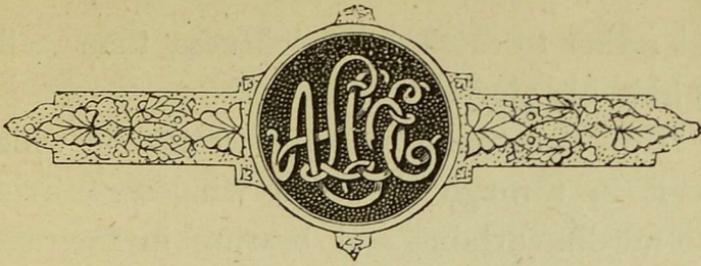


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ZAIDA'S NURSERY NOTE-BOOK.

May 1, Monday.



MONTH'S imprisonment to the sofa! It seems a hard sentence, a grave consequence of a little slip of the foot as I ran down-stairs with my laughing babe in my arms. Thank God—he was not hurt—I am the sufferer alone. When I think what such a fall might have cost him, I tremble, and dare not murmur at my own pain. How grateful should I be that I have hitherto suffered so little from illness. My married life has been one of almost unbroken happiness, such troubles as have arisen being only like those light clouds in yon sky, which now and then veil the sun for a few minutes,

but rather to catch his brightness, than really to hide his glory.

How sweet and soft the west wind which steals in through the open window, stirring the muslin-curtains, and bearing in fragrance from the blossoming lilacs, and the sound of the merry voices of my children who are playing in the garden! I long to join them, and be myself as a child. What endless sources of pleasures are opened in the heart of a mother; the character of each one of her children is as a most deeply interesting book; the more she studies it, the more she finds to delight and instruct her. Yes, *instruct*, I will not erase the word. I have often observed how in teaching we ourselves are taught, and how many precious spiritual lessons may be gleaned in a nursery. Is not this great world God's nursery? and is He not training in it His children—His weak, feeble, ignorant children—for the future glories of their home? I have sometimes resolved to mark down petty incidents as they occur, with the thoughts to which they give rise; the nursery parables, if I may so call them, by which God speaks to *my* heart, while I speak to those of my children: but I

have never yet found time to carry out this intention. I have been the playmate of my little ones as well as their teacher, and so many happy hours have been spent in the romp on the lawn, or ramble in the field, that what with household duties, district visiting, reading with my husband, and writing to absent relations, I have had no time to keep such a journal. Why should I not begin it to-day, when William is away in France, and I a prisoner in this quiet little room? Such a journal may serve to beguile the weary time, and oh! how the perusal of it in future years will recall a thousand little incidents connected with my family, which, however trifling others may deem them, will be always of interest to me. I shall seem to live the old times over, when I open the leaves of my Journal.

To-day Ashley, my firstborn, is seven years old; it is therefore a propitious day on which to begin writing in my note-book. I shall have much to say of him, my thoughtful spiritual boy! He does not learn so readily as Phemie, who is eighteen months younger; but it seems to me that this is because he cannot fix the wandering thoughts which are

ever roving in search of the beautiful and the wonderful, exercising themselves on things that seem above the comprehension of a child. William has told me that I must restrain my boy's imagination, and that there is danger that Ashley may grow too nervous, sensitive, and fanciful. I must be on my guard, for William is always right.

What a merry burst of laughter from the garden! That is the voice of my little Zaida, my three years old, with the arch blue eyes, and the shock of curly red hair. They say that Zaida is plain, they laugh at her plump round cheeks, and wild fiery locks, but to my eye there is not a more winsome face in the world! And yet Zaida gives me more trouble than all my other three children together. Her temper—

I am interrupted by Phemie coming in with her neat little box, always kept in perfect order, to do her hour's work "with Mamma." How lovely my child looks as she sits there by the window, with one ray just touching with gold her smooth flaxen hair; her eyes sedately bent on her work, while her tiny fingers so steadily follow the hem! While I

look at her I think of the sweet words of Wilberforce which I have been reading to-day. They are so true and so beautiful, that I must copy them into my note-book.

“How little does that child know how much it is loved! It is the same with us and our heavenly Father, we little believe how we are loved by Him. I delight in little children; I could spend hours in watching them. How much there is in them that the Saviour loved, when he took a little child and set him in the midst! Their simplicity, their confidence in you, the fund of happiness with which their beneficent Creator has endued them, that when intelligence is less developed, so affords less enjoyment, the natural spirits are an inexhaustible fund of infantine pleasure.”

May 2, Tuesday.

My heart is filled with tenderness as I write down the first little incident in my note-book. The last thing which I always do before retiring to rest, is to visit my sleeping children. Lame as I now am, this is a pleasure which I could not forego, though, at my Ashley's earnest request, I had not gone upstairs with him at half-past seven, as is my

custom, to hear him say his prayers, to sit beside his cot, and have a quiet talk with him before he falls asleep. At ten o'clock I found my sweet boy still awake. He pressed my hand to his lips, murmured "Dear Mamma," and then, as if satisfied with having had my kiss and my blessing, dropped off into quiet slumber. I passed into the nursery, which is the room next to my own. Phemie lay asleep like a folded lily; of Baby I could see little but one little fat rosy hand, as he lay half buried under the clothes. But when I turned to Zaida's cot, to my surprise I saw the little one almost in a sitting-up posture propped up by pillows, but in deep, sweet repose.

"How could you let the child go to sleep in such an uncomfortable position?" I asked of the nurse, with a little displeasure in my tone.

"Miss Zaida would have it so, ma'am," replied Mary; "she was determined to keep awake till she could see her mamma, but she could not, poor little dear! It was Master Ashley that frightened her."

"Frightened her? what do you mean?" I inquired.

“ Miss Zaida was very merry and riotous when they all came up to bed. Master Ashley was not pleased and said, ‘ How can you laugh so when Mamma has had such a fall, and her ankle is in such pain? Don't you know that people are sometimes killed by a fall down-stairs?’ You should have seen the change, ma'am, that came over the child in a minute. She burst out crying and sobbing, I could not quiet her for ever so long.”

“ Why did you not send for me?” I exclaimed.

“ Oh, ma'am, you must be saved the stairs now, if your ankle is ever to get well. Miss Zaida knew that you would come up at ten, and she determined not to go to sleep till she had seen for herself that her mamma was not so ill, that she was not likely to die. So she heaped up the pillows with her own hands, and would scarcely lay down her head; but the poor little dear, as one might expect, could not keep her eyes open.”

Softly and tenderly I removed the upper pillows, and the dear little curly head was laid down in an easy position; neither the moving nor the fond kiss which followed,

awoke my Zaida. I then went to my own apartment, leaving ajar the door which divided it from the nursery. Mary went to bed, and all in the room was soon hushed in the deepest repose and silence.

I did not soon retire to rest. I was in a good deal of pain, and knew that I should not sleep. I wrote to my husband, and to my mother, then took up a book and read for about an hour. Then a little sound of movement in the nursery made me turn my head. I could see Zaida's cot without changing my position, for I was sitting near the open door, but my child could not see me. I observed her partly rise up, and kneel in her cot, putting her little hands together, and then, with what feelings I cannot describe, heard her utter the following artless prayer:—"Pray God make dear Mamma better, for she has such a sore foot. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen." After saying this, Zaida laid down her curly head on her pillow, but almost immediately rising again, repeated her little prayer. Then, having offered her petition, the child fell again into peaceful sleep.

Oh, if our blessed Lord welcomed the

praises of children, how sweet before His Presence will rise the infant's prayer! No formal utterance of words half understood, learned as a task, and repeated by rote. That little one's prayer for her mother will rise above the stars, will be heard through the chorus of angels; and if the petitions of God's people be offered as incense before the eternal Throne, will not hers be as the fragrance of a little violet upwards borne from the earth? My Zaida! my treasure! it is such a joy to my soul to think that you already know where to look for help. You will need it, my child! I often fear that you have a harder struggle before you than others, for of all my little flock you have the strongest passions, the most unbroken will! But if you pray, pray in faith as you did last night, my darling, God will give you his grace, and make you more than conqueror at last!

Zaida ran up to me this morning before I had risen. "Are you better, Mamma?" she asked. "I think you will soon be better, for I've prayed many times."

Later.

How inconsistent is human nature! Zaida

gave me much trouble at lessons to-day. I have often regretted that I began teaching her when she was but three, for what she has gained in ten or eleven months is not worth the trial to her temper and my patience that I too often find the little lessons to be. Ashley and Phemie were such very good pupils, and found the hour of study so pleasant, that I forgot that what suits one child will often not do for another.

What judgment is required by a parent! Warned by experience, I shall not attempt to teach my little Willie till I have reason to think that he is ready to be taught.

Ashley is all affection and tenderness. He offered me the support of his weak little arm to help me downstairs in the morning. He ran to beat up the cushions on the sofa, and brought me my Bible, all in his quiet, loving way. Phemie was so busy preparing lessons for me, that she forgot to make any inquiries after my hurt. I ought to be glad that she is so steady and industrious, and yet,—well, I cannot expect all my children to be just alike, perhaps dear Phemie feels more than she shows. I only lay up this lesson in my own

heart,—our heavenly Father will not accept activity in His service as a substitute for love.

May 3, Wednesday.

I had a curious little conversation this morning with my boy. I will note it down as closely as I can in the words that were uttered.

Ashley. Mamma, I saw such a beauty butterfly to-day, such a splendid butterfly; it was like a flower flying about. I thought of the pretty verse you taught me,—

“Thou hast burst from thy prison,
Bright child of the air;
Like a spirit new-risen
From its mansion of care.”

The child's face beamed as he repeated the lines.

I. Do you remember what I told you, my boy, about the butterfly as being a type? (I had explained this to him before. *Ashley* readily understands allegory, it suits the imaginative turn of his mind.)

Ashley (gravely). Yes, Mamma. The crawling caterpillar that can't get up from the earth is like what we are now, and the bright butterfly that flutters about,—he moved

his fingers to express the quivering of wings,—is like what we shall be in heaven. Mamma, I want to ask you one thing. Some caterpillars are very pretty, some are very ugly to look at. Does the most beautiful butterfly come from the most beautiful caterpillar?

I. By no means, Ashley; from a very unsightly grub a lovely winged creature may spring, while a prettily tinted caterpillar may turn to a sober coloured moth.

Ashley (looking at me in his peculiarly earnest way). Then, Mamma, I daresay it will be so with people. The most beautiful lady mayn't be the loveliest angel. Perhaps that very ugly old woman we see in church, with the dreadful bad eyes, and her face all covered with wrinkles—I don't like to look at her, Mamma—perhaps she'll flash out a glorious angel, with wings all shining with colours, and fly about, and up, up like an eagle!

I. I am inclined to think that the beauty of the saints hereafter will be in proportion to the beauty of their characters here. That should make us feel, my Ashley, that the only loveliness really to be prized is that *beauty of holiness* of which we read in the Psalms.

Ashley. Phemie ought to think about that, then she wouldn't look so much in the glass, and care so much about her hair.

I. We must not be too sharp in finding out the faults of others, my boy, but keep a good look out for our own.

Ashley. What are my faults, Mamma?

The artless question took me by surprise. I could not answer it at the moment, for it seems to me that Ashley is more free from faults than any other child of his age that I know. Perhaps this is because parental fondness blinds me. I soon, however, made reply. "I would rather that you should find them out for yourself. Do you search well for the little weeds in the garden of your heart."

Ashley. But when I've found them, you'll help me to pull them up,—won't you, Mamma?

I. We will both ask God to help us, my child.

May 4, Thursday.

I was much pleased to-day with Zaida's answer to a visitor who was questioning her about her dear father's return. The lady asked Zaida what she had begged her papa to bring her from all the places which he is visit-

ing. My child was silent at so unexpected a question, but when the lady continued, "what will he bring you from Paris?" answered, "a kiss."—"And what will he bring you from Dover?" "His kindest love," said Zaida.

I was both amused and gratified by the naive replies,—they have since given me much food for thought. I cannot but feel that parents often make a mistake in coming back after a short absence laden with gifts for their children. I would rather take any other time for giving presents to mine. I have known children so eager to see what a parent had brought, that they scarcely could spare time to return the kiss, or offer the welcome. Surely this is tainting love with selfishness, or rather it is making covetousness take the place of affection. It is not the gift, but the presence of the giver, that should be most welcomed and prized.

How my own words condemn me! Is it thus with my own soul in regard to a heavenly Parent? Can I adopt as my own the sentiment expressed in these beautiful lines?

"Give what Thou canst—without Thee we are poor,
And with Thee rich—take what Thou wilt away."

How often do His precious gifts make us forget the divine Giver! Let me, as a happy wife and mother, be especially on my guard against this insidious sin!

May 5, Friday.

I think that I have discovered one of my Ashley's "little weeds," and I must take care that I do not water it by injudicious praise. My boy is a little vain. He is too fond of talking. I have let him see too clearly how much his remarks amuse me. Yesterday the friend whose visit I mentioned, took my three elder children a drive in her carriage; this is to them a pleasant variety, as we keep no conveyance of our own. Ashley came and chatted with me after his return. "The two old ladies sat fronting the horses, and we three little ones sat with our backs to the horses, so they, the ladies I mean, were always looking forward, and we were always looking backward," said my boy. "Now, Mamma, I think we ought to have sat quite different. Old people ought to look backward, and young people ought to look forward; don't you think so, Mamma?"

I thought the remark a shrewd one for a

child only seven years of age, and Ashley read amusement on my face. He evidently himself considered the observation clever, for I heard him repeating it to his nurse, who, not understanding the allusion to memory and hope, replied in a matter-of-fact tone, "It would be quite improper, Master Ashley, for the children to have the best seat." Ashley gave a smile of superiority, and afterwards observed to me, "Mary can't understand anything but in such a plain, common way. But then she's only a nurse; one can't expect her to be clever."

Yes, there is certainly a little vanity in my boy. This is a fault which it is difficult to bring the force of conscience to bear upon at all, for it seems rather in the mind than in the heart, and leaves no palpable stain of sin. One cannot reprove a child for loving a parent's praise, or seeking to provoke a parent's smile. And yet vanity, if suffered to spread, is like a mildew, dimming the lustre of the brightest character, and tainting the very spring of our actions. The desire of approbation, in itself innocent, may draw us down into the condemnation of those who *loved the praise of men more than the praise of God*. I will

watch Ashley's character more closely, and let him be more with me alone, when the little ones have gone to bed.

I know that Phemie is vain. I suspect that this is the result of the injudicious notice which she receives from strangers. Every one who sees her admires her beauty, and some are so inconsiderate as to express admiration aloud, unconscious of the harm which they do to the poor little listener. Phemie is a great favourite with my friends; her gentle pretty manners and attractive looks make her always welcome. It is not thus with my poor red-haired Zaida. I often wonder at the little notice which she attracts; but she is shy, and no stranger sees her to advantage. If my visitors could watch her playing with baby, rosy with health, and dimpling with smiles, all animation, all fun—ah! well, perhaps after all they would not behold my little darling with the admiring eyes of her mother!

Later.

My baby, my winsome Willie, has performed a great feat to-day,—for the first time he has run quite alone! This is an event in the family; Zaida tells every one whom she meets

that baby has run five steps from the chair to mamma on the sofa. With what fond delight a mother watches those first feeble tottering steps, as the little one, holding out his tiny hands to balance himself, looking eager, but frightened, quits the support of the chair, runs towards her, and is clasped to her heart of hearts, and half smothered with welcoming kisses!

Oh, what can equal a mother's love for her babe, its very helplessness and weakness make it so inexpressibly dear! What can equal—did I say? How sweetly to my memory comes that verse of Scripture, the very breathing of the Spirit of Him who Himself is Love! *Can a woman forget her sucking child? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.* I never fully understood the beauty of that verse until I myself was a mother!

Those weak, tottering steps of a babe, what a type they are of a Christian's first attempts to walk in the narrow path, when he is yet but a babe in Christ! If he stumble—the world mocks; but it is not so with the parent. I remember once seeing a stunted old man, who had never through his life possessed the

free use of his limbs, laughing at an infant who stumbled in attempting to run a few paces to her father. That seemed to me a type of a Pharisee, coldly, mockingly regarding the failings of one who, however imperfect his efforts might be, was at least striving to reach a worthy mark, and who was likely in time to acquire a strength and stature to which the sneering spectator never would attain.

Are not many of us but as babes in religion? I dare not count myself more. I would that I were certain that I possessed the three distinguishing marks of a *babe in Christ*,—living—loving—growing. Of growth in grace, growth in knowledge, we think far, far too little. We are so willing to rest satisfied with our poor measure of faith and obedience, and to forget that the Christian must go *from strength to strength*, from grace to grace, till he reach *unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*. The weakness, the smallness which I now without concern behold in my babe, would alarm me in one who was twice his age, would terrify me in a child who had reached the years of Ashley. God preserve our souls from being

thus stunted and dwarfed! where there is spiritual health, there must be spiritual growth.

May 6, Saturday.

Such joyful news to-day's post has brought! William will return home on Monday. I could not refrain from starting up from my sofa to call to my children, whom I heard on the stairs, to come in and "hear Papa's letter." In they thronged, full of eager expectation; even the blue-eyed babe in Mary's arms looked as if he knew that something joyful was at hand. When I told the children that they would see their father again in two days, how Zaida screamed with delight, "Papa's coming!" and jumped, and skipped, and clapped her hands, till baby caught the infection of her joy, clapped his soft dimpled fingers and called out, "Papa," as if he could understand her. Phemie was full of the preparations which she would make, saying that she must finish hemming papa's handkerchiefs, and put flowers in the vase in his study, and fasten up a painted scroll with "welcome" over the door. Ashley seemed the least excited by the news, and when little Zaida eagerly asked him, "Ashy,

ain't you glad Papa's comin'?" his "yes, of course," was uttered in a tone much colder than that of his sister. This is rather a damp on my pleasure. I have been trying to think why Ashley should be less delighted than the rest of the family at the thought of his father's coming back.

After some reflection I fancy that I have discovered two possible causes for this. Ashley thinks that he will no longer have his quiet evenings with me, when I give him my exclusive attention. And then, though William is all goodness and kindness, he is not quite so gentle in his manner towards Ashley as towards the two little girls. I believe that he considers Ashley scarcely manly enough for a boy, and on principle, and doubtless in wisdom, sometimes speaks to him rather sternly. William remembers, what I am too apt to forget, that one who is to be exposed to the roughnesses and temptations of school-life, and then life in the world, must have in him steel as well as gold; and not be tenderly touched, and carefully shut up like porcelain in a cabinet. I fear that it would be an evil thing for Ashley had he no training but mine. But

in the meantime I grieve to see that there is as much of fear as of love in his feelings towards his father. I believe that my son would scarcely regret it were something to delay William's return. There must certainly be something wrong here. How shall I meet the evil? I will make my beloved husband my first theme during my evening conversation with Ashley; I will tell of his generous deeds, his noble spirit; I will hold him up as an example. I will try to make Ashley as proud of his father as I am of my husband. I wish our firstborn to yearn and long, like myself, for his parent's return.

How the joyful expectation before me raises my thoughts to meditation on that most great and glorious subject—the earnest looking forward of the Church for the return of her absent Lord! To *make ready*, and *be ready* for that coming, this should be the Christian's first object in life. We should ask our hearts, "What would my feelings be did I know that the Master this night would be here!" Alas! with many, even of the faithful, would there not be much of fear mingled with their joy? Lord, fill my soul with earnest desire for Thy

blessed advent, that my last thought before sinking each night into rest may be, "Even so come, Lord Jesus!"

Nine o'clock.

I talked so long this evening to my boy, telling him various anecdotes of his father, (of that theme I never am weary,) that I quite over-passed the usual hour for Ashley's going to bed. He seemed more than usually unwilling to leave me. Twice, after bidding me goodnight, he lingered still by my side, then, when he went to the door and opened it, Ashley paused with his grasp on the handle, instead of quitting the room.

"Why do you not go upstairs, Ashley?" said I.

He looked irresolute and uneasy, glanced at me, then at the staircase, then murmured in a low tone something about its being "so dark."

"There is a light at the top, you have only to hold the bannister, and you cannot miss your way," I observed. As Ashley did not move, a suspicion dawned on my mind that he was afraid of the gloom.

"Come here, my child," I said, and Ashley

was in a moment beside me. "Are you afraid to go up alone in the dark?"

I saw his cheek flush with shame, and his hand intuitively squeezed the cushion of my sofa as he answered, "I cannot help it, Mamma."

"What are you afraid of, my boy?" I own that I was glad that William was not present at that moment.

"Robbers," answered the nervous child in a scarcely audible tone.

"And do you think it likely that robbers could get in, when you know how careful Eliza is in shutting up the house at night, and that we have a dog in the yard? And do you think it likely that I would send you up all alone if I believed that there was any sort of danger?" here was an appeal to his reason.

Poor little Ashley shook his head. "I know that it's foolish to be so afraid."

"Then," said I gaily, "if you know that it's foolish, would it not be wise to fight against such unreasonable fear?"

Ashley did not reply, and I felt that I must deal tenderly and cautiously with the sensitive child, for when I laid my hand upon his, I found it tremulous and cold.

“Would you wish me to go up with you, Ashley?”

“Oh, no, it would pain your poor foot.”

“Mary cannot leave the little ones; shall we ring the bell, and call up Eliza from the kitchen, to guard papa's eldest son on his journey from the parlour up to the bedroom?”

“No, Mamma, I should be so ashamed.”

“Then suppose that you screw up your courage, and venture up by yourself. It will be a little effort, my boy, I know; but children must make little efforts to prepare them to make great ones when they are men. Your courage will often be tried; you could not bear that your brave father should ever blush for his son?”

“Mamma, I'll go,” sighed Ashley.

“And remember, mine own,” I continued, drawing him closer to the sofa, “God's servant shall always be able to say, *I fear no evil*, because he can add, *for Thou art with me*. Would you be afraid to go up those dark stairs if your father were at your side?”

“Not a bit; my father could conquer any robbers,” said Ashley.

“And have you no comfort in the thought

of the presence of a heavenly Father, who is all power and love, to whom the darkness is as the light, and who says, *I will never leave thee nor forsake?*"

My boy raised his dark hazel eyes to mine. I never saw a more beautiful expression in them than that which lighted them up at that moment; he never looked more like his father. Ashley said nothing, however, save "good-night, dear Mamma," but gave me one kiss so fervent that it seemed to leave its impress behind, and hurried out of the room. I heard his little feet rapidly ascending the stair, and felt a relief somewhat like his own, when the door of his room closed behind him.

I grieve to think of the pain which this nervous, imaginative temperament will cause my darling boy. I have been allowing him to read too exciting stories of late; to him fictions become as realities, and scenes of terror he acts over again in his mind. I fervently pray for wisdom to deal with him wisely as well as kindly. How unfit is a nature like his to battle with a hard, rough world?

May 7, Sunday.

I cannot go to church to-day, perhaps not

for several Sundays. The sweet bells are ringing their summons in vain for me. Mary will take my two eldest children to the afternoon service, while I take charge of my baby and Zaida. The latter has often begged to be allowed to go to church, but I must not let her do so this year; she is too young and restless.

I always try to make Sunday a happy day to my children, and therefore devote a larger portion of my time to them than upon any week day. They have also their peculiar Sunday amusements. Zaida's large ark, and dissected picture of the story of Joseph, are carefully put by during the week, to be produced only on Sundays. She delights in these; but a still greater pleasure to my child is to be allowed to join her brother and sister when I show them Scripture prints, or read to them stories from the Bible. We have hymn-singing, and text repeating, and are very happy together. One occupation of which my children are particularly fond is that of each of the little circle selecting in turn some quality of character, and all finding examples from Bible history of persons displaying that

quality. This often affords openings for conversation both instructive and interesting. I am struck by the quickness with which Zaida understands and enters into this Sunday amusement. I purposely selected to-day the quality of courage to be illustrated by scriptural examples. Samson and Daniel were instantly cited by my elder children, and Zaida exclaimed, clenching her little hand, "And David, was not he bold, for he went and fought the big giant!"

"Was David never afraid?" I inquired.

"He was afraid, when he was so sure that Saul would kill him at last, and went where he shouldn't have gone," said Phemie, who has a very retentive memory.

"And I think," observed Ashley slowly, that somewhere in the Psalms King David says—*fearfulness and trembling are come upon me.*"

"Then David was sometimes afraid," I observed. "Why should he have been so much bolder at one time than another?" I find that I best arrest the attention of my little ones, by frequently asking them questions.

The children looked puzzled at first, then Ashley answered, "Perhaps David thought more of the danger at one time, and at another time more of God."

"Yes, David's *faith* was stronger at one time than another, and with his faith grew his courage. How firm was that faith when he could cry, *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?*"

"That is a beautiful verse, I should like to learn it," said Ashley.

I saw that the interest of my little girls was beginning to flag, so said—turning suddenly towards them, "Do we hear of any one else in the Bible who was sometimes very brave, and sometimes very fearful?"

Phemie replied, "St. Peter."

"Is fear a sinful thing, mamma?" asked Ashley.

"Yes, very, very bad," cried Zaida, without waiting for my reply; "don't you know it made Peter say what was so very untrue."

Ashley's eyes were still asking for my answer.

“I do not think that it is sinful to *feel* fear, but I think that it is sinful to *give way* to fear, because it shows want of faith; it prevents us from glorifying God, it often leads us to do what is wrong.”

“Do you suppose that Daniel felt afraid when he was going to be put into the den of lions?” asked Phemie.

“I’m sure I should have been,” said my talkative little Zaida, drawing up her shoulders with a very expressive look; “most of all if the lions roared.”

“I daresay that Daniel *did* feel some fear,” I replied; “I do not think that it was in human nature not to feel it. But doubtless Daniel prayed to be delivered from the fear of death, and enabled to glorify God. And strength was given to him, according to the promise, *As thy day thy strength shall be.*”

This little conversation evidently interested my Ashley. I am certain that he will turn it over in his thoughtful, inquiring mind. I believe that it is better to try to draw him to combat his natural infirmity by prayer and faith, than by stirring up his natural pride, as I felt at first disposed to do. I do not think

that he is a boy to be laughed out of timidity, though he might be induced to hide his infirmity, and so suffer from it in silence.

Sunday Night.

Ashley whispered to me as he bade me good night, "Mamma, I'm going to pray hard to be made brave like Papa. I've been thinking of the verse, *The righteous is bold as a lion.*"

May 8, Monday.

The longed-for day has arrived, but my dear husband will not be here till the evening. I am sorry that the weather has changed, it has become very dull and damp. My foot is more painful than usual, and I especially regret my lameness to-day, when I should wish to have everything in such perfect order for William. Monday was my usual visiting day in the district, when I changed my books and tracts; I have no one whom I can employ to do this for me now. One of my poor friends, Mrs. Wills, is very ill, and I am sure that she misses my visits; it frets me that I cannot go and see her. My sister (from whom a letter came this morning), not having heard of my sprain, begs me to go as soon as possible to

visit the country workhouse, where she places a most interesting case in my hands, and I must not so much as cross the threshold! I feel sadly restless and impatient; there is so much for me to do, just when I am not able to do it! It is so trying to be kept thus from working a little for my Lord!

The children are just coming in for lessons.

Later.

Since lesson-time the two elder children have gone out. I have kept in Zaida, as she has a cold, and the day is ungenial and damp. My little girl is disappointed and impatient.

Zaida. Mamma, I want to go out.

I. I think that you are better indoors to-day.

Zaida (coming close up to the sofa). But, Mamma, I *must* go out; I must go and help Ashy and Phemie to get ever so many primroses and v'lets to make a big WELCOME for Papa.

I. I am glad that you like to work for your Father, my darling; but the weather is too damp for you to-day.

Zaida (running up to the window). It is not raining, it is not raining one bit! The

others are running about quite happy, why mayn't I go out ?

I. I have told you already; and if I had not told you, you might have been sure that Mamma never deprives you of any pleasure without a good reason for so doing.

Zaida is still looking out of the window, so that I cannot see her face; but I observe that she is moving her shoulders restlessly, and almost stamping her little foot.

I was interrupted just now in my writing, by the gathering storm coming to a crisis. Zaida suddenly burst out into loud crying, and flung herself down on the carpet in a passion.

I. Zaida, Zaida, is this wise, is this right ?

Zaida (between her sobs). I want to get flowers for Papa !

I (as soon as I could obtain a hearing). Do you not think that a quiet, cheerful, submissive temper would please your father more than if you could fill your little arms with all the finest flowers in the world ?

I feel self-convicted as I note down this little incident. How much has my own conduct resembled that of my impatient little girl. It is so much easier to *do* than to *wait*, to be

active in service than to keep "a quiet, *cheerful, submissive temper.*" I need my own rebuke to Zaida. Is it ever without a "good reason" that our all-wise Parent suffers our way to be hedged up with difficulties when we desire to do work for Him?

Zaida has soon recovered her temper this time, as I have set her to make paper matches for Papa's study, since she cannot go out for the flowers. She is sitting quite happily on a footstool near my sofa, humming to herself a sweet little song, and every now and then stopping to hold up for my admiration some match a little less clumsy than the rest. William will prize them all, I know, as the work of those dear little fingers.

Evening.

My dear husband has arrived safely, thank God!

May 9, Tuesday.

We had a pleasant scene this morning. I smile to think of what I wrote in my note-book on Thursday, on the subject of bringing home gifts. William's practice was doubtless much preferred by the children to my theory, when he opened his portmanteau to-day after

breakfast. I sat a much amused spectator of the delight of the little ones, as parcel after parcel was drawn forth, watching Ashley and Phemie's restrained eagerness, and Zaida's free outbursts of joy, as she skipped and danced about the room with her pretty French work-box in her hands, and then ran back to climb up her father's chair, and kiss and thank him again and again.

I have had a deeper kind of interest in watching the subsequent conduct of the children in regard to their presents; it has been characteristic of all. Ashley has been very willing that his sisters should see his pictures; he has asked me to explain their subjects, and translate their French names, which he has begun neatly writing on the margins. Zaida, a generous-hearted little creature, insists on every one using the fittings of her work-box, and cannot rest till I have promised to use her bodkin the very first time that I want one. She has even let dear baby tumble over all the contents of her box, and when I remonstrated, exclaimed, "Oh! let him—it makes him so happy!" I wish that I saw the same readiness to think of others in my

Phemie. Zaida came up to me some minutes ago, with her little face flushed with anger.

“Mamma, won't you speak to Phemie; won't you tell her to let me and Ashy hear the pretty tune which her little box plays?”

I. Phemie, my love, let your brother and sister enjoy your musical box.

Phemie. I don't want them to touch it, Mamma, I'm sure they'd put it all wrong.

I. Set it then going yourself, and all can enjoy the music.

Phemie (keeping her hands over the box). I thought that Papa gave it to me for my very own.

I. It will surely double your pleasure in it to share that pleasure with others. *Phemie does not look as if she thought so.* What do you mean to do with your box?

Phemie. I will shut it up tight in my drawer, and now and then it shall play me a tune.

I catch the sound of Zaida's voice muttering, “Isn't she a miser!” Phemie has heard the words too, and looks less inclined than ever to be a public benefactor. She does not,

however, lose her temper; she very rarely shows anger.

I. Will you not let *me* hear the music?

Phemie. Oh, yes, Mamma, you—when the rest are away.

Zaida. Phemie, you're dreadful selfish!

Phemie. I don't see why I mayn't do what I like with my own. Papa gave the box to me, the others had presents too. If every one hears the tunes, I shall have nothing to myself. I don't choose to make the box so common. I like to have what nobody else can have. I've a right to keep my own present.

I feel that the assertion cannot be disputed on the point of justice on which my little girl takes her stand. It is worse than useless to argue now, for she will grow more determined, while the other children grow angry. I have therefore changed the topic of conversation, bringing forward the engravings brought by my husband from Paris for myself. The children are looking over them now.

This trait in Phemie's character gives me uneasiness, and quite accounts for the fact that she is no favourite in the nursery, though

almost faultless in the schoolroom. She leaves the impression of her amiability on the mind of every visitor, and I have seldom—her father never—occasion to give her a word of reproof. Had Phemie been an only child, she might have appeared almost perfection. And yet, how it grieves my heart to write it, there seems a natural disposition in her to concentrate all in self! Selfishness is like the whirlpool which draws everything to the centre, and therefore *downwards!* Better the rude toss of the billows, the roughness lashed up by the gale. I feel anxious about my Phemie, my most fair and most gentle child.

But why should I be thus anxious, instead of casting all my cares upon Him who is able to help me? Selfishness is a part of our fallen nature, inherent in all—though far more conspicuous in one individual than another. Kindness, love, self-devotion, as surely belong to a nature renewed. My child is as yet like a little tree before the warm breath of heaven has passed over it, while yet winter lingers around. When she feels the warm rays of the Sun of Righteousness, love will rise

in her heart like the living sap in the tree, and its mysterious power be shown in acts of generosity and goodness, more lovely far to look on than the rich spring verdure which now is robing nature, more delightful to the soul than yonder exquisite apple-blossoms are to the eye. Oh, for more grace,—more grace upon us and on our children! I will not covet for them wealth, or honours, or beauty, my God! Thou knowest what is my fondest, first desire:—

“ More of Thy presence, Lord, impart,
More of Thine image let them bear;
Imprint Thyself within each heart,
And reign without a rival there.”

Amen, amen, from the depths of my soul!

May 10, Wednesday.

I have been reflecting much on the means of drawing out my Phemie's better and kinder feelings, and I have consulted with her dear father upon the subject. On his judgment I always can lean. He has suggested my allowing Phemie to visit one or two of my most respectable poor. “Few things,” he observes, “more tends to open the heart than intercourse with our afflicted fellow-creatures.” I have con-

sequently made arrangements for Mary to take Phemie this morning to poor dear Mrs. Wills, with a basket of little delicacies. Phemie will hear nothing in that humble home unfit for the ears of a child, nor is there danger of infection. The nurse will not be long absent, and I shall easily take care of Baby and the other children while she is away. William has already recommenced work, goes up by train to London each morning, and never returns till the evening.

Later.

Phemie has just started with Mary, much pleased at being allowed to represent her mamma. Baby is sleeping sweetly beside me; Zaida has brought her sampler, and Ashley his spelling-book. . . . I was interrupted in my writing by receiving a welcome note from dear Emily Martin, the friend and companion of my childhood. She tells me that she arrived yesterday at Vine Lodge, at the other side of our village, where she is likely to remain for a year. She is going to send her son, my godchild, to see me this morning, and to come herself rather later, as she has an engagement which detains her till

twelve. This is a delightful surprise, for I had not heard before of Emily's movements, and have not seen her for more than five years. Her Rowley will be a nice companion for my children, he is just one year older than Ashley. When I saw him last he was one of the very loveliest children that I had ever beheld. I will stop lessons now, and give my pupils the good news that a young friend is coming to see them.

Later.

Emily has just left me, dear Emily, kind, gentle, tender as ever. But her visit has left a weight on my heart. I will write down the circumstances connected with it, as I chance to have a half-hour to spare. Rowley is still a beautiful boy; so bright, so winsome—no painter could see him without wishing to take his likeness. I could not help thinking what a beautiful contrast he and my Ashley made,—the one with his soft dark eyes, the other with his sparkling blue ones. The children were delighted at meeting each other, and were at once quite at ease together. My Willie woke, and was rather fretful, and I had some arrangements to make with Eliza, so I

let the young people amuse themselves as they pleased in a corner of the room. The sound of their merry laughter sufficiently assured me that they were quite happy without any effort on my part to entertain them. It was some time before I gave any further attention to what was going on, and then, Eliza having left me, and my darling babe being quiet, I was able to listen to the conversation going on between the three children. Conversation did I call it? That is not the right word where almost all the speaking devolves upon one, and the stream of lively narrative flowed almost without intermission from Rowley, scarcely interrupted by exclamations of wonder, or merry laughs from his little audience. I listened with a feeling of surprise and amusement, certainly not unmingled with pain, to a story of improbable adventures and impossible feats, related by the boy with lively gestures and graphic effect, he himself being the hero of his story. Zaida was enchanted, innocently believing every syllable that she heard. Ashley was much entertained, but I could see that he had his doubts as to the perfect credibility of some of the strangest tales. In a pause, when

the little story-teller stopped at length to take breath, I called Rowley to my sofa, took his hand, and said kindly, but rather gravely, "All this may be very amusing, my friend; but you do not wish your companions really to suppose that you leapt over a sand-cart on your pony, caught a fox with your hands, or cut off his brush and wore it in the presence of fifty lords and dukes?"

"Oh, but I did—I did wear a brush! and I daresay there were lots of lords there," said the little fellow with a saucy laugh that betrayed no consciousness that there was anything to be ashamed of in what, to use the mildest term, must have been the grossest exaggeration.

At this moment Mrs. Martin was announced, and in the joy of welcoming my long-absent friend, everything else was forgotten for a time. Almost before the first greetings were over, Mary returned with Phemie. My little daughter came in rather eagerly to give me an account of her visit, but immediately changed her manner on seeing a guest, and behaved—as she always does—with modesty and politeness. As I wished a little quiet conversation

with my friend, and my sprain confined me to the sofa, I sent out all the children with Mary.

Emily was most affectionate, and delighted, like myself, to talk over old times, when we had been girls together. She very soon, however, turned the conversation to the subject of her only son, of whom she is passionately fond, and whom she seems to regard as perfection. How warmly I can sympathize with this tender maternal love! I felt a little embarrassed, however, on the present occasion, weighing in my mind whether it might not be my duty as a friend and as a godmother to say what might possibly give some offence.

Emily was evidently surprised that I did not more cordially echo the praises of Rowley, and expatiated on his extreme cleverness, and recounted anecdotes of his wit. "I assure you," she said rather proudly, "that my guests need nothing else to amuse them when Rowley is present; I have known him keep a whole company in a roar of laughter."

"Is it good for your child to be the object of so much attention from strangers?" I rather timidly suggested. "Is there no

danger of much praise fostering vanity, and of imagination sometimes carrying its possessor over the boundary of truth?"

"Well, I must own," said Emily smiling, "that Rowley's fancy often runs away with him; he tells such extraordinary stories, nothing can be more droll."

"Is this not a dangerous kind of amusement?"

"I often tell him to be more careful to keep to the truth, but he is so very amusing, he makes me laugh, and then I can say nothing more. I think sometimes that the dear child's imagination is so vivid, that he really believes his own stories."

I looked grave, and Emily saw in my face the effect of this confession that her boy was actually beginning *not to know truth from falsehood*.

"He is so very young," she said, apologetically; "when he is older of course he will be more careful what he says."

Alas! does my dear friend think that well-watered weeds have a tendency to grow smaller in process of time?

"He cannot understand yet," continued

Emily, "that there is any harm in talking a little amusing nonsense."

"My husband always tells me," I observed, "that we should teach our little ones *obedience* and *truth* as soon as they can speak."

"Men are so hard," said Emily, shrugging her shoulders. "I bring up my boy by *love*. I have never punished him in my life; indeed," she added with a smile, "I could not give him even a frown. I'm sure there's nothing like love. I always rule by affection."

Rule!—Oh, my poor Emily, there is no ruling in the question, or the ruler is the child, not the parent. This was painfully exemplified at the children's dinner, at which we all soon assembled. Rowley, being a delicate boy, has been forbidden vegetables and pastry by a medical adviser. My children looked on in surprise while Mrs. Martin coaxed and begged, and flattered and praised, to prevent her boy from taking what she knew would do him harm. She called him "good" to make him so, when it was obvious, even to Zaida, that the boy was self-willed, greedy, and disobedient. When Rowley, notwithstanding all remonstrance, had succeeding in having his own

way, his mother only apologised for him, assured us that he was "a good boy, his mother's comfort and darling," though the child showed towards his parent not the slightest obedience, or even respect. It was a painful exhibition, and I was glad when the visit was over. I fear that my poor friend by her weak indulgence is sowing a crop of future sorrow both for herself and her boy.

"Rowley is very funny, I hope he'll come very often," said little Zaida as soon as the Martins had left. "But I think his mamma spoils him a great bit; he wouldn't do nothing that she bid him. You wouldn't have let us go on like that, dear Mamma."

Evening.

When I told William, as we sat alone together, of the visit of poor little Rowley, and of his dangerous habit of invention, my husband expressed himself with warmth on the subject.

"Does your friend think that she can improve on the Almighty's way of training His children, when she talks of 'nothing but love,'" he exclaimed. "God, who *is Love*, thinks it needful to reprove, correct, chastise, not only to command obedience, but to enforce it.

Has she forgotten the warning conveyed in the history of Eli, the terrible end of his sons, because *their father restrained them not?*”

“I have noticed,” said I, “that children seldom love with strong affection those who let them have their own way. Mine never are more full of affection towards me than when I have been obliged to correct their faults.”

“Children have usually a strong sense of justice,” observed my husband, “and, like those who are older, they are most disposed to love where they can thoroughly respect.”

“Poor Rowley’s want of truthfulness seems to me even a more dangerous fault than his want of obedience,” said I; “it makes me almost fear to let him be much with our children.”

“I certainly shall not allow him to be much with them,” said William, with decision; “it would be less folly to let our little ones be exposed to the infection of smallpox, than to be constantly in the society of one in whom the disease of vanity breaks out into such an eruption of falsehood. If Mrs. Martin does not apply a speedy remedy, she may see the

day when she will wish that the child whom she makes her idol, had died before he could speak."

May 11, Thursday.

I had not time yesterday to write down Phemie's account of her visit to poor Mrs. Wills. It was the first time that the dear child had been brought into near contact with such great suffering and trial, and she was evidently much struck by the cheerfulness and patience with which such afflictions can be borne.

"I think that Mrs. Wills must be a very good woman, Mamma. She can't see, nor get up from her bed, and she has such terrible pain, and Mary says that she'll never be well again, and yet she speaks quite cheerfully, and looks contented and happy. Do you think that she can *really* be happy, Mamma, when she is so poor and so ill?"

"I think that Mrs. Wills has the peace of God in her heart," I replied, "and that is better than any earthly comfort. She gave herself to her Saviour long ago, and now He supports her in her sickness with the thought that she is going to Him, to the bright and

joyful home where there is no more sorrow or pain."

Phemie looked impressed. I observe with pleasure that she is always attentive when I speak to her on the subject of religion. It seems to be more consonant to her disposition to feel reverence towards God, than love towards her fellow-creatures. She then observed, "Mrs. Wills says that every one is so kind to her; the clergyman is kind, and you are kind, and her neighbours are kind, and her niece nurses her night and day."

"It is quite natural that people should be kind to Mrs. Wills in her sickness, for she was always kind to others in her health. Do you not remember the promise in the Bible, *With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again?* Mrs. Wills is one of the most unselfish women that ever lived; she was always ready to give up her own interest or comfort for the sake of those around her; I scarcely think that she would have enjoyed a pleasure, unless she could have shared it with some one else."

Phemie. She must have been *wonderfully* good.

I. She has won the love of many hearts, and that is better than anything that gold can buy. Ah! how different is the lot of Mrs. Wills from that of an old lady whom I remember seeing once or twice when I was a child, and of whom I happened to hear a good deal. (I find that my children are more interested by accounts of people whom I have actually known, than by those of fictitious characters in stories.)

Phemie. Was she a poor lady, mamma?"

I. No, as regards this world's goods, she was very rich indeed. She had been gay and pretty in her youth.

Phemie (*twirling one of her own golden curls round her finger*). Very pretty, Mamma?

I. So pretty that prints of her were sold in the shops, and poems were made about her beauty.

Phemie. Oh, she must have been happy!

I. I do not think that she was very happy even while her youth and beauty lasted, for all her enjoyments were so selfish; and selfish people miss some of the sweetest pleasures in life. But such joys as she had passed away

with her youth; she could not keep them any more than the flowers can keep their beauty. When I saw her she was old, and wrinkled, and bent; no one could have guessed that she had ever been pretty.

Phemie. She must have been dull then, Mamma.

I. Very dull, for her eyes became dim, and her hearing hard, and she had many aches and pains. She could no longer be amused by what had once amused her. The saddest thing of all, I heard, was to see her entering still into worldly gaiety; every one said it was to drive away thought. She was afraid to be *alone with herself*. Ah! *Phemie, self* was a sad companion then!

Phemie. I s'pose she did not care to remember all about the prints and the poems.

I. How much sweeter would it have been if she could have remembered homes that she had made happy, hearts that she had cheered; if she had had the sweet recollection of Job: *When the ear heard me, then it blessed me, and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me; because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to*

help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.

Phemie. Oh! that would have been a happy thought, indeed! I suppose nobody cared to go near the old lady.

I. Yes, a great many people went to her, but they did not go for herself; they went because they wanted to have some of her money when she should die. She knew this too well, and it made her so fretful and cross! I think that she trusted no one; she disliked and suspected all the world!

Phemie. Oh, Mamma, she must have been very unhappy!

I. When she died, there was no crying. There was a grand funeral indeed, but not a *true* mourner to follow the hearse. The lady had lived unloved, and there was not, I believe, a single tear shed over her grave!

Phemie. Mrs. Wills is much—oh, so much more happy than she! I s'pose that the poor rich lady had not cared for her Bible.

I. She never let one be opened in her presence. Perhaps she was afraid to hear such words as these, *Inasmuch as ye did it*

not unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto Me.

Phemie (after a silence). I should like to do something for Mrs. Wills, Mamma. Do you think that it would please her to hear my musical box?

I. I think that it would, my love. The kind thought, I am sure, would please her.

Phemie. And I might do something else; I might make her little warm cuffs, for her niece says she gets so chilly. You could buy me some wool, dear Mamma.

I. What would you think of buying the wool yourself, and then the kind present would be entirely your own? (I know that Phemie has the means to do this, as the children have a trifle every week; but Phemie is not fond of parting with her money.)

Phemie looked a little taken aback by this proposal, so I thought it as well to add, "You know that I have a great many poor people to help abroad, and little mouths to feed at home, and dear Papa has to work very hard to get enough money for all."

Phemie (with a little effort). I think that I will buy the wool, Mamma; Eliza will get

it for me to-day when she goes to the village. I should not like to grow up selfish like that poor rich lady, and have no one to care for me at last.

I. No, I hope that my darling will never spend another day of her life without trying to make some one happier. You have made a beginning this morning, for I am sure that you were pleasing poor Mrs. Wills by carrying the basket.

Phemie. But that was *your* basket, Mamma.

I. Is there nothing that you could do now for yourself to give pleasure to some one?

Phemie (slowly). Perhaps I could let the children hear my musical box.

I. That is a capital thought. It makes Mamma so happy to think of her Phemie growing up generous, kind, and good, and being a comfort to many. But to be an unselfish woman, she should begin by being an unselfish child.

Phemie left me full of good resolutions. I am delighted to see my sweet girl thus winning an advantage over a besetting sin. In her case, I feel assured, example was better

than reproof, or even direct exhortation, Phemie is so sensible, that I can appeal to her reason.

Later.

My little Zaida came running up to me a few minutes ago, quite full of what she had heard of Mrs. Wills from her sister.

Zaida. Mamma, I'm going to send the poor woman what's sick a biscuit, a nice sweet biscuit.

I. But, my darling, the sweet biscuits are not yours, but Mamma's.

Zaida. But I'll ask to have dry bread for lunch, then mayn't she have the biscuit, Mamma?

The appeal was irresistible. I shall certainly allow Zaida to exercise self-denial in this small act, and gain in return the delight of feeling that she is helping the poor, and doing some good in her own simple way. She is so generous, so warm-hearted—mine own little cherub girl!

May 12, Friday.

I have had a dreadful morning, one of the most trying that I have ever passed in my life; such a battle with my poor Zaida's pride

and temper. I feel as though I could enjoy nothing for the rest of the day.

My husband, after partaking of breakfast, had just departed for London at his usual early hour, and I was about to look over my accounts, when I was startled by the sound of violent screaming from the nursery above. I recognised Zaida's voice, and though, to my experienced ear, the screams expressed passion rather than pain, I felt alarmed, and regardless of my sprained ankle, hurried up stairs to my child. My first glance at the scene before me when I opened the nursery door, gave me an idea of the nature of the disturbance. The table was spread for breakfast, and at it was seated Willie in his little arm-chair, half inclined to cry for fear or sympathy, but quieted by Phemie who sat beside him. Zaida stood in the middle of the room, her face—even her neck—scarlet, her eyes flashing with anger, her hands clenched, and her foot stamping, while by loud screams she attempted to give vent to the passion boiling within her. My entrance did not subdue the passion, though it so far quieted the noise as to enable a voice to be heard above it.

“What is all this?” I said rather sternly, as I closed the door behind me.

“Oh, ma'am, I'm so glad that you're here!” exclaimed Mary, a gentle creature, quite unable to battle against such a storm. “Miss Zaida threw the bread at me because I had not buttered it to her liking, and when I went to turn her chair round” (the petty punishment which the nurse is permitted to inflict), “she flew at me, and bit my hand!” Alas! there was distinctly to be seen the mark of the little teeth left in the flesh.

I was grieved and shocked. Often had I seen Zaida in a passion, and slightly corrected her for the same, but I had never before beheld her in such a violent fury, nor had known her act like a little tiger. Had there been the slightest excuse for her conduct, it would have been instantly brought forward by the two elder children, who had been witnesses of the whole scene. Their silence and grave looks showed me as clearly as the words of the nurse, that Zaida had been as naughty as a little girl not yet four years old well could be.

“Zaida,” said I, going up to the little

culprit, "your conduct pains mamma's heart ; you are not acting like my own little Zaida. Go instantly and beg Mary's pardon,"

"I won't—I never will!" cried the child, again stamping with passion.

"Then go into the corner this moment!"

Slowly, reluctantly, Zaida obeyed, sobbing and muttering as she went. I wished to give her a little time to recover herself, so seated myself on a chair which Ashley immediately brought, and waited for some minutes before I said, "Will Zaida be good now, and ask nurse to forgive her?"

"I won't—I won't!" muttered the child.

I went up to her ; I reasoned with her ; I tried to work on her better feelings ; I spoke of God's displeasure—of my sorrow—of Mary's pain—but nothing that I could say seemed to have any effect. Ashley was in great distress.

"Oh, Zaida!—be good—*do* be good—you will make Mamma ill!" he exclaimed. Ever that appeal was vain.

One way alone remained. My heart ached and throbbed, but I felt that at any cost to Zaida or to myself, I must overcome this temper and pride. I firmly took hold of the

child's little hand. "Zaida," I said, "it grieves Mamma to punish you; but if you do not instantly obey me and ask Mary's pardon, I will palm you."

In her pride the child looked defiance.

And I did palm her, and sharply too, till my fingers tingled with pain, and I knew that Zaida's poor little hand must feel the strokes more severely than mine. She screamed with passion and pain; none of the other children uttered a word, but I saw that Ashley ran behind a curtain and knelt: I am certain that he was praying that God would soften the heart of his sister.

"Will you ask Mary's forgiveness now for having so cruelly bitten her?"

No; to my extreme distress the little rebel still held out. I sent her into the corner again, but with no better effect than before. I felt that my child's future character might in a great measure depend on the issue of this determined conflict with her mother, and I dared not yield in the struggle.

The painful battle lasted for *three quarters of an hour*. Had it been for three hours instead, I must have persevered till I con-

quered. Ashley could not touch his breakfast; again and again he retired behind the curtain, and I had a comfort in the dear boy's prayers. I needed them, for I felt very unhappy, and inwardly trembled with nervous excitement.

"Zaida," I said very firmly, "I will not leave this room till you have asked Mary's pardon; I will palm you until you do so. It pains Mamma's heart much more than it pains your hand, but I cannot let such wicked tempers conquer my own little child."

I did palm her a second time, and more severely than before, and then, thank God! the proud spirit was broken at last. My poor Zaida fell sobbing on my neck, "Mamma—I am sorry—I will beg pardon—do forgive me—I won't be so naughty again."

Mary, who had scarcely restrained herself from pleading for the child whom she loved, was only too eager to forgive. She would not, like myself, have come to painful extremities. She kissed Zaida, who fervently embraced her, conscious at length that she had cruelly ill-treated her nurse.

"And now, Zaida, there is Another whose

forgiveness you must seek ; One to whom you must pray for a meek and quiet spirit, that you may never, never again give way to this terrible pride."

She knelt down by my knee, my poor little lamb, and prayed between her low sobs. Then I had her soft little arms round my neck, and such a kiss! it seemed to express full acknowledgment of my justice, and full assurance of my love.

I am thankful—so thankful now that I was enabled to keep firm to the end. It was the most painful duty that I ever had to perform; but had it been evaded, how could I have justified myself to my conscience, and before God, for leaving the child committed to my charge under the dominion of sin? Eli's sons—Eli's fate—the thought of them rose before me!

It was a comfort to feel that though my elder children (especially Ashley) shared my distress, they were fully convinced that I was acting rightly. As my dear husband said, "Children have a strong sense of justice," and I have often noticed that, theoretically at least, they are great disciplinarians. I be-

lieve that by showing weakness instead of vigour in governing, parents, like rulers, forfeit some portion of respect. But *never* must chastisement be given in hasty passion. I loved my darling at the very moment when I was punishing her. Does not our Heavenly Father correct us though He loves; does He not correct us *because* He loves?

Later.

Zaida has been so sweet, so good, so loving! It is like sunshine after a storm. She brought me her little biscuit for Mrs. Wills. "I don't ought to have had it at all," she said, with a look of contrition. I kept my little treasure beside me, and talked to her of battling against temper and every other besetting sin, illustrating the Christian fight by her favourite Bible-story of Goliath and David. Zaida perfectly understood the analogy. "My giant conquered me to-day," she said, "but you came to help me, dear, dear Mamma," and there was another fervent embrace. It distresses poor Zaida sadly to see that my ankle is a good deal more swelled and painful. I care little for this compared to what I suffered in the morning. I feel as if the

lesson to my dear little girl were worth any amount of pain to her mother.

My Phemie is busy with her cuffs. I have put the stitches on the needle for her, as she cannot do that yet for herself. She is a steady, persevering child; one of her favourite mottoes being "perseverance overcomes difficulties."

May 13, Saturday.

Phemie came to me this morning after her early walk, and said, "Mamma, Zaida has been telling us such wonderful stories, just like Rowley, how she went into the garden, and caught a fox by the tail. I don't think that she meant any harm, but is it right to tell such stories as that?"

I. I shall desire my Zaida not to do so again. I am sorry that she should have heard Rowley, as she is so fond of imitation. That poor little boy is, I fear, no good example for my children.

Phemie. Does not his Mamma spoil him dreadfully? How he stuck out his lip and made a face when she begged him not to take the fruit-tart. *You* would not have begged him, Mamma; you would have told him not to touch it, and made him obey. I don't

think Mrs. Martin knows how to manage children at all."

I was much of Phemie's opinion on the subject, but as I always discourage a censorious spirit, I told her that it was not for her to judge the conduct of a lady like Mrs. Martin. Her words, however, recurred to me, when a note was brought to me from Vine Lodge, not half an hour afterwards. It was a very cordial invitation from Emily, for my three elder children to pass the afternoon with her. "It is so delightful," wrote my poor Emily, "that your darlings can now meet with mine. I trust that they will become close friends, as their mothers have been for so many years."

I am in difficulty as to how to reply. I have no time to consult my husband, as an answer must be sent to Emily almost directly. I do not like my children to see much of Rowley. Shall I make the excuse of threatening weather, or shall I send them to Vine Lodge this once? Or would it not be more straightforward, more really kind, to let my poor friend know the truth, expressed of course as delicately as may be? She would be so dreadfully hurt and disappointed, per-

haps even angry, though I fear much more her sorrow than her anger. Still, to find the immediate result of her unhappy over-indulgence, might help to open her eyes to the danger of the course which she is pursuing, and I owe the duty to my godson. I suspect that this is one of the painful tasks which conscience sets, and which one would so gladly evade, or delay performing. The world would deem it a trifle, but I feel it no trifle to risk wounding the feelings and losing the affection of my friend; and on the other hand, it is no trifle to expose my children, at a most imitative age, to the example and influence of a boy whose very attractiveness throws a gloss over disobedience, undutifulness, and disregard of strict truth. There is a right and wrong in every matter of this nature, and we can only hope for a blessing when acting conscientiously, and to the best of the judgment which God has given. I will decline the invitation, but what a difficult note it will be to write!

Evening.

I sent my note to dear Emily; I tore up three sheets of paper before I could at all

satisfy myself with the way in which I had performed so delicate a task. My husband says that I did perfectly right; that had I declined sending our children on any pretext, the invitation would soon have been renewed, and that it is ever best to act in a straightforward manner. His approbation is a comfort; but I cannot help feeling unhappy whenever I think of the pain which I must have given Emily.

May 14, Sunday.

My beloved husband and my two eldest have gone to church. My heart has gone with them. I rejoice to see that Ashley is more at his ease with his father. Zaida has just asked me to read to her again the story of David and the giant. She is all sweetness to-day.

What a blessing is the Sabbath, were it only for the closer drawing of family ties, the sweet meeting together of these whom needful business separates during the rest of the week. How little my William can be with his children but on this sacred day! It is an inexpressible joy to me to see him on Sunday unbending from all earthly cares, with his baby

perched on his shoulder, his Zaida clinging to his knees, listening to little hymns from the lips of Phemie, or instructing his first-born in that knowledge which is more precious than rubies! Oh, that our darling Ashley may grow up like his father! I delight in tracing the resemblance in his features to those of his parent. To me there is a touching analogy between what we call family likeness, and that image of heavenly purity and love which we see more or less vividly imprinted on the character of God's true children. Blessed time when that image shall be perfected, by the power of heavenly grace; when the weakest disciple shall find that promise fulfilled, *We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is!* We, poor frail children of dust, are permitted to adopt the language of the Psalmist, *I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake, with Thy likeness.*

May 15, Monday.

I am sorry, but by no means surprised, at not having heard from Emily.

I have had a conversation to-day with Ashley, which to me was very interesting.

He came to me when I was alone, and said, "Mamma, are you busy, or can I have a nice quiet talk with you now, as you can't come and sit beside me in the evening?"

I made room for my boy beside me on the sofa, and told him that I delighted in having him with me.

Ashley. Mamma, do you remember telling me a good while ago to search for the little weeds—I mean the faults in my heart? I have been searching, and I have found a good many. (*After a moment's pause*) Would you like to hear what they are?

Of course I was willing to hear what he was desirous to tell. It is a great safeguard to a child to open his heart to a parent. There was no lightness in Ashley's manner, he was grave and in earnest.

Ashley. First then, Mamma, sometimes the children and I have little quarrels, and you know that's not right; though (he added naively), "I think that the others are as much in fault as me, Zaida is sometimes so very cross, and Phemie so very provoking.

I thought this very probable, but I did not say so to my son.

Ashley. Then, Mamma, I'm sometimes not attentive at church, 'specially when I can't understand the sermon. And sometimes I say my prayers right through, and I've been thinking of something quite different all the time.

I. 'Ah, my boy, wandering thoughts are a great trouble to the Christian!

Ashley (looking at me with a little surprise).
Do you ever feel so, Mamma?

I. Often, my son. This is an infirmity—a sin—against which we all need to struggle. We must all ask our heavenly Father for *the spirit of grace and of supplications*, and say, as the disciples said, *Lord, teach us how to pray.*

Ashley looked as if he felt it a comfort that I could sympathize with him in temptation as well as in trouble. He then went on in his quiet, thoughtful way. "Then, Mamma, when Papa asked me yesterday if I should like to have a pony some day, I said, 'Yes, very much,' quite boldly. But I thought in my own heart," added the child, lowering his voice, "I should only like a *quiet* pony; if I had one that kicked or pranced, I should not like it at all."

What a tender conscience my Ashley possesses, when even this little mental reservation lies on it as a sin!

Ashley (looking uneasy). Do you think, Mamma, that I ought to tell Papa that I only meant a *quiet* pony when I said that I should like one very much?

I saw a danger of conscientiousness degenerating into scrupulosity,—of this some examples have come before me. I replied, “No, my boy, you need say nothing more about the matter now. If your Father ask you again, reply simply, ‘I should like a pony, if you would choose one not too frisky for me to ride.’”

Ashley appeared satisfied with my decision, and went on with his childish confession.

“Then, Mamma, the worst of all is that I can’t forgive Tom Wilkins for killing our poor white cat last month. I can’t help disliking him very, very much. Is it wrong, Mamma, when we repeat the Lord’s Prayer to say, ‘Forgive us our trespasses *better* than we forgive them that trespass against us?’”

I. It would be better to add a little prayer for the spirit of forgiveness, my son.

Ashley. It is very, very hard to forgive such a cruel thing as Tom Wilkins did. It does not come natural at all.

I. True, Ashley, forgiveness is not what belongs to our *nature*. It is like the beautiful flowers which our neighbour has in his hothouse; it needs much care, much cultivation, because it comes from another clime.

Ashley. You mean that forgiveness comes from heaven, Mamma.

I. Yes; it is especially a gift from above; it must be prayed for, and watchfully cultivated. I do not think that in all God's garden there grows a more beautiful flower.

Ashley. I will pray and try hard to forgive, dear Mamma. You see I have a great many faults, and it would be dreadful if God did not forgive them. (*After a pause*) Would it be right, Mamma, for me to punish myself for my faults?

Here was the germ of the doctrine of penance. How natural is that to the human mind, where the disposition is tender and conscientious, like that of my precious boy! It is difficult for many much older than

Ashley to receive the doctrine of *free* forgiveness.

I. What do we learn from the Bible, my son ?

Ashley. Indeed, Mamma, I don't know.

I. When a bad man, a jailor, suddenly felt that he had a great many sins, and dreaded the anger of God, and cried out, "*What must I do to be saved?*" did Paul and Silas tell him to go and punish himself for his sins ?

Ashley. Oh, no ! they said, "*Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*" But did that mean that his sins would be forgiven right out, and never punished at all ?

I. It meant that the punishment for them had been *borne already* by the Lord when He died on the cross, that *whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Ashley (very earnestly). I know, Mamma, that the Lord died for the sins of *the world*, but do you think that He bore the punishment for the sins of a little boy like me ?

I. Does *whosoever* mean only men, or women ? does it not stand for *every one* that believes ?

Ashley. And do you think that the Lord knew every one who would live in the world all these many, many years after He died?

I. The Lord, as God, knew everything; every one of His people by name.

Ashley. Oh, is it not wonderful that the Lord knew *me*, and loved *me* then! He must have loved me, Mamma, or He would not have borne the dreadful pain for my sin! (*The child's eyes filled with tears at the thought.*)

I. Since the Saviour loved you, Ashley, will you not love Him now, and give your young heart to Him, and try to please Him in all things?

Ashley made no audible reply, but he squeezed my hand very tightly, rose and walked away to the window. But oh, my God, I thank Thee and bless Thee that the light of Thy truth is shining on my child! Grant that it be as *the light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

May 16, Tuesday.

Some gusts of temper from Zaida this morning, but they were lulled more quickly to-day, and by milder measures than on that

dreadful morning. That palming has evidently left a strong and salutary impression on the mind of my little girl. She knows that I can not only threaten but punish, and having measured her strength with me once, she is less inclined to repeat the experiment so painful to us both.

How good and gentle my poor Emily is! She was here to-day, and sat with me for an hour. She actually thanked me for my letter, though it had evidently given her pain. She owned that she had made some mistakes, but said how difficult it was to bring up wisely an only child, how hard not to make of him an idol. She had shown my letter to her husband, who had told her that it confirmed him in his intention to send Rowley to an excellent school after midsummer. "Perhaps I ought not to oppose this," said Emily, with tears in her eyes; "certainly my darling boy is getting beyond my control." She is going to London to-morrow for the day, to be with her brother who is seriously ill. I remembered that poor Rowley must be left at Vine Lodge, and feeling sure that William would approve, I asked Emily to let

her child pass the day here. Her face brightened at the proposal, which she at once gladly accepted. I am not much afraid of having Rowley *here*, as I shall keep him under my eye, and exercise a gentle restraint over him, as I was not able to do in the presence of his over-indulgent mother.

Evening.

When Mary brought Zaida to bid me good-night, my little girl turned to her nurse and said, "You have not told of me?" It appears that Zaida, in a passion at tea-time, had broken her little china mug by flinging it across the table. Mary had declared that she would tell Zaida's Mamma, but perhaps from indulgence towards her little charge had omitted to do so. Zaida, who has a high sense of honour, young as she is, thus reminded the nurse of her promise.

My little girl must be contented for the present with a stoneware cup; I shall not replace the china at once. This will, I hope, be punishment sufficient for the ebullition of temper.

May 17, Wednesday.

Mary has gone with baby and the two

elder children to bring Rowley here, as I promised Emily to send for her boy. I have detained Zaida, both because she has a slight cold, and also because she is the one who is most likely to be affected by the example of poor little Rowley. I am not sorry to have my little girl quietly with me alone. She came to the sofa, about ten minutes ago, and clambered up on my knee, taking care so to sit as "not to hurt the poor foot." We entered into conversation. I chanced to ask Zaida what was her greatest wish, what she would ask for if she were certain of obtaining what she desired. She laid her curly head down on my neck, pressed her little arms round me, but would not reply. I heard the child sigh heavily; after a pause she sighed again, and then a third time; what was passing in her mind I could not tell, though I had a strong desire to know. I was anxious to penetrate her secret, and find out what is the greatest wish of my little girl, as it is evidently connected with something that to her is serious and sad. Zaida does not care to be questioned, however, and now has gone to her play.

Later.

Rowley's visit has passed over very well, and has been greatly enjoyed. The poor little boy came this time, I suspect, with an idea of my being terribly strict, and was evidently more on his guard than he had been on the former occasion. I soon, however, put him at his ease. I took care that he should have no temptation to disobedience at the dinner-table, and put a gentle rein on his love of talking by reading aloud to the party one of Miss Edgeworth's delightful tales, and afterwards suggesting a variety of games, in which Rowley was happy to join. He would really, if kept under a little discipline, be a fine, interesting boy. He told me, when he bade me good-bye, that he had never spent such a happy day before in all his life.

I have made another attempt to induce Zaida to break her reserve, but to no purpose. Young as she is, and frank, she does not open out her little heart to me like my Ashley. I asked her if her wish were for something that she could pray for. Zaida silently nodded her head. I cannot write more now, for I

see my dear husband crossing the lawn—how grave and careworn he looks !

May 18, Thursday.

I feel very dull and anxious to-day, all the more so perhaps from not being well, for I awoke with a violent headache. The tidings which William brought last evening had broken my rest a good deal. He is much alarmed for the safety of the *Miranda*, a vessel in which more than half of our little property is embarked. Her arrival has long been expected, and William heard tidings yesterday in town of the total wreck of some vessel, name yet unknown, but which he has the strongest reasons to fear to be the missing *Miranda*. Our property is not insured, and the loss of it would plunge us at once into comparative poverty and distress. I kept up as well as I could last evening, trying to cheer my dear husband, who is naturally oppressed with heavy anxiety on account of our dear little flock ; but this morning, since he has left me, all my spirit and courage seem to have gone away too. I feel very chilly, and have ordered the fire to be lighted. Why is my heart cast down ?

Oh! where is my faith in the hour of trial?

Later.

Dear Phemie, with a look of quiet pleasure, brought me just now the little cuffs which she has knitted for poor Mrs. Wills. I tried to brighten up and encourage her by showing her that I appreciated her first effort of self-denial in the cause of charity. I have promised that she shall take the cuffs, and Zaida her little handful of biscuits, to the poor invalid this morning. To see for themselves the object of their benevolence, and carry to her their own little gifts, will, I trust, deepen the lesson which I so earnestly desire that my children should learn, that of the happiness to be found in serving God and our fellow-creatures. I must keep my Ashley beside me to help in looking after sweet Willie, who is now so active and restless, that—with my sprained ankle—I should have some difficulty in managing to take care of my little darling.

Later.

I have had such a terrible fright, and, oh, such a touching rebuke for mistrusting for

one moment the watchful tender love of my heavenly Father.

My little girls started in high spirits for their walk to Mrs. Wills, carrying also a little present made by Ashley. I had my sofa drawn very near to the fire, and while Willie played on the farther side, Ashley came to arrange the banner-screen for me, to shield my eyes from the glare of the fire. I did not notice that part of my dress rested on the carpet, and that Ashley, inadvertently, was standing on its folds while he moved the screen. At this moment Willie chanced to tumble; I instinctively started up from the sofa, and the sudden pull to my dress occasioned by my quick movement threw Ashley off his balance, and he fell with his dear arm on the hot iron bar of the grate, and received rather a severe burn. Up sprang my precious boy instantly with the exclamation, "All right, Mamma!" in that moment of fright and burning pain, his *first* thought was of his mother!

I rang instantly for Eliza, and took every means that I could to relieve the pain of the burn. Ashley was so patient while I dressed

his hurt, seeming to feel nothing so much as my keen distress. His greatest wish was to comfort me. "Mamma," he said, "I'm so glad that it wasn't Phemie or Zaida that fell; you know *their* dresses might have caught fire. And wasn't it a good thing that the fire was so low? It is not much pain, dear Mamma; I can't bear to see you so anxious."

Who from this day will ever doubt my boy's firmness and courage? He is now, with his arm bound up, quietly reading near me, while baby sleeps on the sofa by my side. Ashley glances up every now and then from his book, and smiles as if to assure me that he does not suffer much.

And I had been fretting and fearing about a matter of mere worldly loss! I had been disheartened at the idea of a few privations. I had been afraid of the downward slope into the Vale of Humiliation, and lo! I am suddenly given a glimpse of the precipice over which my earthly happiness might in one moment have been hurled! Oh, while my husband and children are spared to me, can I murmur whatever other trial be sent!

I could preach a long sermon to my heart

on the text of my boy's "All right, Mamma!" the instinctive exclamation of filial love. I who have so long experienced the goodness of Him who *doth not willingly afflict*, I who so often have seen the cloud of troubles break in blessings, how slow am I in learning to lisp these words of submission, "All is right!" Oh! my Saviour, help my weakness, pardon my unbelief, subdue this wilful, wayward heart. Even in the fire of tribulation, teach me to say, "All is right."

Later.

I have just received a telegram from my husband. *The Miranda has arrived safely.* My God, I thank Thee. Let every fresh instance of Thy bounty draw me closer and closer to Thee!

May 19, Friday.

William has been so much pleased with my account of our precious Ashley's conduct. I could not refrain from visiting my boy's little room in the middle of the night, to see if he were suffering from the effect of the fright or the burn. I found him awake and restless.

"Oh, Mamma, you ought not to come now," he said, but he was evidently very glad to

have me with him, to put his little hand in mine, and lay his head on my shoulder. How inexpressibly sweet is the tie which binds parent and child!

“Shall I tell you, Mamma,” said Ashley, “which are two of my favourite texts? *Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.* I like to repeat that, but the other verse seems still sweeter, just like honey out of the honey-comb,—*As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.*” The child turned on me a look of intense love, then dropped his head, and seemed to nestle into my heart.

I did not leave him till he had fallen asleep.

Ashley seems perfectly well this morning, but it will be several days before the dear little arm is healed.

Later.

I have found out my poor Zaida's wish. She showed temper again at her lessons to-day. I spoke to her with some vexation. I told her that she must strive and pray hard against her evil temper; then suddenly—I know not why—the remembrance of what had passed between us on Wednesday came

into my mind, and I inquired whether her great wish had been to get rid of this temper. To my joy the dear child gave her silent nod. God grant her her heart's desire. How much patience should I show towards one who is so conscious already of her own infirmity!

A friend called on me to-day. We conversed on various subjects, and very naturally came upon that of bringing up children. He affirmed that all children were born alike, and that education and outward circumstances alone formed difference in character. Inferior as I am in knowledge to Mr. Penfold on all other subjects, I have higher standing-ground on this, as my friend has never been married. I could refute his theory from my own experience. All my children are brought up alike, but they do not resemble each other. I have never known either of my two elder ones show the furious passion which sometimes sweeps like a torrent over the spirit of my Zaida. I mentioned facts, without mentioning names,—for I deem it cruelty to let a poor child be stamped with a character for ill temper which may cling to her through life, even when time may have mellowed her dis-

position, and high principle have smoothed its roughnesses away. I never talk over the faults of my children to my friends.

Mr. Penfold was not inclined to yield his opinion, or give up his theory as to the natural equality in the dispositions of children.

"Is it not against all ideas of God's perfect justice," he remarked, "to suppose that one poor child is born, say, for instance, with a vile temper, while another is naturally calm and complacent?"

"No more than to say that one child is born to a fortune, and that another has to struggle with poverty from its cradle," said I.

"Riches and poverty belong to mere outward circumstances," replied my friend; "we can call neither of them positive good or evil, as riches may become snares, and poverty be an incitement to industry and energy. But to say that one unhappy little child is naturally more wicked than another—"

I could not help interrupting Mr. Penfold. "Forgive me," I cried, "but to be tried with an evil temper is not just the same thing as being 'naturally more wicked than another.' Our enemy is ever on the watch to attack us,

sometimes in the form of passion, sometimes in that of selfishness, or vanity, or pride. It by no means follows that the more open assaults are the most dangerous."

"You mean that bad temper, though the most obtrusive, is not the only fault to which little children are liable?"

"And I mean more," I replied, for the image of my precious little Zaida was full in my mind, "the trial of bad temper comes usually very early in life, and if met then, and by faith resisted and overcome, the whole character is likely to acquire a strength and energy most valuable in after life. The little Christian whose warfare with sin begins in the nursery, is likely to become a tried veteran sooner than one who is kept, as it were, on easy garrison duty, till brought face to face with the more insidious temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Besides, that child, accustomed not only to inward struggles, but to the censure and displeasure of others to which a bad temper necessarily must expose him, is not likely to be self-complacent, mistaking the absence of violent passions for the absence of sin."

"Then, according to your theory," said my friend, with a smile, "a naturally bad temper is rather an advantage than otherwise."

"No, indeed," I replied; "I should rather class it with the poverty of which we were lately speaking. No parent would wish his child to be born to an early, painful struggle; but as you said that poverty 'might be an incitement to industry and energy,' so if conscience in the heart of a child be brought to overcome evil temper, early experience of conflict and of victory must strengthen and exalt the character."

"But what if it should be experience of *defeat*?" asked my friend.

"If either young or old, instead of mastering their passions, become the slaves of them, of course the chains become only heavier and more galling by time," I replied. "The violent child becomes the unreasonable, ill-tempered man, the tormentor of his neighbours, the tyrant in his home. But when irritability is subdued, passion conquered by faith working on conscience (as they may be, and often have been), the result is, at least I believe so, a higher type of Christian than if

the conflict with temper had never been encountered."

"Then you will never utter the words which I once heard from the lips of a much-tried preceptor: 'That boy has such a vile temper that it is of no use trying to make anything of him!'"

"I should as soon say," I replied with a smile, "That soldier is so sure to be attacked by the enemy, *that there is no use in supplying him with arms!*"

May 20, Saturday.

My boy's arm is healing nicely. My two girls I have sent again, at their earnest request, to see Mrs. Wills, "our own poor friend," as they call her. Zaida said to me just before she started, "Mamma, do you think that God loves that poor woman?"

"I am sure that He does," I replied.

"Then why does not God make her quite strong and well in a moment? Why does He let her be sick?"

"God has His own reasons, my child, and we are certain that they are wise and kind. *Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.* Did I not love you last week when I would not let

you go out to gather flowers, and when I gave you the medicine which was so very bitter?"

"Yes, Mamma," said Zaida, "but you gave me something sweet too, to take away the bad taste."

"God, too, puts sweetness into the bitter cup of His afflicted servant. She has pain in her poor body, but heavenly peace in her soul. Mrs. Wills knows that her trials are but for a time, and soon will end in glory. A queen on her throne, my Zaida, might envy that poor woman on her bed."

Zaida. And *we're* a little bit of sweetness to her too, Mamma, arn't we? She looks so pleased to see us, and she liked my biscuits very much.

I kissed my little one, and told her that the kindness of pitying friends was certainly one of the honey-drops by which the Lord sweetens the bitter cup of His people.

Later.

My husband was telling me yesterday of a dear bright child whom he had met in the train, travelling with a gentleman whom he supposed to be her father. The child was

about our Zaida's age, but had long golden curls instead of our darling's fiery corkscrew locks. She was full of intelligence and eagerness to know all about every object that she passed. William conjectured that this was probably the little one's first railway journey from home. The gentleman amused himself by playing on her credulity, and exciting her innocent wonder by telling her all sorts of nonsense about the various places on the way. Yonder was the grand house in which Cinderella had lived with her sisters, and received visits from her friend the fairy. That wood in the distance was the identical wood in which Red Ridinghood had met with the wolf, and the cruel creature had afterwards been hung up on one of the telegraph posts. Little Sophy opened her blue eyes very wide, and received the stories eagerly; while the gentleman appeared highly diverted at his own wit in "taking a rise" out of the child.

"It made me indignant," was William's remark, "to see that man thus abusing the innocent confidence of childhood. If he was her father, he was doing much the same thing

as another whom I saw long ago, who made his little boy sip port wine after dinner, and who laughed and clapped the child on the back, when he saw him smack his lips with enjoyment. That boy—now a youth—is, I have heard, a confirmed drunkard; his father has reason to rue those early sips of port wine.”

I. Little Sophy will soon find out that her father has been telling her foolish tales.

William. And learn, of course, to disbelieve him in future. That *faith*, simple and trustful, which is one of the most beautiful features in the character of a child, will be shaken—perhaps permanently impaired. I wish that parents would remember that the *Fifth* commandment is, if one may so speak, *the bud of the First*. Filial obedience and reverence are, one might almost say, the religion of a very young child. Who can calculate the injury which may ensue from the infant mind being *taught to doubt!*

I. Many appear to look upon children merely as toys meant for grown people's amusement.

William. And so treat them as an idle boy

treats a butterfly, rubbing the delicate down from its wings, marring its beauty, and destroying its powers of future flight; perhaps without any evil intention, but simply because he reflects not that, while amusing himself, he is seriously harming his tender plaything.

I. Our children have the most implicit confidence in your word. I believe that "It must be true, for Papa has said it," would be to them sufficient answer to the objections of half the world!

William. So may their faith in future years be firm and unshaken; so, whatever difficulties they may meet with in religion, whatever doubts may be suggested to their minds by others, may they take their stand on this rock of assurance, "God hath said it, and *it must be true!*"

What a blessing it is to my lambs that they have a father to whom they can look up with reverence and love! What a blessing to me that I have a partner to guide my erring judgment, and help me to bring up my children aright! William and I ever go hand in hand together, and each upholds the

authority of the other. I have seen such evils arise in a family where the children saw, as children are quick-sighted to see, different opinions held by their parents. If the proverb, *Union is strength*, be true, it is especially so as regards a father and mother bringing up a family of children !

William has given Phemie and Ashley little portions of our garden to weed and keep in order for him. "It is well to accustom them early," he says, "to take pleasure in working for a parent." Dear Phemie is very patient and industrious; neat in gardening, I do not think that she will leave a single weed on her border. Ashley is not so fond of the work, but still performs it with care.

May 21, Sunday.

There has been another of what I call my *nursery parables* to instruct my heart to-day! William, after taking our two eldest to morning service, remained here during the afternoon, to give Mary an opportunity of also going to church. He wheeled my sofa close to the window, that I might look out on the lawn and garden, and see my lambs at their

quiet play. My sweet baby I kept by my side. William took a book, and sat in our rustic arbour, while Ashley, Phemie, and Zaida amused themselves as they pleased. I had no fear of their getting into mischief as their father was near, and I enjoyed looking out of the window at their innocent enjoyment of the sweet breeze and sunshine of a May afternoon.

Presently, however, I saw the three children in a state of great excitement, and I soon perceived its cause. A low palisade separates our grounds from those of our next neighbour, a farmer: beyond this palisade lies a pond, and in this pond was struggling an unfortunate chicken. Ashley and Phemie were eager to save the drowning creature, and made every effort to do so. Phemie thrust a stick between the palings, but it could hardly touch the chicken; Ashley tried to clamber over the palisade, but if he had succeeded in doing so would have been more likely to have had a wetting himself, than to have saved the object of his pity. Zaida, conscious of the utter uselessness of her trying to draw the chicken out of the water, ran off at full

speed to where her father was sitting in the harbour, calling out loudly to him as she ran, and soon bringing him to the rescue. William sprang over the palisade in a moment, saved the chicken, and restored the poor little dripping creature to the mother hen that was fluttering and screaming at the edge of the pond; while the delighted children shouted and clapped their hands for joy!

This was a great and exciting event to my three; and Ashley, who always makes me a sharer in whatever interests him, ran into the house to give me a full and particular account of the adventure, forgetting, I suppose, that I had been a witness of the whole from the window.

"Is it not strange, Mamma," said Ashley, after he had given me an animated description of the chicken's peril, "is it not strange that the one of us who really helped the poor little creature was the smallest and weakest of us all? Zaida could not have got to the chicken, she could not have climbed over the paling, but she did more than either Phemie or I! She brought one who could help, and did help, and so the poor drowning creature was saved!"

“That very thought struck my own mind,” said I, “and it seemed to me like a little parable of things that are much more important.”

“O Mamma, I like your little parables! let me try to find this one out.” Ashley remained for some moments in reflection, then his thoughtful face brightened as he said, “I think that you must mean this, Mamma. People who are poor, or weak, or ill like Mrs. Wills, and cannot do anything themselves to get their friends out of trouble, however they may wish to help them, may really do as much or more by praying, than rich, strong people can by trying. 'Cause, their prayers bring One who is much stronger and much greater, and much more able to save. Was that your thought, dear Mamma?”

Ashley had guessed rightly as to the idea which had presented itself to my mind.

I like to exercise my boy's intellect thus. I am often struck by the facility with which he receives allegorical illustrations. The common routine of daily life thus affords opportunities of teaching by parables, and with some classes of minds no other kind of teaching is so impressive.

May 22, Monday.

My poor dear Phemie is in sorrow to-day. Just as I was dismissing the children after the hour of lessons, Eliza came into the room where we were all together, and said that Mrs. Wills' niece had called to let me know that her aunt had died peacefully on the preceding evening. I was vexed at the suddenness of the announcement in the presence of my dear little girls, who have taken such a kind interest in the sufferer. Zaida looked surprised rather than distressed, she is so young that her mind has scarcely formed an idea of death, except as simply going away. Her only remark was the very childlike one, "I am glad I took her the biscuits." But tears rose into Phemie's eyes, she turned and walked up to the window to hide them, but I heard the sound of a little low sob. The quiet unostentatious sorrow of my darling girl touched my heart, while I was thankful to see how tenderly she could feel—as well as how kindly she could work for the poor. Ashley followed his sister to the window; I heard him trying to comfort her in his gentle, affectionate way. I noted down his words, not because there was any-

thing original in them, but as showing how a child of seven years of age can view the subject of death.

“Don't cry, Phemie dear, you know she was one of the jewels. The Lord has only taken the jewel out of the case. They will put the case in the churchyard, down in the ground; but the jewel will be up—high—in heaven, it will shine so bright—like the stars! Perhaps the stars are the Lord's jewels, and if we love and obey Him, we shall shine too one day—a little.”

I applied a less spiritual kind of consolation. I had in the morning received an invitation from my sister, asking that the whole family should pay her a visit at her beautiful country seat in Hampshire. I had intended to say nothing about this to the children until I should have spoken to their father about it, though I had little doubt of his consent; but as I knew that the idea of the visit would give intense pleasure, and I wished to cheer my little girl, I soon afterwards mentioned the possibility of our going ere long to Sunnidale Park.

The faces of the children brightened at the

tidings. My little impetuous Zaida was half wild with joy, for even she can remember the delights of last year's visit, and she often talks of the mossy banks covered with wild flowers, the beautiful deep woods, and the lake shining so brightly in the sunbeams. I believe that my children take their idea of Paradise from my sister's delightful home. Phemie dried her tearful eyes, but the thought of the departed Christian was still on the dear child's mind, for she said in a very low voice, "Mrs. Wills has gone to a still more beautiful place."

"Yes," said Ashley, taking up the thread of idea, and following it up as Phemie could not have done; "we don't think it such a sad thing to leave one dear home for another; we are glad to go, very glad, for we know we'll be welcome, and we're sure we'll be happy. I think it's something like this when good people go to heaven. But then," he added with a shade of sadness, "when we go to Sunnidale we shall all travel *together*, not one by one. I wish we could all die and go to heaven together; one could not bear to be the one left behind!"

Later.

My husband consents to the visit; all is arranged. I hope to start for Sunnidale on Monday. I enjoy the prospect of the visit as much as if I were a child also!

May 23, Tuesday.

My elder children often play or converse together in the room beside me, while I read, work, or attend to my dear little Willie. I often say playfully that it is a positive advantage to have a small house and few servants; such circumstances draw a family so close together. I think that I gain more knowledge of the characters of my children while they are amusing themselves, almost forgetting my presence, than I do when actually conversing with them myself. Mothers lose much pleasure, and much opportunity of influencing their children for good, by sending the little ones away from them during their hours of play, from their own dislike of noise or petty interruptions.

Ashley is rather fond of building castles in the air, and of talking to Phemie of all that he intends to do when he is a man. He said to her to-day, "I shall be glad when I am

grown up, for then I can earn my own living, and help Papa and Mamma."

"I earn now—I help now," replied my little girl, with a placid, self-satisfied air.

"You who are so little, what can you do?" asked Ashley, giving a voice to the question which I was already asking in my own mind.

"I weed in the garden, I hemmed the handkerchiefs, now I'm sewing the curtain," said Phemie with quiet assurance.

"But all that you can do is not earning your living, it is just nothing," exclaimed Ashley.

Phemie looked a little offended at her brother's estimating her labours so lightly; but she merely repeated her words with rather more emphasis than before, "I earn now,—I help now!"

"I work a little too, but I never think that I'm earning my living by it," said Ashley, laughing at the idea. "I only do it because Papa bids me, and I love him, and I like him to smile at me, and say, 'well done!'"

Another nursery parable for me! As

images may be reflected in the tiny sphere of a dewdrop, I traced in this little conversation between two children the different spirit in which workers for God pursue their labours. How much of Phemie's has been my own! I think that she of all my children resembles me most. There has been such a desire in me to *do* something, to *be* something, springing, I fear, from the spirit of bondage that performs the servant's work, looking for the servant's wages. How often have I thought that it has been to check this spirit that I have been thus crippled for a time, that I may learn how little my services are needed, how easily my place can be filled by others. For oh, how can our Heavenly Father regard this kind of working? how does an earthly parent regard it? Can I feel the same pleasure in the border weeded by one whose thought is, "I earn, I work," as in the labour which claims no merit but that of love, no reward save a parent's smile? Surely the highest services which we poor feeble beings can render to God, are but as a child's plucking up of a weed, the poor work of an infant's hands. And yet how graciously, how lovingly are

such services accepted, what a value love stamps upon them! Even the little wild violet which my Zaida brought me to-day was precious, because a token of affection. I shall preserve it, and prize it for her sake. Let me try henceforth not only to say, but to *feel*, that prayers, praises, and sacrifices for God, are but as little wild flowers laid by a child at a parent's feet!

May 24, Wednesday.

When Ashley was alone with me to-day, I marked a troubled expression on his face. I was the more struck by this as the children have been in high spirits preparing for their approaching visit to Sunnidale. I asked my boy if he had had anything in the nursery to vex him."

Ashley (looking half unwilling to speak). No, it's my own thoughts, Mamma. I don't much like to tell you what it is, you will think it so bad.

"Some little feeling of jealousy or of revenge," thought I. "Is it about Tom Wilkins?" I inquired aloud.

Ashley. Oh, no, I really think—I hope that I'm getting over hating him. I said "Good

morning" to him yesterday when I passed him, and he touched his cap and smiled. Perhaps no one had ever taught him how wrong it is to be cruel. Don't you remember, Mamma, long ago I was tormenting a poor butterfly, and you took me on your knee, and told me how God had made it, and how He likes us to be kind to His creatures. Perhaps Tom Wilkins had no Mamma to teach him.

I had forgotten the little incident, till it was thus recalled to my mind.

Ashley. I'll tell you what it is that puzzles me, Mamma, because I like to tell you everything. When Papa sent back his empty bottles the other day, what would the wine-man put into them?

I. The wine-merchant would fill them again with wine.

Ashley. Old wine or new wine, Mamma?

I (smiling). Whichever suited his convenience.

Ashley did not reflect my smile; he looked more troubled than before as he observed, "Mary lived at a wine-merchant's once, and I asked her about it, and she says that he

often put new wine into old bottles, and (the child lowered his tone as he added) the Bible says that men never do so."

I instantly perceived the difficulty which had arisen in the mind of my sweet boy. His reason was vainly trying to reconcile God's Word with what, in practical experience, seemed to him to contradict it; his mind was perplexed, and his conscience disturbed. In a nature constituted like his, this is a trial likely often to arise, and I felt thankful for the opportunity of saying a few words which may, if it please God to bless them, assist my Ashley when more serious difficulties try his faith.

I. I suppose that you are thinking of the Lord's words, *No man putteth new wine into old bottles, else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred.*

Ashley. Yes, Mamma, that's the verse. Now it seems to me that no one makes any difference between old bottles and new ones; new wine *is* put into old bottles, and yet the bottles don't burst.

I. That is true, my son.

Ashley (much perplexed). But the Bible must be true too.

I. The Bible is Truth itself—of this we must always be certain; it is *our ignorance* that throws a mist around it. Now the explanation of your difficulty is simple enough. Our Lord was not speaking of glass bottles like ours, but of leathern bottles, such as were always used by the people whom He was addressing: such bottles—like shoes—would of course become worn-out in time. New wine, when fermenting, would swell out and stretch whatever held it; a fresh skin bottle would bear the stretching, but an old one, stiff and dry, would crack and split, and let out the wine. What the Lord said was exactly true; it was your ignorance of Eastern customs that caused any difficulty to arise in your mind.

Ashley (looking relieved). Oh, now I understand it quite well! I only knew about glass bottles; I did not know that any one ever used bottles made of skins. I will always come to you, Mamma, when I have any difficulties, and you will explain them away in a moment.

I. I cannot promise to do that, Ashley: there are many things in the Bible which I cannot myself understand.

Ashley (looking surprised). Can you not, Mamma? But Papa, then—he knows everything.

I. No, there are some things which neither your dear father, nor the most learned men in the world, can fully understand.

Ashley (uneasily). Then what must they do, Mamma?

I. Believe, my son; trust and believe.

Ashley did not look satisfied.

I. We are all of us—the wisest, the holiest—only as children learning of God. How can we expect to understand things high above the reach of our minds, things which belong to the world unseen? Zaida knows more than baby, you know more than Zaida, but you could not understand one word of some of the books belonging to your father.

Ashley. No, I could not even make out the letters of one into which I happened to look. But I shall when I grow older.

I. Perhaps in another world the deep

things which perplex us now will all be made plain to our minds. *We shall know even as we are known.*

Ashley. But God could prevent our having these difficulties now.

I. God could, my boy; but I believe that He has a wise purpose in leaving these difficulties. They try our humility and our faith.

Ashley. I don't quite understand you, Mamma.

I. Pride does not like to confess ignorance. It is ignorance from which our difficulties arise, and when we meekly own this, we show *humility*. And when we humbly believe God's Word, even when we cannot comprehend it, when we are sure that the Bible must be right, then we show *faith*—which is pleasing to God.

May 25, Thursday.

Emily paid me a visit to-day. Our conversation usually turns on the subject of our children, and I read to my friend what I had noted down yesterday of what had passed between Ashley and myself. She listened with grave interest to the little dialogue, and then the following remarks ensued:—

Emily. Did you not show surprise and distress at the shadow of a doubt having passed over the mind of one so young?

I. No. Had I done so I should have thrown my boy back on himself, and prevented his opening out his mind to his mother. I always invite confidence; a look of surprise or of pain would instantly have repelled it, and I should have lost the opportunity of dispelling the shadow from his mind. I remember having myself, when I was a child, mentioned some small difficulty regarding religion to a relative much older than myself. She looked shocked at my artless question; I received a rebuke—but no explanation. The impression left on my mind was that no explanation *could* be given; and I retained this unhappy impression for years, till accidentally—or providentially—I met in a book with a full solution of my problem. The rebuke had effectually *silenced*, but it certainly had not *convinced* me. I never asked a similar question of that relative again; I struggled on in silence with the thoughts which distressed and perplexed me. I have often since reflected how easily might a few

kind judicious words have lighted up the darkness which proceeded only from the natural ignorance of childhood.

Emily. I am most thankful that my precious Rowley never has a difficulty or a doubt!

I could not help thinking, "Perhaps he never exercises his mind at all on these subjects;" but I did not give utterance to the thought.

Emily. I am most anxious to bring up my Rowley for God. It's my heart's desire that he should become a clergyman; I am always telling him so.

I. Might it not be better to wait till the desire of holding the sacred office of a pastor first develop itself in *his* heart? I have the same desire for my Ashley, but I have never yet mentioned it to him. Not even filial love should be the motive for a man's giving himself to the work of the Christian ministry.

Emily. There is a great deal, however, in early training of the mind. I always make a point of my Rowley's going twice to church on Sundays; doubtless you do the same with Ashley.

I. No; my boy has never been twice to church on one day; nor shall I take him a second time until he asks me to do so.

Emily. You much surprise me, Zaida! I thought that you brought up your family in such a very religious way.

I. I do not think that a child of seven can keep his attention to devotional exercises through two long services. I wish my son to love religion, to love God's day, to render to his Lord the homage of the heart, not only of the lips. I believe that I should defeat this most important object by making him associate the house of prayer with thoughts of weariness, the Lord's day with ideas of painful restraint.

Emily. I must confess that Rowley dislikes Sunday; in his frankness he tells me so plainly; and he not unfrequently falls fast asleep during afternoon service. But I have always hoped that habit would reconcile him to what he finds wearisome now.

I. Does experience teach us so, dear friend? Do we not meet with unhappy men who are altogether neglectful of the forms of religion, because, as they say, they had too much of

them in their childhood? I cannot forget the story which I once heard of a little one, very strictly brought up, who, when told that life in heaven would be much like an earthly Sabbath, observed, "Then I hope that I'll not go to heaven."

Emily. How shocking!

I. Shocking words, but conveying a warning which it seems to me that Christian parents would do well not to neglect.

Emily. But how can one make Sunday happy to children?

I. To do so requires thought—and sometimes self-denial on the part of the mother.

Emily. One cannot be reading Bible stories or repeating hymns to a child all the day long.

I. Nor do I believe that the Almighty requires that a little one's mind should be exclusively given to religion for the whole of the Sunday. Not one out of a thousand could bear it.

Emily. But how do you vary occupation without lowering the sanctity of the Sabbath in the eyes of your children?

I. I do not exclude God's book of nature on God's holy day. My large illustrated book of animals and insects, my collection of shells and wild flowers, afford a great deal of innocent amusement, while I seek, as occasion offers, to lead the mind of my children "from nature up to nature's God." All my three have enjoyed making a list (it is to be a birthday present for me) of all the animals, birds, insects, and plants of which we hear in the Bible. Ashley takes the writing part, Phemie searches the Scriptures, Zaida helps—or fancies that she helps—with suggestions, and considers that she has contributed the ant, the lion, and the bear. Then we allow the children to sit beside us all through dinner-time on Sundays, an indulgence which in itself outweighs such week-day pleasures as they are called on to forego. I think that my children really enjoy the Sunday, especially since I have introduced Sunday clocks, perhaps the most popular amusement of all.

Emily. Sunday clocks, what may they be? I never heard of them before.

I pointed out to Emily's attention half a sheet of foolscap paper fastened up on the

wall, just over against the place where I usually sit at my desk. She went and examined it with some curiosity. A large circle, to represent the face of a clock, is rather neatly drawn upon it, and two little paper hands fastened in the centre; but instead of numbers, *texts* are written around, in Ashley's smallest printing-hand, each consisting of exactly as many words as would represent the strokes of the clock at that hour.

Emily. Did your boy really do this all by himself?

I. Phemie, and even little Zaida helped him to find out texts containing the proper number of words. I assisted a little with "ten," "eleven," and "twelve," as the number of words in each made it difficult for Ashley to crowd the long sentence into so small a space.

Emily. This is an admirable idea. I shall certainly set my Rowley to make me a Sunday clock.

I. My children are looking forward with impatience to next Sunday, when they are to finish a very splendid clock of card-board,

with red ink letters, and gilt-paper hands, a gift for their Aunt at Sunnidale.

Emily. I should have thought that when one clock was made, all the interest of the occupation would be over. Mere copying is so tiresome.

I. But one clock is not copied from another. At my suggestion the children vary the texts according to the circumstances of the person to whom their little present is to be given. For instance,—you see that the first numbers on my clock are—REJOICE—SING PRAISES—GOD IS LOVE—for, as my little Zaida observed, “Mamma’s clock must be all joyful!” One that was made for a poor sufferer in whom my children were interested was to be “a comforting clock.” Its first numbers, I recollect, were—HOPE—BE PATIENT—BE NOT AFRAID—and THY WILL BE DONE. Ashley made a clock for himself, which is hung up close to his bed, but this was to be “a teaching clock.” WATCH—BE KIND—LOVE ONE ANOTHER—were texts selected for that.

Emily. How searching for such appropriate texts must increase your children’s knowledge

of, and interest in, the Bible! * Pray let me take home your clock to show to my Rowley; he is far more likely to fancy the occupation after seeing what others have done. I shall go to the stationer on my way home, and lay in a little supply of card-board, coloured ink, and gilt-paper. You do not know how thankful I should be to find some Sunday amusement that would really please and instruct my darling.

Later.

Zaida came to me after her walk to-day, full of delight, with an opened sycamore pod in her chubby little hand. Showing me the soft silky down within, "Mamma," she exclaimed, "see how God wraps up the little seeds so soft and warm like babies!"

May my little one thus ever see God in all His works; may she trace His hand in all the brightness and beauty with which He has clothed this world! I was struck by Ashley's

* My idea of a "Sunday clock" was taken from a very beautiful little volume (not intended for children), entitled, "The Tongue of Time," in which to each hour of the day is given not only its text, but its appropriate thoughts of devotion. It struck me that it might interest children to make diagrams, such as the volume contains, choosing their own texts for the hours; and I found the occupation so popular with the young, that I suggest its introduction to the numerous Christian mothers who, like myself, have been anxious to find out some means of making Sunday a happy as well as a holy day.

remark in regard to this beautiful season of spring, "I think that all the flowers are preaching, and all the birds are praising!" He often repeats his favourite verse from a well-known hymn:—

"Thy bountiful care
 What tongue can recite,
 It breathes in the air,
 It shines on the light;
 It streams from the hills,
 It descends to the plain,
 And swiftly distils
 In the dew and the rain."

Ashley is delighted with the beautiful flow of the poetry, as well as with the truth which it contains. How acutely sensitive some children are to the charms of verse! When such is the case, poetry becomes a valuable vehicle for imparting religious instruction.

May 26, Friday.

Dear Emily left yesterday a handsome present for my Zaida, who is her god-daughter, of a very pretty phantascope. I did not give it at once to my child, as I wished to consult William as to the expediency of my presenting Phemie and Ashley with something at the same time, to prevent any feeling of jealousy towards their younger sister from arising in

their hearts. I suggested to William that this might be an occasion for bestowing pretty new books on the two elder children.

William. There is no harm in giving the books, but I see no reason for your selecting the present time for so doing.

I. I have always endeavoured to divide every pleasure evenly between our children, so that none of them should ever have the shadow of a reason for envying another. I keep in mind your remark, "Children have a strong sense of justice."

William. But this is no question of justice, my love. You do not bestow a gift upon one of your children, neglecting the others; you show no partiality, that grievous error in a parent, which is so fertile a source of misery and dissension in families. This is simply a question whether a disposition to jealousy be checked or encouraged by our making up to the other children (as far as we are able to do so) for some casual advantage possessed by one of the party.

I. Jealousy *encouraged* ! how is that possible ?

William. Remember that when our chil-

dren enter into life, their circumstances will vary considerably, according to the usual order of events. Look at your own family, Zaida. Your sister married a rich man—you a comparatively poor one; but you have no sense of wrong, no feeling of jealousy, because Euphemia dwells in a splendid mansion, you in a small villa not six miles from the city.

I. Jealousy—oh, no! I think myself the richest woman in the world. Envy is the very last failing for which your wife would have any excuse. Besides, dear Euphemia shares her good things with us; and I enjoy her beautiful home almost as much as if it were my own.

William. That is exactly the spirit in which I would wish Ashley and Phemie to regard what they will deem the grand possession of their sister. Here we come to the point under discussion. If children are trained to think that they are not treated with justice unless every incidental advantage possessed by one be “made up” to the others, how will they regard in future life natural inequalities of fortune? Instead of sincere honest pleasure in the prosperity of a brother,

there is likely to be a secret disposition to repine at the disparity between the fortunes of those who in the nursery were equals. Carry Zaida's present to her, my love, call the others to rejoice with her, let them feel that good fortune to one is good fortune to all; and never give them such an idea of justice requiring perfect equality as will be falsified by all that they will see of God's providential dealings with men. The children are equal in our affection, our care, but they must not expect—nor wish—in all other things to be equal.

I see clearly the reasonableness of what my dear husband has said. I should have fostered a spirit of jealousy by the very means which I tried in order to check it. I was forgetting that in the nursery children are trained for their future sphere in the world, and that we must never lose sight of the consequences resulting from early impressions.

Later.

Every one is delighted with Zaida's present. I thought at first that I detected a little shade of envy on Phemie's face, but it almost in-

stantly passed away; and now I fancy that I hear from the nursery above the sound of her musical box. She has learned a lesson of kindness from her open-hearted little sister, and I doubt not that Zaida is now displaying her phantascope to delighted spectators, to the sweet sound of Phemie's music.

May 27, Saturday.

How rapidly the weeks roll round! here is the end of another. Zaida came to me to-day with her round face dimpled with smiles. "Mamma," said she, rising on tiptoe to give more effect to her very audible whisper; "haven't I been a bit better little girl this week—not quite so dreadful cross? I have always stopped when you was a-counting." This refers to a very mild measure which I have not unfrequently found successful in curbing Zaida's less violent fits of temper. I merely cover my eyes with my hand, and count twenty aloud, in a slow, deliberate manner, to give the little one time to recover her good humour. When I withdraw my hand, it is usually a face bright with smiles that is looking up into mine. The innocent desire to "give Mamma a surprise" is often

sufficient to allay the little gust of passion. This is of course not the case when violent storms arise, but this, I am thankful to write, is not now a frequent occurrence.

May 28, Sunday.

Happy Sunday has returned again, and this one is especially happy, for on this day I have been permitted once more to worship in God's courts with my husband and children. *Bless the Lord, O my soul!*

My darlings are now happy beside me, making the Sunday clock for my sister, which is to be carried to Sunnidale to-morrow.

Later.

I was interrupted just now by Ashley, who came up to my sofa with his pen in one hand, and his Bible in the other.

Ashley. Would, *We walk by faith and not by sight*, be a good text to put for eight o'clock, Mamma?

I. An excellent text, my boy.

Ashley. But I don't understand what it means.

I. Our daily *walk* means our daily course of conduct. Enoch *walked with God*, that is, God was in his thoughts—he constantly acted

in obedience to the will of his God—he lived as one who feels that God's eye is always upon him.

Ashley. But what is it to walk by *faith* and *not by sight*.

I. Worldly people *walk by sight*, that is, their daily conduct is according to what they *see* around them, they seldom give a thought to the holy, heavenly things which they cannot *see*.

Ashley. Still that verse is a hard one to me.

I. I will try to show you its meaning in a different way.

I opened the drawer of my desk, and took out a piece of money and a folded bank-note, and placing them before my son, asked him which he thought of most value.

Ashley. The bright gold sovereign of course is worth more than that little bit of paper.

I. You are judging by *sight*, my son. Now when I tell you that the coin is not gold, but merely a bright copper farthing, and that the folded paper is worth nearly a thousand of such, which will you think of most value now ?

Ashley (looking surprised). Well, Mamma, of course I believe you, for you always tell the truth, but I should never have thought it, if you had not said it.

I. You have *faith* in my word, my son. And now, if you had the choice of the two things before you, which would you take?

Ashley. I should certainly take the paper.

I. That is to say, you would *choose* by *faith*, not by *sight*. Now can you apply all this to the daily walk of the Christian?

Ashley (after a pause for thought). Yes, it is all plain now. Worldly people prize worldly things that they *see*, and think them more precious than they really are, as I took the copper for gold. Good people—I mean people who have *faith* in God's word—believe that heavenly things are the best things, although they cannot see them, any more than I could see the value of that bit of paper.

Here Zaida came running up to her brother.

Zaida. Oh, Ashy, put in *Suffer the little children to come unto me*, that's my favourite verse of all.

Ashley (after silently counting on his fingers the number of words). No, Zaida, that

would be for eight o'clock, and I've found a beautiful verse for eight o'clock already, *We walk by faith, and not by sight.*

Zaida (entreatingly). Oh, but do put mine in, please, for my sake; I like about the dear little children.

Ashley was unwilling to omit the text which he had taken such pains to understand, and yet he did not like to disappoint his dear little sister. Phemie, with her quiet good sense, came to the assistance of her brother.

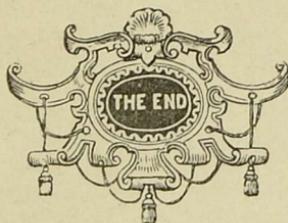
Phemie. Let's put in, *And forbid them not* too, that will make the text long enough for twelve o'clock, and Zaida will have her favourite verse at the top of the Sunday clock.

Zaida. Oh! that will do—that will do nicely. *Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not;* I do love that beautiful verse!

My heart echoes the words of my own little lamb; I too do "love that beautiful verse." It is as Bethlehem's star to the mother who in humble faith would lead her little ones to the Saviour, to Him who deigned for their sakes once to become Himself a child.

Oh! gracious and loving Lord, breathe Thy

blessing now upon me and mine, guide us by Thy counsel here, and afterwards receive us to glory. Make us a holy united family on earth—a rejoicing unbroken family in the world of light! Water with the dew of Thy grace,—ripen with the sunshine of Thy love—the good seed which I seek to sow in the infant mind! Let me at the last great day,—saved by Thy mercy, redeemed by Thy blood,—exclaim with joy in Thy presence, *Lo, I and the children whom Thou hast given me!*



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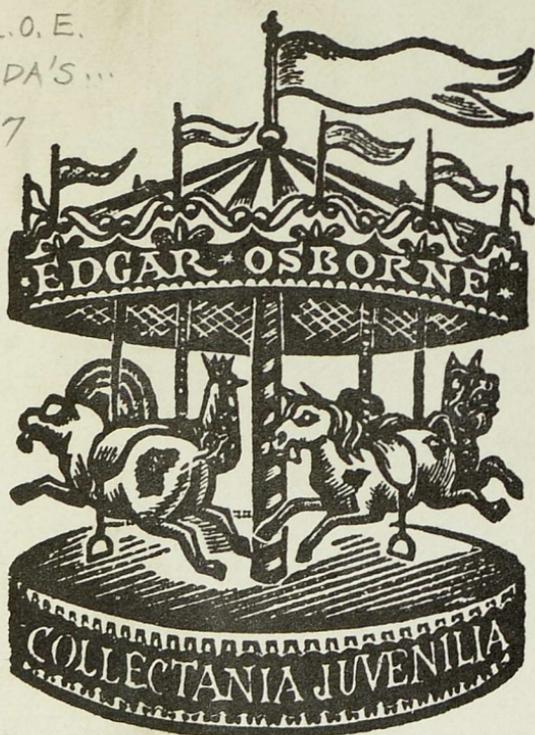
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