TALKS TO BOYS

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BY

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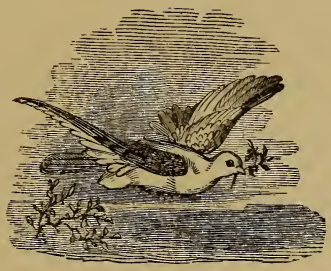

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,
150 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK.

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TO THE BOYS WHO WILL READ THIS BOOK.

My Dear Boys:—I think you will discover by the time you have read this book that the writer of it likes boys, and you will also perceive as you turn its pages that I have a good many boy friends. It is through them that these "Talks" have come to be written out, for they are the direct result of genuine talks which I have had at various times either with my Sunday-school boys or my "other boys." Some of them have occurred in the half-hour which my Sunday-school class always takes for general chat before the school is opened; some are bits from the lesson itself; and others have come about on Saturday evenings or other odd times, when some of the "other boys" have dropped in for a half-hour.

Thus there are in it, as you will see, "Sunday talks" and "every-day talks," but after all they each bear upon the same thing in the end, and that is—how a boy may train himself day by day into a nobler life. And I have put these talks into print in the hope that boys whom I may never see and talk with face to face, yet of whom I often think, may find within these pages something which shall be a help to them upon the upward way.

E. A. H.

TALKS TO BOYS.

TRIFLES.

They were only some little snowflakes,
So feathery, soft, and light;
Yet a host of them together
Stopped a train of cars one night;

And the shivering, frightened people
Fought with hunger and cold
Long hours ere they were rescued
From the little snowflakes' hold.

They were only some little raindrops
Who lived afar in the sky;
But they said, "Let 's drop together
Down into that field so dry."

So they jumped down, laughing and splashing,
With a music fine and sweet,
And saved with their gracious moisture
The field of withering wheat.

Oh! my boys, come near while I tell you—
Let me speak as clear as I can:
'T is little deeds, for wrong or right,
That will make or mar the man.

Let your thoughts, your words, and your actions
Be honest and kind and true,
And the crown of a noble manhood
Will surely belong to you.

WHAT TO BE.

If a boy knows what trade, business, or profession he wishes to have when he is a man, it is a very good thing. There is no doubt that he should follow his bent, and his education should be such as will help him best to develop those faculties which he will use in his work. But many a boy of good abilities, honest and sincere, does not know what he wants to be. It is for such boys that this article is written.

I feel sure that there is some particular work given to every one who is born into this world. And I think that if a boy will patiently and seriously study his own nature, in time he can find out what his work is. It is a good plan, in the first place, to find out what one cannot do. Many of the arts, for instance, require a genius—and that means more than a taste, or even a talent—for their successful pursuit. And there are at least two professions which should not be attempted unless one is sure of an unmistakable call towards them. A boy should never dare attempt to be a physician unless he has not only the strongest taste for the twin sciences of surgery and medicine, but also a love for humanity so broad and deep and unselfish that he cannot be satisfied with anything less than

spending his lifetime in alleviating its miseries. And before he enters the Christian ministry he should be equally sure that he can be satisfied with no other life-work, and that he is willing to make the same self-consecration for the souls that a doctor does for the bodies of men.

Regarding what are called "the professions:" never choose one because of the honor or distinction which it may bring you. No profession ever distinguished a man; on the contrary, if a man does not ennoble and dignify his profession he disgraces it.

Many pursuits are in these days barred out because they are not considered suitable for a gentleman. This is a mistake. All labor is honorable, and any man is a gentleman who behaves like one; and I know men to-day who have failed in life because they were put into a profession or a business, when if they had been allowed to learn their favorite trade or handicraft, they would have been successful and happy. So if you have a strong taste for anything of that sort, be sure it is a bent of your nature and not a fancy, then make your choice, stick to it, and be happy.

I know a gentleman, now living in a New England college town, where plain living and high thinking are yet the fashion, and he made such a choice and became a blacksmith; and he

is the most wonderful blacksmith I ever heard of. He has a power of subduing vicious animals which is phenomenal, and which two hundred years ago would have given him a reputation for sorcery. He shoes the most untamable horses entirely unaided; the touch of his hand, the sound of his voice, and the steady gaze of his bright dark eyes, in a short time after they are brought to him, quiet and subdue them and render them obedient to his will. This gentleman is a well-educated man, a reader and a thinker, and he is considered the social equal of any one in the place; and I did not know whether to admire him more as he stood before his anvil, with his leather apron buckled on and his sleeves rolled up to his shoulders, displaying the magnificent muscles of his arm, while with his great hammer he smote with mighty blows the iron he was fashioning, making showers of sparks fly all about the place, or when, on the evening of the same day, he came forward to speak to me at the president's levee with the same easy and gentle manners with which he had welcomed me to his shop. And I imagine that if that man had attempted to be anything else than a blacksmith he would have disobeyed a divine call.

And when you have made your choice, remember that fitness for your business is not the

only thing. Long years of steady work may be necessary before you gain success. Without industry genius itself is nothing; but patient continuance in well-doing will surely win its reward.

A TALK TO BUSINESS BOYS.

THE first year of a boy's business life is a critical one. He comes, perhaps, from a country home, certainly from a school-life well hedged about and protected by careful parents and teachers. He has lived heretofore under conditions in which it was easier to go right than wrong, and it is indeed a change when he takes life into his own hands and plunges into a great city's business current whose ramifications encircle the world, and becomes one little atom in its vast force. Then it is he gets his first practical experience of life and gains his first real knowledge of men and things. Then, too, he begins to find out what metal he himself is made of, and to shape his life's course; and as he gives it an upward or a downward curve, so it is apt to continue.

A boy's first position in a commercial house is usually at the foot of the ladder; his duties are plain, his place is insignificant, and his salary is small. He is expected to familiarize himself

with the business, and as he becomes more intelligent in regard to it he is advanced to a more responsible place. His first duty, then, is to his work. He must cultivate day by day habits of fidelity, accuracy, neatness, and despatch, and these qualities will tell in his favor as surely as the world revolves. Though he may work unnoticed and uncommended for months, such conduct always meets its reward.

I once knew a boy who was a clerk in a large mercantile house which employed, as entry clerks, shipping clerks, buyers, bookkeepers, and salesmen, eighty young men, besides a small army of porters, packers, and truckmen; and this boy of seventeen felt that amid such a crowd he was lost to notice, and that any efforts he might make would be quite unregarded. Nevertheless he did his duty; every morning at eight o'clock he was promptly in his place, and every power that he possessed was brought to bear upon his work. After he had been with the firm a year he had occasion to ask them for the favor of a week's leave of absence during the busy season.

"That," was the response, "is an unusual request, and one which it is somewhat inconvenient for us to grant; but to show you that we appreciate the efforts you have made since you have been with us, we take pleasure

in giving you the leave of absence for which you ask."

"I did n't think," said the boy, when he came home that night and related his success, "that they knew a thing about me, but it seems they have watched me ever since I have been with them."

They had indeed watched him, and had selected him for advancement; for shortly after he was promoted to a position of trust with an appropriate increase of salary.

It must be so, sooner or later, for there is always a demand for excellent work. A boy who means to build up for himself a successful business will find it a long and difficult task, even if he brings to bear his best efforts both of body and of mind; but he who thinks to win without doing his very best will find himself a loser in the race.

There is no position in life more honorable than that of a successful business man, and there are few more influential. It is the judgment and advice of business men that guide affairs of national importance. The most wonderful inventions of the age are but servants to do their bidding. It is no wonder that they are called "Railroad Kings" and "Merchant Princes," when we see the power they possess. How necessary, then, that the boys who are growing

up to take the places of those men who now direct our commerce and manufactures, should be noble-hearted, honorable, and intelligent men, not amassing wealth for its own sake or for the selfish pleasures which it brings, but to bestow it in a wise philanthropy for the comfort, welfare, and advancement of their fellow-men.

A TALK TO POOR BOYS.

If a boy has good health and an intelligent mind, the best thing that can happen to him is to have to make his own way in life; for every struggle increases his strength and every success gives him fresh courage and confidence, and whatever he wishes to be he can be. In this land of cheap books and free schools, if he desires an education he can get it. If he has a real thirst for knowledge, he can work his way through college as many another boy has done before him, and enter any profession he chooses. So many of our distinguished men have fought this fight and have reached their present eminence entirely through their own exertions, that it seems sometimes as if that was the only path to fame and honor, and as if all one had to do was to start at the bottom to end at the top; but the fact is that all poor boys do not become suc-

cessful men. As Mr. Howells puts it, "I have known too many men who had *all* the disadvantage and who never came to anything." Those are the men who have neither the industry nor the pluck to work and fight through long years, if need be, until the battle is won. The world is full of discontented and unhappy men, the cowards and deserters in the fight of life, lagging in the rear, hiding behind every shelter they can find, and grumbling because they cannot get somebody to fight and work for them. Envious of their neighbors who are better off, forgetting that other men have won their ease and comfort through their own industry and thrift, they blame everybody for their misfortunes except themselves. I do not know of what use such men are in this world, unless it be as warnings to the rising generation.

Never say you cannot do a thing because you have not the chance. If you really wish to do it and need to do it, the opportunity will come; and if you are swift to see it and quick to take it, it is yours.

But perhaps a boy who is reading this may say, "Ah, but I have more than myself to take care of. If I had only myself I could manage; but I have mother and the children, and I am the only man there is in the family." That is the best of all. A boy with such a trust never

can nor will desert it; and he is learning daily such lessons of endurance, industry, and unselfishness as will be of priceless value to him during his whole life. Courage, my dear brave fellow, for you are sure to win.

A poor boy learns to "endure hardness like a good soldier," and things which others could not bear he takes as easily as a trained athlete lifts a weight which untrained muscles could not stir. So be thankful if you have been sent to school to Mistress Poverty, for though she is the sternest, yet she is the wisest and most faithful teacher, and if you will learn the tasks she sets, you will surely become a brave and noble man.

A TALK TO RICH BOYS.

THERE is no doubt that to be the son of a rich father is apt to be a disadvantage to a boy. He has all the clothes he needs, made of excellent material, well cut and suitable, his food is of the best, and the house in which he lives has every comfort and luxury. He has no anxiety about his school bills and he has plenty of money in his pockets. He is sent to the best of schools in the winter and goes to pleasant resorts in the summer or takes delightful journeys. His father and mother grant him every

indulgence, and when he has finished college, where he has doubtless been lodged like a young Sybarite, he is given every help that money can furnish to establish him in his chosen business or profession. All this is extremely hard on a boy. It is hard on him mentally, morally, and physically, and if he lives through it and comes out a noble man, he is indeed made of excellent metal. He knows nothing of anxiety or care, and he knows nothing of physical labor. He has no need of self-denial, industry, or endurance, and how can qualities which never are exercised be developed? I have read of a wealthy man who felt these things so keenly that after having given his son a liberal education, he shoved him out of the parental nest and made him shift for himself, and when he died left his fortune entirely to charity. I think he would have done better if he had educated that son as to the care, use, and value of money, and then left him the money as a sacred trust to be used both for himself and for his fellow-men. I feel sure that money was meant to be a blessing and not a curse, and that if we estimate it at its right value and use it as we should, it will prove to be so.

A rich boy, then, ought to be just as fine a fellow as a poor boy. Every virtue which a

poor boy is obliged to cultivate if he makes a man of himself, a rich boy ought to cultivate for the same reason. He ought to rise superior to luxuries and to prove that if need be he can do without them. He should resist every temptation to dissipate, and learn to work just as thoroughly and heartily as a poor boy must. Try during next vacation, if you are a rich boy, and see if you have sufficient pluck and knowledge to earn your own living. Insist always upon doing everything that you can for yourself. Play hard, work hard, and study hard, so as to fit yourself for the trust which is coming to you in your manhood. Remember that it is not the one who has the best start who wins the race, but the one who has the best staying power. You may have every possible advantage and help, but if you do not improve them they are of no benefit; for after all you are the one who must make a man of yourself, and if you do not do it no one else can.

The annals of our country bear many honored names of men who never knew the sharp discipline of poverty, and who, being born with every advantage which wealth and position can give, realized that these blessings were also added responsibilities—for from him to whom much is given much shall be required; and they nobly fulfilled their trust. They have left

their mark upon the literature and art of their country. They have been in the van of noble reforms, and their philanthropy has been as wide as the land which they sought to benefit. And if a boy who has money will remember these things and will fit himself for that station in life to which it has pleased God to call him, his wealth will be a blessing to him and to the community in which he lives.

A TALK TO SCHOOLBOYS.

I SUPPOSE most boys think that the reason why they are sent to school is to get an education, and that if they learn their lessons sufficiently well to pass the examinations and finish the prescribed course of study and be graduated, they will have that education and be ready for the business of life. But the object of the best schools now-a-days is not simply the book-learning to be gained, but to give to a boy's spirit, mind, and body the best moral, mental, and physical training which he is capable of receiving, so that when school-days are ended a boy shall be equipped with a healthy and active body, a mind with alert perceptions and well-trained reasoning faculties, and a moral nature whose will is strong enough to govern both mind and

body perfectly. This is a great deal to do, but it can be done if a boy will help his school to do it; and the way he can help is by his conduct. When a boy behaves well he always plays his fairest and studies his best, so that his mind and body and spirit are all being trained well together.

Every boy cannot carry off the first prize in his school for languages or mathematics, but every boy can be perfect in conduct if he will. And for the comfort of those boys who do not rank first in class I will say that although rank in class is always worth trying for, and every boy is bound to do his best, yet it is not always the most brilliant scholars who make the most successful men. I was reading not long since the experience of a gentleman who gained a part of his education at that historic institution, the oldest school in America, which is called the Boston Latin School. Says he:

"I came home from this school at the end of the first month with a report which showed that I was ninth in a class of fifteen; that is about the average rank which I generally had. I showed it to my mother because I had to. To my great surprise and relief she said it was a very good report. I said I thought she would be displeased because I was so low in the class. 'Oh,' said she, 'that is no matter. Probably the

other boys are brighter than you; God made them so and you cannot help that. But the report says you are among the boys who behave well. That you can see to, and that is all I care about.'"

That boy is now one of our wisest philanthropists and one of our most brilliant writers besides.

Every boy knows that he transacts a good deal of business during a school-term besides learning his lessons and playing his games. He has a great many plans and schemes which he is busy about. Perhaps he takes to taxidermy, and has various natural history collections of beast, bird, or fish. Or he plunges into mineralogy or botany with enthusiasm. Or he is occupied with private experiments in chemistry or inventions in mechanics, and all these things are excellent in their way and are as much a part of his education as his lessons. But it is on these points that I would like to give my boy friends a gentle word of warning. For one thing, do not spend too much time on these things. Keep them in their proper place and they will rarely get you into trouble. Occasionally, however, something may go wrong through your inexperience or carelessness. It is surprising what a propensity things have to explode or to burn up, or at the least to make a

very bad smell or to leave a dreadful stain, when they are being managed by a boy. Well, when you are in your scrape, own up and take the consequences and never attempt to slide out of it. You will have gained a valuable piece of experience, for I am sure you will never attempt to do that particular thing again in exactly that way, besides adding a bit of strength to your moral character by a temptation successfully resisted.

School-days are a delightful period of life. I do n't say that they are the happiest times you will ever see, for I do n't think that will be true; but it is true that your happiness and excellence as men depend greatly upon the use you make of your time while you are boys, for now you are building, habit by habit and thought by thought, the characters which you will have when you are men. So you should cherish now every generous aim and noble ambition which you would like to achieve as men, and scorn every mean and ignoble act now as cordially as you expect to do then, and practise every Christian virtue now as heartily as you mean to do then; and if you do these things you will be certain of a life which will bring happiness to yourself and a blessing to every one with whom it comes in contact.

ON TELLING THE TRUTH.

THEY teach two things at West Point which I wish were taught with equal thoroughness in every school in the land. One is to love the flag of our country, and the other is to speak the truth. The word of a cadet is accepted always unquestionably, but if he is detected in a falsehood he is dismissed from the service; and it would be well for every school if all were governed upon this point in a manner at once as trusting and as rigid.

Sometimes there comes a crisis in a boy's school or college life when a falsehood seems so easy and the truth so hard to tell—nobody knows how hard save the boy who has to tell it—that the sympathies of his friends would be very deep if they knew of the struggle; and if by writing this article I could help any boy who is in such a strait, I should be very glad.

Some time since I heard a boy who was in college giving his brother an account of a recent college scrape from which he had wisely retreated in time.

"You see," said the narrator, whom we will call Don for the time of this story, "we had settled on that night for 'the rush,' and Prex got hold of it in some way; so he said in chapel

that morning that no member of the Sophomore class should be out that evening after eight o'clock without being able to give a satisfactory account of himself. If he was out and was recognized, he would be expelled."

Now Don was at that time a Sophomore, and he was and is a lad with both a heart and a conscience, but he is so bubbling over with fun and brimming with life and vitality that his more valuable qualities are apt to be somewhat obscured.

"Well," he went on, "as soon as it got dark we rigged up so that it would n't be quite so easy for old Savage" (the college proctor) "to spot us, and we went out on the campus. All the fellows were there shrieking and howling and in for a good time, and we were just getting formed into line when I felt some one touch me on the shoulder, and there was old Savage. 'Beg your pardon, Mr. B——,' says he as polite as you please, 'but I must request you to go at once to your room and to stay there. If you do not I shall be obliged to report your name to the president, and you know what the consequences will be.' And he warned all of the other fellows, too, but some he did n't call by name. You see Prex had told him to give us one more chance. Of course we all scattered, and some of us went in. I did, but oh, how I did hate to! But I

knew it would be sure death if I did not, for Savage had my name listed, and I thought of mother; so I went up to my room and pegged away at my Greek all the evening. Some of the fellows came back later, and they were called before the Faculty and expelled, but there were a few that there was n't any proof positive about, and some of them lied out of it, and they stayed. Well," continued Don, sitting up and looking very earnest, "it was a falsehood they told, and no mistake. Every fellow in college knows it and Prex suspects it, but he can't prove it; and I look at them as they are going about, and I think they must feel mighty mean. But the question is, if I had been in their fix would n't I have done the same? I tell you when expulsion comes so near as that, it looks like a very serious business. You think of the folks at home and all the trouble there will be there, and you do n't have to tell on anybody else, you know. It is just to keep still about yourself, and it is very easy to do that and very hard to do the other thing. I 'm glad I did n't have to choose; I 'm glad I went in when old Savage told me to."

I thought then of another boy, whom I had known years ago, who had once to make that very choice, and who at the last moment chose the right and told the truth, though he then thought that it ruined his prospects for life. He

had with a number of others transgressed the rules of his college, and he was summoned before the Faculty to answer the charges against him. A little deceit would have saved him, and one of the members of the Faculty, knowing it, suggested that he might not be reliable; but the boy turned to the old president, a man whom the greatest madcap among them loved and honored, and said, "I have never told you a lie yet, President F——, and I don't mean to begin now."

"That is quite sufficient," responded the president, who knew the nature with which he was dealing. "I believe you. Proceed with your story."

The boy told it, was convicted, and expelled from the college. How he bore the shame and disgrace of that time he never could tell, but he was saved as by fire; and he left behind him with his college life his old foolish self and strove with all his might to make himself a noble man, and he succeeded. And I feel sure he would not have made the man he is to-day, had he remained in college through his own deception and graduated at the expense of a lie. But he won his manhood through a bitter struggle, which he need not have fought if he had bravely resisted that sudden, sharp temptation which wrecked his college life.

I find that there are two morals to my talk this time. One is that it is never too late to

mend. No matter how far you have gone astray, dare to turn around and do right at whatever cost, and you may be sure that it will be better for you both in this present life and in the life to come. And the second moral is—Do not do wrong in the first place. Never turn aside from the right track, for, after all, that is the nobler and wiser as well as the happier way.

ON SPENDING AND SAVING.

I ONCE knew two brothers who went through college on exactly the same allowance. It was not an extravagant allowance, neither was it scanty, but "'t was enough, 't would serve," if they were reasonably prudent. It was paid to each lad quarterly, and they were allowed to spend it just as they thought best. The elder lad was always well dressed, had sufficient books, his board-bill was promptly settled, and he always had a surplus for amusements and incidentals. The other was apt to look rather shabby, and he always had hard work to make both ends meet. For about a week after quarter-day he lived in affluence; at the end of that time he would thrust his two fists into his empty pockets and inquire in blank despair, "Where does the money go to?"

"I've paid my paper bill and laundry bill," he remarked on one occasion, "I've had a pair of shoes mended; I've bought three neckties—I had to have them—and 'pon my word I've only got one dollar and sixty cents to last until next quarter-day."

Ben was a very bright and charming fellow and a great favorite with his class, and when his check was cashed and the bills stowed away in his pocket, his first words were, "Come, fellows," and he would crack his first ten-dollar note in a treat. After that the bills would fly away right and left, some in perhaps a beautifully bound book or good engraving, or they would go in any amount of boyish trinkets, such as Russia leather card-cases, silver match-safes, elegant penknives, or the like. His father said nothing, for he had observed that in this case talking did no good, and he felt that experience must now be the teacher; and so it came to pass that Ben was stranded in the middle of a term, and left, as he expressed it, "gasping high and dry on the bank." He wrote to his father asking if he might draw a part of his next quarter's allowance in advance, but his father said, "No; what your brother Robert found to be sufficient you must make do."

He went to Rob, and Rob lent him ten dollars, which helped him for the moment; and

then Ben went to his room and for the first time examined his accounts and faced the situation. He was in debt, and deeply in debt for the size of his income. His whole coming quarter's allowance would not cover his liabilities. He recalled more than one warning of his father's on the subject of indebtedness, and he began to realize that he had behaved in a very dishonorable manner, for he knew that his father gave him all the money he could afford. He sat staring at the opposite wall, where hung a pretty little etching which was his last extravagance, and wondered what he should do. His father clearly would not help him, and could not in justice if he would. And Ben was quite at the end of his rope. But he had good stuff in him. When he had been made to stop and think, he thought to some purpose. All at once he started as if he had been stung, and springing up, he began to walk rapidly up and down the room with his brows knit. "I 'll do it," he said, and crushing on his hat he ran down stairs and out of doors with an air of great resolution.

The fact was that the proprietor of the steam laundry which he patronized had asked him a few days before if he knew of any student who would like to keep his books for him. The hours of work were from seven to nine in the evening, and the compensation was fair; and

Ben put his pride in his pocket, applied for this situation, and got it. Great was the astonishment of his mates at this singular move of his, but he persevered and earned the money, and with it he succeeded in paying his debts; and by the end of the year he could look his father in the eyes without any shame or trouble, for he stood fair and square with all the world.

But there are many other things in this world beside money which can be saved or spent. Many a lad needs to think of how he spends his time.

This same Ben—who I may as well admit is one of my "best boys," in spite of his faults—sometimes remarks that "Punctuality is the thief of time!" "Look at Rob," he says; "he is always *there*. He was never known to be late at a class or a lecture or a committee meeting in his life. But think of the things he misses because he is always in such a tearing hurry, while I acquire quantities of information simply by keeping my eyes open and taking things easy. Depend upon it, the 'fetlock' is the place to take old Time by, instead of snatching the hair off his head as some folks do."

Nevertheless Master Ben is finding out that if he ever makes a mark in the world he cannot indulge in a wasteful extravagance of time any more than he can of money, and I am glad to

see that he is settling down to his working life quietly, patiently, and perseveringly.

These things will bear thinking about, and the boy who spends not only his money, but his time, prudently is really braver as well as better than those who do not.

ON PLAIN ENGLISH.

NOT very long since one of my boy friends dropped in, as he is apt to do in vacation, to spend an hour or so with me. I have known him ever since he was a little fellow, but since he has been away at school I have not seen so much of him. On the afternoon of which I speak he began to talk to me about his school life, and I should have been very glad to listen if I had been able to understand him; but two years of school, while it may have improved his Latin and Greek, seemed to have quite bereft him of the power of using plain English. His father and mother are people of cultivation and refinement, and during his childhood he had been used to hearing the English language spoken with great purity; but his conversation on this occasion was so corrupted with slang that I was obliged to interrupt him frequently to ask him what certain expressions meant, and

I noticed that he had some difficulty in telling me. The only synonyms which occurred to his mind were other slang words or phrases which were quite as unintelligible to me as the first. He seemed rather embarrassed by his difficulties and said he "never could talk, anyhow, unless he was with a lot of fellows. He did n't know how to talk to other people."

It seemed rather a pity for a bright young lad of sixteen to have to confess such a thing, and what made the case peculiar was that he was one of the best orators of his school, and he had just written and delivered a prize oration which was excellent; but the trouble was that he had allowed himself to talk in such a slipshod manner among his mates for so long that he was unable to express himself properly in ordinary conversation.

I was talking with a certain liberal professor of English literature once on this subject, and he remarked that "slang ought not to be frowned down altogether, for the language is constantly being enriched by new words and expressions which were once called slang, but are now by common consent considered correct English. The words and phrases which are worthless will be cast aside, and those which are valuable will in a few years be incorporated into the language and be in constant use."

I smiled and said, "Perhaps you are right."

But when a lad "enriches" his mother tongue to such an extent that middle-aged people cannot understand him, when he uses slang without knowing it and makes slang words and phrases the chief part of his vocabulary, he makes a mistake, for he defiles the wells of pure English from which he might draw to suit his needs, and which are a rich inheritance to him from the great storehouse of the past; and while I should be the last to repress those witty and forcible expressions which boys have a genius for coining, and which, as the professor remarked, are of genuine value, I cannot but think that there is a great deal of slang which is both vulgar and meaningless and which it is a great pity for any boy to make use of.

There is another point to which it is well to pay attention. Very few of us take the trouble to pronounce correctly even if we know how. Just watch yourself a little and see whether you say *wy* or *why;* and do you always say *and*, or do you sometimes say *an';* and do you invariably sound your *ing's* distinctly, or do you defraud the endings of their rightful *g's*? Many people, if they should see the words they use written as they speak them, would be shocked indeed, and it is only because we are more used to hearing incorrect English spoken

than we are to seeing it written, that we do not notice our mistakes. It is only after hearing it spoken by a master that we realize what a noble and beautiful tongue our English is. It is generally conceded that there is no language which is at once so copious, so flexible, and so suited for the expression of ideas; and yet there are many people whose mother tongue it is, and who speak it all their days, who never realize its worth and who go through life poverty-stricken for want of words with which to express their thoughts, their feelings, and their desires.

ON WEAK POINTS.

LAST holidays, when the Academy term was ended, I asked Harry how he ranked.

"Well," said he, "my average is only fair, for though I am well up in my languages, yet I do so hate mathematics that I am always at the very bottom of the class with them, so, of course, that pulls down my general average; but in Latin"—and he smiled gayly—"I am leading the crowd."

"Then you really enjoy the languages?" said I, "and they come easy to you?"

"Oh, yes," he answered readily. "I like them ever so much."

"Which do you give the most time to," I asked, "your Latin or your Algebra?"

"Why, my Latin, of course," he answered, surprised. "I wont bother about my Algebra any more than I must."

"Ah, but you are making a mistake," said I. "It is precisely because you don't like it and don't take to it naturally that you ought to cultivate it. You should spend three times as much time on your Algebra as you do on your Latin. You have as much sense as the average boy, and if you would apply yourself you could comprehend mathematics as well as any one; your brain needs just that clear and exact habit of thought which can be cultivated by a mathematical training and nothing else, and you will miss it all your life if you do not take it now while you can get it."

But Harry hopelessly shook his head. "I can never do anything at it; it is no use to try."

"Harry," said I, "you began to tell me a little while since of that friend of yours with the weak chest, and how slender and round-shouldered he was when he began at the Academy, and you said he had no muscle whatever; and you told me how he took to practising every day in the gymnasium with the rowing-machine and with boxing-gloves. Seems to me that was very silly for a fellow like him."

"Why, no," answered Harry, alert in a minute, for he admires "muscle" above all things. "Why, no. You just ought to see him now. His chest has expanded five inches, and his biceps—they are as hard as rocks, and he is as straight in the back as anybody. It was just the thing for him."

"Exactly," I answered, smiling, "and I wish that you would show as much sense in the training of your mind as your friend has in the training of his body. You would find the results quite as admirable if you would treat your brain to a course of mathematical athletics. You would find that portion of your brain-cells which you would be forced to use improved, strengthened, and quickened by use quite as much as the flaccid muscles of your friend's body were improved by his exercise."

My boys who read this, I don't know what your weak points may be, but I know that you have them, for there never was a character in this world—save One—that was perfectly symmetrical and strong at every point. But this I do know, that it is possible for you to make your weak point, whatever it may be, the very strongest point of your character, for there you know that you are liable to be tempted; so there you can be perpetually on guard, so that it will be impossible for the enemy to surprise you,

and there—God helping you—you can always win the fight.

THE SOUL OF HONOR.

THERE is a certain quality of the moral nature which is called honor. The dictionary defines it as "true nobleness of mind, springing from probity, principle, or moral rectitude," and calls it "a distinguishing characteristic of good men." Such a quality will bear thinking about a little.

The other day a certain wealthy gentleman, speaking of a young man in his employ, said, "I would trust him with every dollar I possess. He is the soul of honor."

These were not idle words, for I knew he was in the habit of confiding to that young man large business interests which involved a great deal of capital; I knew, too, that he had no security for his money; he "trusted him."

Once in a large boys' school a disturbance occurred which involved nearly a whole class. The master sent for the principal of the school. He entered the room and listened to the teacher's account of the trouble; then, glancing around at the pupils, he said, "I should like to know exactly how this happened, so I will ask Fred B—— to tell me."

Fred stood up and related the occurrence from beginning to end clearly and fairly, naming no names, but taking his share of the blame, and then sat down.

"Now," said the principal, "I should like the other boys who have been implicated in this trouble to follow Fred's example and acknowledge it as he has done." And the other lads arose and owned up also.

Afterwards in speaking of the affair the principal said, "I knew I could rely upon Fred to tell me the exact truth without fear or favor, for though he may be led astray in a moment of excitement, he is always willing to acknowledge when he has done wrong. There is nothing underhanded or mean about him. I have tried him and tested him often, and he is regarded by both his classmates and teachers as the soul of honor."

It is somewhat rare, and it certainly is a very beautiful thing, to have a reputation such as this young man possessed, and it is something worth striving one's whole life long to win; and yet such a character is built of very little things. Many people who would indignantly deny that they ever told a falsehood, nevertheless seem quite incapable of relating a thing exactly as it occurred. They will either enlarge or detract or vary the statement in some

way, so that their words are not reliable. And many a lad in business who would not take a dollar from his firm unlawfully, will yet take that firm's stamps and letter-paper for his private correspondence. The firm will never feel it, it is true, but that lad's character will feel it; and the boy who habitually does such things will in the end find his conscience so blunted that dishonesty will come easy to him, and he will not be able to withstand some sudden, sharp temptation, and he will fall. Those who do not know him well will be surprised; but those who know his real life will know that for years his character has been undermined by trifling deceptions and dishonesties, just as the ocean slowly encroaches upon a sandy shore, and at last, during some terrible storm, when the wind is raging, it will gather itself in its might and wash inland, bearing devastation and death and changing the whole face of the country.

The lad who cheats a little in his games or remains silent while others cheat; he who learns his lessons with a "crib," or takes his diagrams or dates into class upon his cuffs, or gets his answers from his neighbor—yes, and the boy who gives such unlawful help too—they are dishonorable boys, and it would be better for them if they had never been born than to live on and

grow up and carry into life such principles as these. But no boy means to do that. He means to do it "just once," because he is hard pressed for some reason. Think a minute. Did you never do it but once? The boy who does it once is very apt to do it again, and to go on doing such things until they become the habit and practice of his life. Therefore a boy should be very watchful that no petty deceit or dishonesty ever stains his life, and to behave in all things so truly and so nobly that those who know him best and love him dearest can proudly and gladly say of him, "He is the soul of honor."

WHAT TO READ AND HOW TO DO IT.

THE best book of all to read is of course the Bible. It is the most interesting book in the world. Almost any one would admit that, and yet I know that if I should put the question "honor bright" to some of the boys who read this article, they would answer honestly that they do not think so. This is partly because they have not learned to read the Bible properly.

Many people read the Bible in a piecemeal sort of way, a chapter every night before they go to bed, and they bring up their children to

do the same. Now a few verses from the Bible are a very good thing to go to sleep on, but one will never get a real knowledge of the book by reading it in that way only. Such reading is for rest and comfort, but it is not for information. And how many of you who read in that fashion remember from one night to another what you read? The end of a chapter does not by any means necessarily conclude the subject of which it treats, or even indicate a good place for stopping, for the narrative or argument may be continued through several chapters, or indeed to the end of the book. You should give the Bible as fair a chance to interest you as you give any other book, and any other book you read connectedly from beginning to end. Suppose next Sunday afternoon when you are neither tired nor sleepy, but when you feel just in the mood for a good comfortable read, instead of taking up your Sunday-school book or a religious paper, you settle yourself with your Bible and read the Acts of the Apostles from the first verse to the last, and when you have finished it you will have a realizing sense of the courage and devotion of the men whom Christ chose to plant his church; and Peter and Paul and James and John will seem like live men to you, and real heroes too, and you will want to trace their lives from beginning to end.

By reading a book through you get a clear idea of the author's design, and you are able to appreciate the beauty and force of the language which he uses.

Another good way to read the Bible is to take it by subjects. The Old Testament biographies are exceedingly interesting. Take the life of Moses or Joseph or David and read it through, and you will be sure to like it. After you have once begun to enjoy the Bible I am sure you will never leave off. You will read it more and love it better and better the longer you live, and the better you become acquainted with it the more you will wonder at its inexhaustible riches.

After the Bible the next best thing for a boy to read is a good newspaper. Newspapers are the publishers of modern history. They bring the history of our own times to us every morning, and every great question which affects the welfare of mankind is reflected in them. It is not necessary to read about the commitment of horrible crimes or the execution of criminals, or topics of that nature, but you do want to know about the history of the last strike, for instance, because it concerns the great struggle between capital and labor which you are to help decide in a few years. You should keep track of the doings of Congress and the gist of the Presi-

dent's messages and international legislation, and foreign topics you should not miss. Think of the things which have happened abroad this past year, the centennial jubilees, the death of kings and eminent statesmen. One cannot pass these things by. Besides all this, the latest discoveries in every science are reported in the newspapers, the explorations of unknown countries are mirrored there, descriptions of the best and newest works in literature, in music, are in its columns, and to read the newspapers is in itself a liberal education. Therefore I would advise every boy who is too busy to give much attention to general literature, to read carefully the news of the day, for if he does he cannot fail of being an intelligent man, and then, when a time of leisure comes, he will have an excellent foundation to build upon when he is able to cultivate his mind more thoroughly.

WHAT TO READ AND HOW TO READ.

WHAT books should our boys read? That is a wide question. There are quantities of charming books now-a-days which are published on purpose for young people, many of which are both delightful and instructive. Dear old "Tom Brown at Rugby," for instance, is one of the

best of friends and companions for any boy. But I should not advise a boy to depend upon this class of literature. I believe in reading for profit as well as for pleasure, and the best results will be obtained by cultivating an acquaintance with general English literature.

There are three sorts of boys in this world: those with a healthy appetite for good wholesome reading, which they take to as naturally as they do to beefsteak and potatoes; and those who because of various circumstances have not been thrown much with books and who think that they do not like to read, though they really do not know whether they do or not; and lastly, those whose taste has become vitiated by reading the trashy, exciting, cheap literature which has inundated the country like a flood, until other books seem stale and flat to them. Now this article is chiefly for the two latter sorts of boys, and for the last mentioned class I am particularly sorry, because they are not very well in their minds, and I would like to cure them if I could. I wish I could make every boy who reads this understand the unspeakable delight which comes from reading a good book; then I should be sure that whatever else might fail him in the way of earthly joys, he would be sure of one great happiness and consolation.

Boys who are in business particularly need

to cultivate the habit of reading because they are apt to leave school early, and if they are not careful they will become so absorbed in the fierce competition which now characterizes all sorts of business that by the time they are twenty-five they will care for nothing else, and by the time they are fifty they will be in the condition of a poor man whom I once knew, who, broken in health, but with more money than he could use, still dragged himself daily to business and went on making more, because, as he pitifully remarked, he did not know what else to do.

"But," says my business boy, who works nights during the busy season and who does n't like reading, "do you suppose that I could study English literature?"

Certainly I do. A boy who can spare on an average an hour a day for reading will be able to read a good deal in the course of the year.

"But," says my boy who does n't like reading, "I can't bear poetry."

When a boy says that to me I always try him with "Horatius at the Bridge," or Tennyson's ballad of "The Revenge." If he does not like either of those poems I conclude that he is right in his own estimate of his taste; but I never met a boy who did not like such poetry.

"Well," says my boy again, "history is awfully dull. I never can remember the dates."

But, I answer, you can remember the century in which the events occurred, and that will do very well. Try it with Green's "Shorter History of the English People," and see if you cannot. For essays, try Charles Dudley Warner's "Being a Boy," and you will discover that an essay is not necessarily a dull and uninteresting thing, "as dry as a chip," as many a boy supposes. For biographies take, perhaps, James T. Fields' "Yesterdays With Authors," or Noah Brooks' "Historic Boys," or "Sea Kings and Naval Heroes," by J. G. Edgar, and for a story of travel and adventure take Lieut. Greely's "Three Years of Arctic Service." You will not understand all of the scientific allusions, but if your heart does not beat fast by the time you have finished reading how Lieut. Lockwood with his two devoted companions won the "Farthest North," then you are not the boy I take you for. For novels there is gallant Sir Walter Scott, one of my childhood's very best friends. If you do not know him, you had best read "Ivanhoe" right away.

The best short story that I know of for boys is Edward Everett Hale's "Man Without a Country."

And now, my boy who "does n't like to read," if you should read one of the articles or books in each class which I have named, do you realize that you would have had a taste of history, biography, essays, poetry, and novels? and these are the component parts of general English literature. And after having taken a taste you will discover that the table is spread and you have only to help yourself wisely and judiciously to whatever you please; and the habit of reading good books when once formed, besides giving a great deal of pleasure, cannot fail to make you a cultivated man, whether you have had the advantage of being trained in the schools or not.

ON SELF-CONTROL.

THERE is no quality which a boy admires more than that of self-control, and it is right to admire it, for it is only the man who has control of himself that can control others and can be of value and service to the community in which he lives.

No one can hear untouched such a story, for instance, as that of the English troopship which sprung aleak, and the officers and men, when they found they could not save her, safely and quickly transferred their wives and children to

the boats, and then, drawn up at quarters, each man at his post, quietly and calmly went down with the ship, content with having saved the lives which were dearer to them than their own.

The heroic endurance of pain, the ready wit in an emergency, the lightning-like quickness of thought which plans and the steady hand which executes a rescue, such traits command the respect and admiration of every one, and every boy wishes that he could possess them. Boys, and older people too, are apt to think that these qualities are an especial gift, like a genius for music or art, and that no one can behave in this way unless it is, as the phrase goes, "born in him." It is true that to some self-control comes easier than to others, but it is without doubt a quality which can be cultivated. You can have it or not as you choose.

A friend of mine who was a volunteer during the late war, though at that time he was scarcely more than a lad, was relating to a few friends something of his experience. He is one of the most quiet, retiring, and gentle of men, not at all a man whom one would suspect of having soldier stuff in him.

"Were you never afraid?" some one asked him curiously.

"Yes," he answered frankly, "I was always afraid. I never went into a fight in my life

that I did not tremble just in the beginning, and any minute I would have been glad to run for old Vermont. But," with a little smile, "I did n't do it. I suppose," he continued, turning to me, "that you would call me a coward."

"If you had run away," I answered, "perhaps I should; but my idea of a brave man is, not one who does not know the meaning of the word fear, but rather one who knows the feeling, and who conquers it, and does his duty just the same."

I could not say to his face what I knew to be a fact, that he had won promotion three times for conspicuous gallantry upon the field of battle, and that he had inspired his men with such confidence in him that they would follow anywhere he led.

Therefore if a boy feels that he is lacking in self-control, the best thing he can do is to practise it every chance he gets. There are several young men of my acquaintance who faint at the sight of blood, and when there is an accident in their vicinity they every one of them get out of the way, because if they are called upon to help they may drop at just the most critical minute. They all regard the trait as constitutional, but it is my belief that if they would exert their will power sufficiently they could conquer their infirmity.

There is nothing more desirable than the ability to keep cool in case of an accident, and it is well to have some idea of what to do until the doctor comes. There are several excellent little books which are printed for this purpose. After he comes, do exactly what he tells you. He will never ask you to do anything which you cannot do if you pay strict attention, control yourself, and try.

The best way to maintain self-control in an emergency is to always keep control of yourself when there is no emergency; that is, to practise it all the time, for one has plenty of opportunity in every-day life. Keep your temper through every game, no matter how exciting. When some one else wins the prize which you have been striving for during the whole term, shake hands with the victor and say, "I 'm glad you have won it." If a sudden insult comes, which seems to make every drop of blood in your body boil indignantly to the surface, clinch your teeth until you can answer calmly, or do not speak at all. Never allow yourself to become so excited that you do not know what you are about. Train the hands and feet and eyes and brain to constantly serve you well, and then they will not fail you in time of trouble; and you will find that in sudden need, instead of being paralyzed with

fright and helpless, you can think and act with a quickness and capacity which, when it is all over, will seem surprising even to yourself; or if it should be your lot to bear instead of to do, you can endure with a composure which will be a comfort to yourself and to all of your friends.

WHICH WAS THE BRAVER?

THEY were looking at the ice on the river one day early in the winter. The ponds were frozen and the Branch was frozen, but no one yet had had a skate on the deep and rapid river, and all the boys were aching to try it. It lay before them frozen from shore to shore, a smooth expanse of dark and glassy ice, most tempting to the sight of any boy, and to the little group of lads who stood eying it it was almost irresistible. They had been skating on the Branch, so they had their skates in their hands, and every now and then one of them would venture out upon the ice and stamp about to try it. At last one lad came back from one of these short excursions.

"Pooh!" said he stamping, "it's safe, safe enough for an elephant, and I am going to try it. I dare any one of you fellows to skate across with me. Dare, dare, double dare you, Fritz

Ward, to do it," and down he sat to put on his skates. "What!" said Jack, "nobody coming? Not you, Fritz Ward? The champion skater of the town refuses. Well, well!"

"No, I 'm not going," answered Fritz.

But his refusal was not because he was afraid or because he did not want to go, for he was all eagerness to be off; but he had promised his mother that he would not go on the river until it had been pronounced perfectly safe, and he never yet had broken his word to her, and that was all that held him.

Jack was cutting airy circles near the shore and watching them, smiling.

"Well, good-by, 'fraid cats," said he, and giving his hand a little mocking flourish, off he flew straight towards the middle of the river, and his light, boyish figure seemed to skim the ice like a bird; but light as he was, it bent beneath him as he sped. The lads on the bank saw it and cried, "Come back," but he never heeded, in fact he was afraid to turn, and in another instant down he went. His comrades stared as if they were dreaming at that little black hole in the ice where Jack went down; and though those boys now are middle-aged men, yet they can shut their eyes, any one of them to-day, and see again that snow-clad shining landscape, and the gleaming river with

that little black hole in it well out towards the middle. It was but an instant when they saw Jack's head once more, and his face was turned towards them. He threw his arms out on to the ice and it broke beneath his weight, but before he sank he grasped it again with his other arm and it bore him for a moment, only to break again, but it brought him a little nearer to his friends. Instantly he comprehended what he had to do. He had to break his way bit by bit through the ice across that dreadful river. His friends could not help him, so like the gallant lad he was, he fought on inch by inch for his life, while his friends on shore cheered him all they could.

"Fellows," said Fritz Ward, watching him keenly, "he will never reach us without help; take off your comforters"—they all wore gay worsted scarfs knotted around their necks, and each of them was fully two yards long. "Knot them together tightly," Fritz continued. "I know the bottom here, and I am going out as far as I can to meet him. I shall throw him these and you must help me. I am going in up to my waist, and you must all throw yourselves on your faces and work yourselves out one after the other. Each fellow hang on to the other, and you, Joe Anderson, come next to me and steady me."

It was planned and done in a minute. Fritz, with the coil of comforters ten yards long, went out until the ice cracked beneath him, and then he let himself down into the water. Joe Anderson, who was the lightest boy there, had cautiously worked himself out and lay near enough to give a steadying hand to Fritz, who was in up to his arm-pits, but his arms were free.

"Just a little nearer, old boy," shouted Fritz to Jack, "and I'll throw it," and poor Jack struggled a moment more. "Now," cried Fritz, and threw the rope, and the end lay well within Jack's reach. He grasped it and Fritz drew him inch by inch through the splintering ice until he had him by the collar; then the ice broke under Joe and let him down, but he landed on his feet, and together he and Fritz tied one end of the comforters under Jack's arms and tossed the other end to the other boys. Then somehow they got him on to the ice, and the other boys pulled him cautiously ashore. After that Fritz and Joe were helped out, and the dry boys piled their overcoats on to the wet boys, and they took Jack, who was by that time quite unconscious, safe home.

When Jack was convalescing from his attack of pneumonia the first boy he wanted to see was Fritz. He held out his hand to him with a smile.

"Old boy," said he, "if it had n't been for you I would n't be here."

"Pshaw!" answered Fritz, "it was the comforters did the business."

"Ah!" said Jack, "the comforters were a very good thing, but I would never have got hold of them if it had n't been for you. You need not try to get out of it. If you had n't been as quick as thought and chock full of pluck beside, I would n't be in this world now. And the sense you 've got too, Fritz," Jack went on reflectively; "first time I ever knew you not to take a dare. How did it happen?"

"Oh," answered Fritz, laughing, "that was not any sense of mine. I would have been after you fast enough if I had n't promised my mother that I would n't go on the river that day."

"Well," said Jack, "my old doctor says there is a difference between courage and foolhardiness, and it is pretty plain which quality he thinks I have shown the most of recently; but in the future I am going to keep what little courage I have left to use when it is needed, instead of fooling it away in such a scrape as this."

All this happened years ago, but the lesson Jack then learned has never been forgotten. He has had plenty of battles to fight since

then, and he has fought them bravely; but his old foolhardy, daring ways, which so threatened to injure his character, he left behind him forever on that terrible day when he fell through the ice into Green River.

A DANGER SIGNAL.

ONCE, when I was a little girl, I took a drive that I shall never forget. A party of us were going to attend the commencement exercises of a college which was situated about three miles from the town in which we lived. Our own carriage was filled with guests and driven away, and my mother and I accepted seats in the carriage of a neighbor. This neighbor's horses were a pair of frisky young colts—beautiful, spirited creatures—not long since broken to the harness, and the gentleman who undertook to drive us was a friend from a distance who was little accustomed to the management of horses; but no trouble was apprehended, as the horses were not at all vicious and the roads were excellent. We had proceeded only a short distance, however, when we noticed that the horses did not go with their usual fine, steady gait. They began to prance and fret and to act decidedly nervous. Our driver only irritated them by his

efforts to control them, and at last they broke away and dashed into a run. My mother clasped me close as we whirled along, the light buggy swaying and rocking dangerously over every inequality of the road, when suddenly, just as we were giving ourselves up for lost, a young fellow with the figure of an athlete sprang out from the roadside, seized the horses by their heads, and with one powerful movement turned them toward the fence and stopped them. They were quivering in every nerve, and with the touch and tone of a born horseman he began to soothe them, meanwhile examining the harness with a knowing eye.

"Why," said he, "these horses are hitched up wrong. It is no wonder they ran away." And he began altering straps and buckles to rectify the mistake.

By this time the horses were much quieted and my mother had recovered herself, and she called the young gentleman to her side. I shall never forget his bright, gallant face and his noble bearing as he came forward to receive the thanks with which she overwhelmed him. My mother then took me on her lap, and our preserver, seating himself beside us, drove us safely to the college.

This was the beginning of our acquaintance with this young man, and it will not harm him

now if I give the history of that acquaintance until its close. It may perhaps serve as a sort of danger signal to some other young man who is possessed of a similar temperament and who is beginning to travel in the way he went. Let us call him for the time of this story Harry Belden.

After the college exercises were concluded my mother spoke to the president, who was an old and much valued friend of our family, and related our adventure, and spoke in warm terms of our preserver.

"Ah," responded he, "it was Harry Belden, was it? I wish, Mrs. H——, that you would invite him to your house."

"I have already done so," said my mother, somewhat surprised. "He is coming to tea tomorrow evening."

"He is the son of my old friend Horace Belden, of L——," explained the president, speaking somewhat gravely. "He is to spend his vacation with me at my house, and next fall he enters college. The fact is, he is somewhat dissipated, and I have promised my friend Belden to do what I can for him, so he is to be under my own eye, and we hope a good deal from a quiet country life. He 's a charming fellow, charming," he added emphatically, "and he is too young to be lost. I shall be glad for

him to have your house to go to, for it is a cheerful place, and he will enjoy it."

Every tender feeling in my mother's heart was roused for this young fellow who had saved her life and that of her child, and yet was so near to making shipwreck of his own. She and my father made him thoroughly welcome at our home, and as the president had prophesied, he did enjoy it. My two young lady aunts who resided with us filled the house with life and gayety, and Harry Belden's frequent visits made the bright summer days seem brighter still. He was indeed a "charming fellow," bubbling over with wit and mirth, generous, kind-hearted, and obliging, and gifted with a handsome face and manners of a thorough gentleman. I do not think that in all his life he had known, or that he ever did know in after years, the sensation of physical fear. A thing to be really enjoyable to him must have a spice of danger; a situation that would justly alarm another but produced a sense of exhilaration in him. It was but a pleasurable excitement. It brought his "blood up," as he himself expressed it, and then whose foot so fleet, whose hand so firm, whose nerve so steady as his? Of course, possessing such a disposition, he excelled in all manly exercises. A good shot, a fine rider, an excellent swimmer, and devoted to athletic games, in all these

things he was more than fine, he was recklessly daring. But, alas! this craving for excitement was his ruin; it made all simple, normal pleasures seem dull and tame, and he turned to intoxicating drink for satisfaction. He understood the danger he was in and appreciated President F——'s efforts in his behalf. June and July had gone by, and the last days of August were come, and still Harry Belden had made no slip from the right path, and his friends were hoping that a reform had really begun. But, alas! one August evening he did not return home as usual; nine, ten o'clock passed, and still he did not come. Then President F—— drove down to the town and instituted a search through its liquor saloons, and in one of them Harry Belden was discovered almost dead drunk. He was assisted into the buggy and taken home and cared for by his kind friend. When he came to himself he was very penitent, and the grief and disappointment of the dear old "Prex," as the boys all called him, affected him greatly.

"I'm not worth it, sir," he said to him. "You would much better let me go."

But President F—— would not let him go; he called upon him by every sense of duty and honor that he possessed to fight the demon which had conquered him, and he promised to try again. Perhaps the most discouraging thing

about him was the ready way in which he would promise to coöperate with any efforts which were made for his reform; for with the first sharp temptation he would break every promise, and yield apparently without an effort. Autumn came and the students returned to college, and Harry joined the Sophomore class. He proved to have a quick and retentive mind, and the president hoped that the necessity of steady and regular work would be of benefit to him; but far from it. As soon as the novelty of his position had faded he began to associate with the worst characters of the class, and one night under his leadership they indulged in a wine supper, which ended in such a scene of debauchery as was a disgrace to the whole college. This could not be overlooked; it was a case for expulsion, and Harry knew it.

"It 's no use, sir," said he to the president. "I told you so months ago; but do n't think that I do not remember your kindness to me. I do, though I have abused it so shamefully."

Harry Belden went home to his parents, and we never saw him again; but the rest of his sad story can be told in a few words. He made two or three futile efforts to reform after this, and during one of them he married a lovely young girl of his native city. She had but a few months of happiness; he fell again, and de-

serted her, going to a distant city. There, under an assumed name, he married another young lady. But his fraud was soon discovered, and he is now serving out a sentence for bigamy in the prison of his native State.

This is a sad story to read. It has been a sad story to write. And if it were not for the hope of arresting some careless footsteps which are beginning to tread the downward path that Harry Belden trod, it would never have been written.

People used to say in a kind of sad excuse for Harry's doings that "he was his own worst enemy." This was pitifully, shamefully true; for, with all his courage and his daring, there was one person whom he never dared to face, and in whose presence he was a miserable coward, and that person was himself. If he had sought the aid of our best and ever-present Friend, resolved to conquer his evil impulses and desires at whatever cost, he would have been to-day a noble man, honored, respected, and beloved by all who knew him, instead of what he is, a poor miserable felon.

KATE'S BROTHER JACK.

"YOU seem to think a great deal of your sister," said one of Jack's chums to him the other day, as if the fact was rather surprising.

"Why, yes, I do," responded Jack heartily. "Kit and I are great friends."

"You always," continued the other, "seem to have such a good time when you are out together."

"Well," laughed Jack, "the fact is that when I have Kit out I keep all the while forgetting that she is n't some other fellow's sister."

I pondered somewhat over this conversation, wishing that all the brothers and sisters in the world were as good friends as Jack and Kate Hazell, and wondering why they were not. It struck me that the answer to my query was contained in Jack's last sentence. Boys do n't usually treat their sisters as they would if they were "some other fellow's sisters." Jack is a shining exception. He kneels to put on Kate's overshoes as gallantly as if she were Bessie Dare, and Bessie Dare is at present Jack's ideal of all that is loveliest in girlhood. If at a party at a neighbor's, he takes Kate in to supper himself, and cares for her in all ways as an escort should; and Kate knows what to expect of him

and what to do herself, and is not in dread of desertion or of being left to the tender mercies of any one who notices her forlorn condition. And I don't wonder, when I see how nicely he treats her, that Kate declares that she would rather have her brother Jack for an escort than almost any one else in the world.

At home, too, Jack is a pattern. Though there is a constant merry war between brother and sister, and jokes and repartees fly thick and fast, yet it is always fair cut and thrust between them, all for sport and naught for malice; the wit never degenerates into rudeness. Then, too, if Kate does anything for him her kindness is always acknowledged. Does she take the trouble to make for him his favorite rice griddle-cakes, and then stay in the kitchen to bake them herself, that they may acquire that delicate golden brown which is so dear to the taste of all who love them truly, Jack never fails to assure her that her efforts are appreciated.

Does she paint him a teacup and saucer or embroider him a hat-band, he is as delighted as possible. He does not take all these things as a matter of course. On Saturday nights he is apt to remember her by a box of candy, a bunch of flowers, or a bottle of her favorite violet perfume. Best of all he *talks* to her. He tells her his thoughts, his hopes and fears, his disap-

pointments, and his plans for the future. In short, they are, as he said, "great friends."

Some of Jack's comrades rather envy him his good fortune in possessing so devoted a sister as Kate, and they have been heard to say frankly that they wish their sisters were as nice as Kate Hazell. If those boys would pursue the same course of action towards their sisters that Jack does towards his, they might, perhaps, be rewarded with as delightful a result; for it is by little acts of kindness and courtesy and consideration that Jack has made of his sister a friend whose love will never grow cold, whose devotion will never falter, and whose loyalty will never fail while life shall last.

"MOTHER'S OWN BOY."

WE hear a good deal in these days about boys being neglected, unappreciated individuals. It is said that every one is so absorbed in the girls that the boys are treated rather carelessly. Some people even go so far as to say that the boys' own mothers prefer their sisters to them. If this were true it would be very dreadful. I have looked into the subject somewhat, and have come to the conclusion that where such is the case it is the boys' own fault. When the sons are as attentive and helpful and

loving as the daughters, their mothers usually value them about alike.

Some boys have the idea that they can't and wont do "girls' work." If those same boys would practise that sort of employment a little when mother is laid up with a sick headache, or sister Maggie is off for a well-earned week's holiday, it would be a very nice thing for the family. I know boys who have tried it and have not found it so distressing.

I have the honor to know one boy seventeen years old who does all the family washing every Saturday morning. His mother's only assistant in her housework is his little sister, aged ten, and the son has decided that during his school-life there is one burden that he can take from his mother's weary shoulders, and that is the great bugbear of washing day; and so every Saturday morning he rolls his shirt sleeves up to his shoulders, ties a good stout apron in front of him, and plunges into the suds; and it is one of the most beautiful sights I know of to see him

> "Cheerily rub and rinse and wring
> And hang up the clothes to dry."

I know another boy who did all of his family's ironing during one summer, except the shirts; those, he was forced to confess, were too much for his skill. I know boys who can run

the sewing-machine, and who can sweep, wash dishes, and trim lamps on occasion. I even know boys who can cook. One boy in particular I call to mind whose corn-muffins are the pride of the family, and if there is company Jim is always called upon to contribute some of his inimitable hot corn-cakes for breakfast. These boys, I assure you, are appreciated in the home circle; and when their mothers talk them over, if their right ears do n't burn, why, there 's no truth in signs, that 's all!

If there is no need for a boy to do housework, then let him do whatever is his appointed work with cheerful promptness. Every boy ought to have, and most boys do have, some daily tasks to do, the non-performance of which makes a jar in the family machine. If you have the furnace fire in charge, see to it regularly night and morning. I know a boy whose work it is to take care of the furnace in his home, and he could hardly seem more unwilling to go down the cellar stairs if that cellar was a dungeon cell in which he was about to be incarcerated for life. His father, his mother, and his sisters all have to "be after" him twice a day in order to get him to perform that simple duty. If you have the kindling-wood to cut, keep the wood-box full. If you have an errand to do, do it pleasantly. I heard a mother request her son

to go of an errand the other day, and this was the response she received: "Well, there 's one thing Job did n't have to do anyhow; he did n't have to go to the store to get a quart of molasses!" There is a way of doing even an errand "heartily, as unto the Lord," and a beautiful way it is, but that boy did n't practise it that time.

Perhaps some boy who has read thus far in this article feels like reminding the writer of the old proverb, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." Should that be the case, I will say that I heartily agree with the proverb, and I suggest that sometimes when "Jack" goes out to play he should take his mother with him. Astonish her by an invitation to a concert or a lecture or some other entertainment which you think she would enjoy. Devote yourself to her in your very best style for the evening and see if she does not seem pleased. If there is likely to be a good match for your base ball nine or a race for your rowing club, invite your mother to witness the contest, and if your side wins she will be a proud mother.

There is a phrase which happy mothers sometimes use — it is the one which I have placed at the head of this article—that has always seemed a beautiful one to me, because when I hear it I know that the one of whom it

is spoken is strong and gentle, thoughtful, helpful, and cheery; in short, much that a son ought to be. And I hope that the mother of every boy who reads these lines can say of him fondly and proudly, "He is a good son; he is his 'mother's own boy.'"

OUT-OF-DOOR BEHAVIOR.

THE other evening Rob was lying on the sofa in the library and telling me about what he called a "little adventure" which he had had a day or two before. He had met a young girl on the ferry-boat whom he had never seen before, and, as he expressed it, "had had some fun with her."

"Why, Rob," said I, "you don't mean to say that you have been flirting, and with a young lady who was a total stranger to you beside!"

"Well," he answered, laughing a little, "she wasn't exactly a *young lady*, you know. But that is just what I did."

"I am sorry to hear it," said I.

"Where is the harm?" he answered. "She liked it. I would not have done it if she hadn't."

"That is just it," I responded, "and if you had not done it, certainly she could not, for it

always takes two to make a flirtation as well as a bargain."

"Seems to me," said Rob, sitting up and looking at me, "seems to me you are taking a little bit of nonsense very seriously."

"Yes," I answered, "I am serious, but it is because I do not think it is nonsense. See here, Rob, how would you like to have some one flirt with your sisters?"

"I 'd like to see any fellow try it!" was the instant response. "I 'd punch his head for him. But then no fellow ever would, you know, for my sisters are ladies."

"But you should treat other fellows' sisters with the same respect which you wish them to show to your sisters," said I, applying the Golden Rule with a little twist to suit the occasion. "You ought to treat every woman, young or old, rich or poor, plain or pretty, and of whatever condition, with as much respect as if she were a lady; and you ought to do it for your own sake as well as for theirs, because it is a fact that the man or boy who habitually thinks of women disrespectfully or lightly greatly injures the tone of his moral character and opens the door to temptations which, if he yields to them, will ruin his life."

It is very pleasant for a lady to feel whenever she goes out that, as the old song says,

"Friends in all the old she 'll find,
And brothers in the young."

And I am glad to say that such is the treatment which a lady usually receives in this country. She can rely upon a ready courtesy and a generous help, when needed, from any man wherever she may go; and such attentions it is pleasant to give and equally pleasant to take.

For ever to be remembered is a certain gentleman in rather a shabby coat and a shocking bad hat who one rainy day was riding up town in a Fourth Avenue car, and who, when a young girl with her arms full of parcels was about to get out at Denning's, stopped the car for her, seized her umbrella, opened it, and escorted her to the shop-door safe and dry, and then responding to her grateful "Thank you, sir," with a touch of the hat and a smile, ran after his car, caught it, and disappeared therein. Equally unforgotten is another gentleman who, when a Broadway stage stopped in a mud-puddle which the same young girl was about to step despairingly into, said frankly, "Wait a minute. Step on my foot and I 'll swing you across," and suiting the action to the word, he planted his foot in what was apparently the worst spot of all, and as she stepped upon it with one deft swing she was landed safely on the opposite pavement; and she went on her way with a

thankful heart and visions of Sir Walter Raleigh flitting through her brain.

My paper has been occupied so far with suggestions as to how you should behave to other boys' sisters; but now how shall you behave when you meet their maiden aunts, their mothers, and their grandmothers? I asked my particular Sir Philip Sydney a question once which I think throws some light on this point. I will explain that Sir Philip is a clerk in a wholesale hardware store where they have very long hours and very hard work. Said I, "Phil, do you *always* give up your seat to a lady if she is standing?"

"Well," he answered, "some nights when I am awfully tired I don't give up my seat to a young lady; but I can't bear to see an old woman, no matter whether she is a lady or not, stand while I sit."

Those whose behavior is regulated by such a spirit will always be truly courteous to their elders. It is a shame to see half a dozen young fellows spring eagerly up to give a seat to a beautiful girl, when they will not stir for a worn, faded woman, with perhaps a bundle of cheap sewing in her arms, and who is not in any case one-tenth part as able to stand as the bright, healthy young lady. They agitated the question a while ago in dear old Boston

whether, if every seat in the street-car was taken and a young man should see his mother's cook enter, he was in courtesy bound—remembering that she was a woman as well as a cook—to rise and give her his seat. I for one do not see why he should not.

After all, the truest guide to a courteous behavior is the promptings of a kindly and thoughtful spirit, and the best rule for the government of manners is the golden one. And if our boys will cultivate the one and be guided by the other, they cannot go far astray.

A TALK TO SHY BOYS.

ONE of my boy friends came to see me a while ago; a very little boy he is, only six years old, but he said something which set me thinking. He is such a shy little fellow that he reminds me of nothing so much as a little turtle shut up in his shell. When he is alone with me, however, he sometimes opens his shell and gives me a glimpse of what is going on inside. He did so on this occasion. He was seated on the edge of the big rocking-chair with his small hands thrust into the pockets of his first knickerbockers. His brow was wrinkled and he looked very unhappy. Being such a little fel-

low, he could not express himself with much fluency, but to me his very blunders were eloquent.

"I 've got to go a-visiting," he remarked gloomily. "I 've got to go with mamma to see my grandma. Do you know I have a grandma? I have, and I 've got aunties—I 've got uncles—and I 've got—folks."

He enumerated his relations as if each particular class were an especial affliction. He continued:

"There 's an awful lot of people at my grandma's house." Here he left his chair and nestled close to me. "I 'll tell you something," he said mysteriously; "I 'm afraid of them. Last time I went there I shivered—I did n't say anything, but I shivered."

And I thought of dozens of boys whom I know, who are a good deal older than my little turtle, to whom the hours which they are forced to spend in society are so many hours of silent agony. Like little Jack, they do n't say anything, but they shiver.

A while ago, too, I was present at an examination in one of the most thorough private schools in the city. When the class in French conversation was examined two brothers whom I knew were in it. The elder was the more thorough French scholar of the two, but the

younger carried off the honors solely on account of his superior coolness and composure. He was quite ready to chat with his teacher, and even made a bright little joke in French which delighted his audience. But when it was his brother's turn, every idea forsook him; he started, flushed, and could only stammer out, "*J'oublie, Monsieur,*" and sat covered with confusion as with a garment.

"I knew how it would be," he said hopelessly afterwards. "I always go to pieces on oral examinations."

I felt so sorry for Hal that when I went home I told Mrs. Experience about it. Mrs. Experience is a wise woman who lives in our family and whom I often consult on my own and other people's difficulties.

"I wish," said I to her, "that I could do something to help shy boys."

"I will tell you a little story that perhaps may assist you," she said, smiling.

"When I taught school twenty years ago in Wisconsin, I had a scholar named Sam B——. He was eighteen years old and was exceedingly tall and awkward. He was backward in his studies, for his educational advantages had been limited; but he was very conscious of his defects and feared ridicule. I think he was the most bashful fellow I have ever known. Not-

withstanding all this he was bent on gaining an education and was determined, as he expressed it, to 'make a man of himself.'

"Of course I was ready to help him, and as he had a fine mind, he went forward rapidly in his studies.

"Now it was a rule of mine that my pupils should each prepare either a declamation or a composition for every Friday. This rule Sam had hitherto been excused from. When I thought him sufficiently advanced, however, I told him to be prepared with a declamation on the following Friday.

"'Oh! Miss Grace,' he objected, 'I can't; anything but that! I never could speak a piece. All the fellows would laugh at the very idea.'

"'But, Sam,' I urged, 'it will be the best thing in the world for you. What you lack is confidence in yourself, and that would help you to gain it.'

"'I should certainly fail,' he answered.

"'Sam,' said I, 'you wont fail if you make up your mind to succeed. At all events you must recite some selection before the school on Friday next.'

"'What will you do if I refuse?' asked he.

"'You would be obliged to leave the school,' I answered promptly. 'I can have no scholar in my school who refuses to accede to my wishes.'

"'Well,' he replied, 'that's fair. If I make up my mind that I can't speak, of course I'll leave.'

"I watched for Friday with a good deal of anxiety. In about the middle of the exercises I said, 'We will now have a recitation by Samuel B——.'

"Sam turned all sorts of colors, but he walked forward to the platform, made his bow, and essayed to speak; but he shook all over and the words would not come. Fifty pairs of curious eyes seemed boring into his very soul, and his voice died away in a husky whisper. He walked stiffly to the water-pail, took a drink, and came back to the platform; just then he heard a suppressed titter, and that struck fire. Grasping a shaking knee in each hand, he thus apostrophized his recreant limbs:

"'Keep still,' he cried, 'keep still, I tell you, for I *will* speak.'

"That loosed his tongue, and the famous old periods came rolling out:

"'Not many generations ago, where we now sit, encircled by all that exalts and embellishes civilized life, the rank thistle nodded in the wind and the wild fox dug his hole unscared,' and so on.

"That boy," concluded Mrs. Experience, fanning herself complacently, "became a member

of Congress from his native State, and a very eloquent speaker he is too."

I thanked Mrs. Experience for her kindness in telling me this story and went on thinking, but it seemed to me that I saw a glimmer of daylight.

That very evening Charlie Axtell dropped into the sitting-room, just home from his first trip West as a commercial traveller. Now Charlie is a very domestic, home-loving fellow, modest and unobtrusive, with but a small opinion of himself, and such being the case, I feared he had not enjoyed his Western experiences very much.

"Oh!" said he, in answer to my questions, "at the start it was awful. I walked up and down in front of my first customer's door for fully half an hour without the courage to go in, and when I did get into the store I had n't a word to say for myself and precious few for my firm. How I did it I do n't know, but I managed to make a small sale, so my first effort was not an absolute failure; but the first two weeks were terrific. I was n't going to let myself be beaten, though, so I persevered, and take it all in all, I have made a very successful trip."

One little sentence of Charlie's stuck in my head. "*I was n't going to let myself be beaten*," he said. Ah! that was it. The boy who is de-

terred from doing anything by shyness lets himself be beaten. His shyness conquers him when he should conquer the shyness.

One of our most noted humorous lecturers once asked Mr. Beecher what he should do to overcome a certain nervous trembling which always attacked him whenever he faced an audience.

"My boy," said the wise old veteran, "I don't think that you will ever get over it; *you had best not mind it.*"

This habit of shyness, if nursed and yielded to, may come to dominate a man's whole life, and may so fetter his actions that half his native powers may never be fully developed; but if fought with it can be conquered and put down and kept in its proper place. Sam did it when he resolved that he *would* speak. Charlie did it when he determined not to be beaten, and every boy can do so if he will exert his own courage and self-control.

A TALK TO AWKWARD BOYS.

THERE is a time in the life of many a lad when during the course of a year, or perhaps even a shorter period, he changes from a little fellow into a big boy. It is marvellous how fast he grows; before his friends know it he is

taller than his father. He has to have as many new suits as a silk worm does to keep him looking respectable, and in spite of every care there is apt to be a gap between the bottoms of his trousers and the tops of his shoes, and a wide strip of wrist between his sleeves and his hands. Sometimes they call this season the "awkward age," and a very hard time it often is to a lad; many are the jokes that are cracked at his expense, and in some families many are the sighs and critical remarks which he hears about his looks, his carriage or behavior, from friends who ought to know better; while the poor boy himself feels more than any one else can feel that his feet and hands are more than he can manage, and that when he sits down he seems to have as many joints as a grasshopper, and he always appears to himself to be ten times more clumsy and awkward than he does to any one else.

I number more than one such boy among my friends, and the other day one of them was telling me how queer and shy he felt, just like dear Hans Andersen's ugly duckling—how he never could bear to get into company because he did not know what to do or to say; and one would think, to hear the boy talk, that life under the circumstances was scarcely worth living.

"Why, Herbert," said I, "have a little pa-

tience with yourself; in time that tall frame of yours will fill out and assume its proper proportions and you will learn how to govern it; its muscles will knit if you give them sufficient exercise. The lines of your face will change, and by the time you are twenty-five years old you will probably be a man of fine appearance, and, if you will take the pains to cultivate them, of easy and graceful manners."

"But," said the young Hopeless, "suppose I should n't turn out as you think I will? Suppose I keep on looking awkward and queer to the end of the chapter?"

"Why, then," said I still cheerfully, "listen to this: I have a friend who when he was a lad was certainly the most awkward and angular boy that I ever saw. His face was plain to the verge of ugliness; he stammered so badly that it was only by speaking with the most painful slowness and precision he was able to control his speech so as to make himself understood, and he had absolutely but two good points about him: one was a nobly shaped head, and the other was a gentle and agreeable tone of voice. In spite of all of these drawbacks, he has not only won a most enviable rank among the scientists of this country, but he is distinguished for his beautiful manners as well. He has learned to behave so charmingly, and with such uncon-

sciousness of self, that people forget his looks when they have been in his company ten minutes, and only notice the rare and noble attributes of mind and character which he possesses. As he grew older he learned to manage himself better, and he became accustomed to his own peculiarities, so to speak; for though they were toned down somewhat as he reached manhood, they never left him, but he bears with them so pleasantly himself that to his friends they are actually an added charm. He never alludes to them in any way, excepting that I have heard him make to strangers a winning little apology for his manner of speech, which is still very slow, though his utterance is easy. But though his speech is slow, his thoughts are quick, and he is always thoughtful for others. He has a beautiful deference in his manners toward his elders, no lady is ever near him that she does not feel a sense of his quiet consideration for her, and all children turn naturally to him for protection and care; and his brilliant mind and beautiful spirit together have so dignified and ennobled the body which they inhabit that every one who knows him regards him with admiration, respect, and affection. It is the finest example of the triumph of mind over matter that I have ever seen."

A mere awkwardness is almost always out-

grown, or, if it does not entirely vanish with maturity, it ceases to annoy unless its cause springs from some physical defect which time cannot cure. Some boys perhaps, who chance to be reading this, may have the lot to go through life halt or maimed, not equal physically in some way to their comrades. To such I would say with great gentleness and sympathy, be careful not to let any over-sensitiveness keep you back or prevent you from taking your share of work or play whenever you can; and cultivate steadily the habit of forgetting yourself and entering heartily into the hopes and pursuits of others. For it is a fact that a physical peculiarity or defect, if its owner allows it to trouble him, can mar or even ruin the usefulness and happiness of a life; but if it is bravely and cheerfully borne it never fails to give a peculiar nobility to the spirit of the one who so takes it.

And not only that, but such a defect may be overcome, and in spite of it one may do such good and manly work in the world that those who are in the perfect possession of all their faculties must pause in admiration of the man, who, though so hindered, accomplishes such beautiful results.

When the late William Fawcett, of England, was a young man of eighteen, he was out shoot-

ing, and his eyesight was destroyed by the accidental discharge of a gun which was in the hands of his father. The agony of the poor father when he found, after weeks of suspense, that his dear son was hopelessly blind, was almost unendurable, and the brave boy to comfort him said, "Father, don't grieve so. I promise you that this accident shall not ruin my life. Everything that I had planned to do before it happened I will accomplish still. You shall see."

As soon as he was able he returned to college and took his degree. Then he came home and practised vigorously all sorts of manly exercises, even to riding horseback—a pastime in which he delighted as long as he lived. When his not over firm health was fully restored he began to consider what he could best do to help his fellow-men; he turned his attention to politics, and was elected to Parliament, and for many years his name was identified with every needed reform and with all legislation which was for his country's good. Finally he was made Postmaster-General of England, and he filled that high office to the satisfaction of the whole country, and when he died, a few years since, England mourned him as one of her best and bravest sons. And the man who did all this was perfectly blind.

So, my boy to whom God has thought best to send some similar affliction, never repine, never despair; but remember that with God to help you, and your own determined will, there is no limit to the things which you may accomplish if you try.

ON TEASING.

It seems to me that one of the most annoying traits of character which one can possess is a disposition to tease, for when that disposition is freely indulged there is nothing that can cause more unhappiness to others. To be obliged to spend one's life with an inveterate tease is like living in a bramble bush, or suffering constantly from the torture of innumerable pin-pricks. To be sure, one pin-prick is nothing much, but when one has to bear ten thousand of them it is quite another matter.

"Pshaw!" says the tease, "I did not hurt you any. I would n't make such a fuss about nothing. I did not *mean* anything. I was only teasing."

Exactly. And it is just because there is no meaning in it nor necessity for it, because it is "only teasing," that poor tormented, insulted human nature cries out sometimes in a passion against it. It is astonishing what an unerring

ingenuity a born tease will show in choosing his victim's weakest point and in sticking his little pin straight into it. Is his victim timid, quick-tempered, or has he some infirmity of speech or peculiarity of person about which he is sensitive? That is the very place which the tease selects for his thrust; and a tease never misses a chance. If he cannot find anything else to annoy, he will tease an animal or torment a little child, and he thinks it is fun; but it is the most malicious, most dreadful, and most dangerous fun in this world. I once knew a lady who was literally almost frightened to death by a miserable man who followed her home through the twilight; she reached shelter and dropped fainting upon the floor, and the thoughtless fellow who occasioned the distress explained that he "just followed her to tease her, because he knew she was timid, and he did it just for fun." He found that it was not so enjoyable as he waited while she hovered between life and death, the victim of his wretched joke. Fortunately for him and for the friends who loved her, she recovered, but she never entirely got over the effects of the nervous shock which she endured at that time.

I think that a genuine tease is always a coward, for he never attacks his equals: his victims are the helpless animal, the little child, the timid

woman. If you will notice, it is never the smaller boy who teases the larger one. And then a tease can never bear to be teased himself. Nothing makes him angrier than to be paid back in his own coin.

But really, the most distressing thing about the whole matter is the effect which the habit of teasing has upon the nature of the one who indulges in it. A confirmed tease becomes positively heartless. He can look upon mental or physical distress quite unmoved. Indeed, he is not satisfied with the results of his teasing if he does not cause one or the other. That is the part he enjoys, and it is why he teases.

If there is a boy who reads these lines who likes to tease his little sister until she runs in tears to her mother, or who torments some little fellow at school just to see him flush crimson and bristle with impotent indignation—if you want to make a man of yourself, stop it. For it is a most ignoble and unmanly thing to take delight in causing pain to any living creature, especially if it is smaller and weaker than yourself.

ON BEING PLEASANT.

Says Mr. Thackeray about that nice boy Clive Newcome, "I don't know that Clive was especially brilliant, but he was *pleasant*."

Occasionally we meet people to whom it seems to come natural to be pleasant; such are as welcome wherever they go as flowers in May, and the most charming thing about them is that they help to make other people pleasant too. Their pleasantness is contagious.

The other morning we were in the midst of a three days' rain. The fire smoked, the dining-room was chilly, and when we assembled for breakfast, papa looked rather grim and mamma tired, for the baby had been restless all night. Polly was plainly inclined to fretfulness, and Bridget was undeniably cross, when Jack came in with the breakfast rolls from the baker's. He had taken off his rubber coat and boots in the entry, and he came in rosy and smiling.

"Here 's the paper, sir," said he to his father with such a cheerful tone that his father's brow relaxed, and he said, "Ah, Jack, thank you," quite pleasantly.

His mother looked up at him smiling, and he just touched her cheek gently as he passed.

"The top of the morning to you, Pollywog,"

he said to his little sister, and delivered the rolls to Bridget with a "Here you are, Bridget. Aren't you sorry you didn't go to get them yourself this beautiful day?"

He gave the fire a poke and opened a damper. The smoke ceased, and presently the coals began to glow, and five minutes after Jack came in we had gathered around the table and were eating our oatmeal as cheerily as possible. This seems very simple in the telling, and Jack never knew he had done anything at all, but he had in fact changed the whole moral atmosphere of the room and had started a gloomy day pleasantly for five people.

"He is always so," said his mother when I spoke to her about it afterwards, "just so sunny and kind and ready all the time. I suppose there are more brilliant boys in the world than mine, but none with a kinder heart or a sweeter temper; I am sure of that."

And I thought, "Why isn't such a disposition worth cultivating? Isn't it one's duty to be pleasant, just as well as to be honest or truthful, or industrious or generous? And yet, while there are a good many honest, truthful, industrious, and generous souls in the world, and people who are unselfish too after a fashion, a person who is habitually pleasant is rather a rarity. I suppose the reason is because it is

such hard work to act pleasant when one feels cross.

People whose dispositions are naturally irritable or unhappy think it is no use trying to be otherwise; but that is a mistake. Any one can be pleasant who wants to. If one will patiently and perseveringly try to keep always pleasant, after a while one will get in the habit of smiling instead of frowning, of looking bright instead of surly, and of giving a kind word instead of a cross one. And if some of the boys who read this should chance to be of the kind who only act pleasant when they feel like it, I wish they would think of what I say, and try and see if I am not right. And the beauty of it is, as I said before, that pleasantness is catching, and before long they may find themselves in the midst of a circle full of bright and happy people, where every one is as good-natured and contented as they are.

ON LAUGHING.

Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way,
And merrily hent the stile-a;
A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a.

SHAKESPEARE.

THERE is no more delightful sound on earth than a hearty laugh. One good laugh will

brighten the whole day for the laugher and cheer everybody within hearing. But every laugh is not like that. Some laughs hurt instead of helping, and their sting remains long after the careless laugher has gone on his way and forgotten what he was laughing at. I think this is what the Bible means when it gives the kindly warning that there is a *time* to laugh.

Some time since five of my boy friends were appointed a committee to select the subjects for the coming quarter for the young people's prayer-meeting of their church. Four of the boys were the sons of well-to-do parents. They had plenty of money and good clothes, they were well bred, well educated, and altogether delightful young fellows. The fifth was a lad who had been born and brought up under very different circumstances. Fatherless, motherless, uneducated, and poor, he had struggled for existence from his babyhood, but through all his troubles he had kept an honest and cheerful heart. Naturally intelligent, he was always learning, and all the boys of the —— Street Church liked and respected Joe. On the appointed evening the committee met at the house of one of the lads where I was making a visit. They went into the library and held their meeting, and after an hour or so I heard them out in the hall having the last

words and giving cordial hand-shakes and good-bys to Joe, who was obliged to leave early. The hall door closed and there was an instant's silence; then the four boys who were left came leap-frogging across the hall and into the dining-room where I was sitting, and dropping on the floor around my sofa, they all went off into peals of long-suppressed laughter. After a while they managed to control themselves and tell me the joke. It seemed that Joe had mispronounced a word in a peculiarly funny manner, and the way in which he applied it made it sound supremely ridiculous to the fun-loving lads who were listening; but not one of them smiled in the slightest, or even moved a muscle, lest Joe should notice and his feelings should be hurt. They controlled themselves perfectly until Joe had gone, and then nature was too much for them and they laughed till they cried, when it could do no harm. They never repeated the story to any of their mates, so that Joe's feelings were carefully guarded in every way, and he never knew that he had said anything unusual or absurd. And I thought to myself that the Master whom those boys were serving must have been well pleased at such an instance of their thoughtfulness and self-control.

Never laugh at a jest on a sacred subject

even though the temptation may be strong. All such jesting is a species of profanity, and the influence of every boy who is trying to do right should be against it.

There are a great many practical jokes which do not deserve to be laughed at. Anything which causes inconvenience or pain to another is brutal and cannot by any possibility be amusing.

Never laugh at a vulgar joke. But laugh at a joke on yourself even if it is a little severe, for it is the best sort of practice. Many people can be very witty at other people's expense, who do not like the laugh to be turned on them. It is a good rule never to give a joke that you would not like to take.

But of honest, wholesome, hearty laughter this world can never have too much; so cultivate a merry heart which is brave enough to laugh at the little cares and annoyances of life, and you will find every day plenty of things both gay and sweet to gladden you. This is the kind of heart which the Bible says "does good like a medicine," it is such a heart that Shakespeare meant when he wrote the jolly little song which I have put at the head of this article, and it is the kind of heart which everybody loves and always has loved since the world began. And if you have such a heart you will

brighten the "foot-path" way of every one whom you meet as you travel on life's journey.

MISSIONS FOR BOYS.

THE word mission comes from the old Latin verb *mitto*, to send, so that a missionary is one who is sent. In these days there are a great many missions, both home and foreign, and thousands of people are working in them, preaching to and teaching and helping in many different ways the poor, the lonely, the ignorant, and the oppressed. But boys, as a general rule, do not do very much missionary work. I do not think this is their fault, however, for boys have naturally just as much of a missionary spirit as any one else. But the trouble is they have not "been sent." And boys can give such valuable help if they will that I feel like "sending" every boy I know and giving them a hint or two as to how to begin; and perhaps I can do that best by telling how some of my boy friends have been working recently.

Not very long ago, in a Consumptives' Home which I sometimes visit, a boy of nineteen was dying. Week by week life was slipping away from him, and one by one all the bright hopes of his youth and young manhood were departing. He was a lad who had looked poverty in the

face since he was a little child. He had never known in all his life what it was to be thoroughly well clothed and fed. While but a child he had been obliged to work, and his scanty wages had always been cheerfully divided with his mother and little sisters; and then, just as the future began to grow brighter before him, the effect of his long years of toil and privation was made manifest and he was stricken with consumption.

Friends procured for him a pleasant and sunny room at the "Home," where, surrounded by every comfort, he was free and welcome to remain as long as he lived. At first the peace and quiet of his little room, the rest and freedom from anxiety, were all he craved. But afterward, when the excellent nursing which he received and the nourishing food which he ate began to tell upon his exhausted system, and he began to revive, he missed his former busy life and his old friends and companions desperately. He missed their boyish talk, their fun and laughter above all. This quiet, monotonous life was something he was utterly unused to, and he became very lonely. The ladies who managed the Home came often to see him, and he was very grateful to them and learned to love them. His mother and sisters came, sorrowful and anxious, so their visits could not cheer him, and as

he said to his Sunday-school teacher, he wanted "the boys." So she told his old class about it, and they agreed, as they expressed it, "to stand by Frank as long as he lived." So they went to see him regularly every visiting day in turn and spent every Sunday morning with him besides. They were all working boys, and it was sometimes a real sacrifice for them to spend the scanty time they had for recreation with Frank, but they never missed him once for nearly a year. They soon discovered that Frank did not care to talk about his sufferings, but that he did like very much to know all about their plans, their work and play, and all the details of that dear every-day life which he had left for ever behind him; so they talked to him about what they were doing, and many a hearty laugh rang out from Frank's room at the relation of some droll anecdote or bit of nonsense from one of the boys. On Sunday mornings they always used to go over the Sunday-school lesson together, and then they would read aloud from some good paper.

These boys kept, beside their regular envellope for Sunday collections, a horn which was tipped with silver and which had this inscription around its edge:

"Once I was the horn of an ox,
Now I am a missionary box."

And in this they used to take up collections for whatever object they chose, and during Frank's illness he had frequent presents which were bought with this money. Rather amusing were some of the purchases, too, and yet, as Frank said, they each went to the spot.

Towards the last Frank could only see his kind friends for a few minutes at a time; they used to go in and sit quietly by his bed, and when they left they would give his hand a gentle clasp and say warmly, "Keep up your courage, old boy," or "Don't give in: we fellows remember you in class prayer-meeting every time." And so, helped and encouraged by his friends, Frank passed through the dark valley, brave and faithful to the last, and reached his home in that happy country whose inhabitants never say, "I am sick."

I know another class of boys who are interested in a poor woman who has a sick husband and six little daughters to provide for. These boys are sons of parents in good circumstances, and many are the glasses of soda-water and pounds of candy which they deny themselves for the sake of "their little girls," as they call them; and frequently on a Saturday before they are out on their bicycles or off for a game of some sort, one or another will go bounding up the four flights of stairs which lead to the tene-

ment where their protégées live, with a special gift for a special little pet.

I know another set of boys who live in the country, and they collect every season crates of delicious fruit — grapes, apples, peaches, and pears--and send them to the poor children in the city. This deserves a story by itself, as I well know, for I sometimes help to distribute the gift, and I can never forget the look of the eager little mouths which are reached up to take it — mouths, sometimes, which have not tasted one single bit of fresh fruit all during the long hot summer.

My dear boys, I think I have told you enough to give you a hint of how to begin being missionaries. You have only to look about you, and you will find somebody to whom you can lend a helping hand. But if you should fail to find an opening for yourself, just go to your pastor or teacher, and he will soon put you on the track of somebody; and when you have once begun I don't think you will ever care to stop, for the great beauty of all such work is that it ennobles the nature of the one who helps as well as comforts and encourages the one who is in need, for as Mr. Lowell so beautifully says,

> "Who shares his bread with a beggar feeds three,
> Himself, his suffering neighbor, and Me."

Which is only another way of saying, "Inas-

much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these ye have done it unto Me."

And I trust there is not a single boy who reads these words who would not run with eagerness to do a kindness to his Lord and Saviour.

ON BEING A GENTLEMAN.

WHAT is it to be a gentleman? If you ask Mr. Webster, he will tell you that any man who is well educated, polite, and civil ranks in this country as a gentleman. But I think that to-day most people acknowledge that it takes more than that to make a gentleman.

"It takes blue blood," says Charlie. I suppose Charlie means by that expression that to be a gentleman a man must come of a noble and distinguished ancestry; but I have known many a man who came of a noble race who was not truly a gentleman. Though an honorable ancestry is a thing to thank God for and to be glad of, yet that in itself is not necessary to make a gentleman, for a man may have been born in a poorhouse and know nothing about his father and mother, and yet be a gentleman. Look a little deeper. What does the word "gentle" mean? To be gentle, says Mr. Webster, is never to be rough, harsh, or severe. So, then, a

gentleman must have polite manners and never be rough, harsh, or severe. But to be a thorough gentleman takes more than this.

A short time since an American visiting London for the first time was invited to a reception to meet a very distinguished company. During the evening he found himself seated beside a pleasant-looking gentleman; they entered into conversation and the American told his neighbor that he was from the United States, and that it was his first evening out in London.

"Indeed," said the other, smiling. "And how do you like us?"

"Oh," was the hearty response, "I like you all greatly. Everybody is very kind; but, to tell you the truth, I think your titles very confusing. I find that I am getting my dukes and earls all mixed up, and I am afraid that I do n't address any one properly."

His neighbor's eyes sparkled. "Ah," said he, "in America you do n't have that trouble."

"Oh, no," was the answer. "There any man is a gentleman who tells the truth and pays his debts, and we are all plain Misters."

The other looked amused, but just then a gentleman came up, and bowing profoundly, addressed the American's companion as "Your Royal Highness," and with a courteous smile

and a bow, H. R. H. walked off, leaving Mr. C—— anxiously considering the tone of his previous remarks, and wondering if they had been too free and easy for the ears of royalty.

But the American's idea of what constituted a gentleman throws another light on the subject. A gentleman *must* pay his debts and speak the truth. He must verify the old proverb that "a gentleman's word is as good as his bond." If he passes his word he must keep it at any hazard, and every word he says must come within the limit of absolute truth. And a gentleman must live within his income. True, many a true gentleman has known poverty's bitterest sting, and has seen his property melt away from him like snowflakes in spring-time, leaving him positively penniless; then it is right to take help from others, both for one's self and for one's family. But such help is never obtained under false pretences, and a true gentleman, if he is ever able, will repay the donors.

So, then, a gentleman must be polite, gentle, truthful, and honest. And if a boy wishes to become a gentleman, and will rule his life by those four words, he will succeed. But he will find when he begins to try that those four words, simple as they are, have deep meanings, and it may not be always easy for him to put them into daily practice. But if he wishes an

example by which to mould his life, I can point him to one perfect model, Jesus Christ, who was, as the poet truly says,

"The first of gentlemen."

Never before or since have there been shown in this world such beautiful manners as his, so courteous, so friendly, and marked with such an unfailing tact and kindness, whether they addressed the young, the middle-aged, or the old.

And was not He the very essence of gentleness?—a gentleness which had no trace of weakness in it, but rather one that was born of conscious power and perfect self-control.

And who but He could say that He was Truth itself?

And though He was born and lived and died in poverty, yet no one of all his enemies, and He had many, eager to find some flaw, could point to the slightest stain on his integrity and honor.

A lad who hopes to win this high ideal must make up his mind to spend his life in trying; but it will pay him, for he will find sooner or later that in aiming to be a gentleman he is only trying to make himself like Christ.

ON GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH CHRIST.

I KNOW that there are many boys who will read this who do not yet know Christ who would like to get acquainted with him, but in spite of all they hear about him in church, in Sunday-school, and prayer-meeting, they do not know how to begin; for the things which are said about him touch upon ideas which are quite outside of their experience and which seem very strange and unreal to them. What is this "still small voice" which Christians speak of which brings such happiness to hear? How do Christians know Christ hears them when they pray? How do they know He loves them, and how can they love Him when they have never seen Him? One has to be well acquainted with Christ before one can understand all this. You will have to be more than an acquaintance, you will have to be a friend of his, before you can experience such things. And to become genuine friends with any one takes time, you know. But fortunately for us, it is very easy to win Christ's friendship, for He is always ready and waiting and we have only to do our part.

The first thing of all to do is to read the

story of his life as we find it in the four Gospels, not reading it piecemeal, a little bit at a time, but reading it as if every chapter were a lesson—as indeed it is—and you were bound to get the meaning out of it. When you have done this you will find that there are certain things which Christ expects every friend of his to do. One is to pray—not simply to *say* your prayers, but to pray honestly from the heart. Tell Him that you want to be a friend of his, and ask Him to forgive your sins and make you worthy. You will not hear anything, you will not see anything; when you arise from your knees the world will look the same as usual. But nevertheless, if you have prayed that prayer with an honest heart, it will surely be answered. You will also find, if you want to be friends with Christ, that he expects you to make your life as nearly like his own as you can. To do this there is just one little test which you must apply to your actions every hour in the day—it is to say to yourself, "Would Christ like me to do this?" If you think he would, go on and do it well. But if you think he would not like it, then never do it.

And if you keep on steadily day by day reading his Book, praying to him, and trying to be like him, then surely some day, sooner or later, you will feel his presence near you, and

he will speak to you in that wonderful way of his which one can know but can never describe; and you will be ready from that moment to drop everything and spring with joy to answer when he calls.

Sometimes—I 'm sure I do n't know how—a boy gets an idea that to become a Christian will take all the fun and sparkle out of life.

"You have to be so awfully solemn," said one of my boys to me once.

"Why, Jack," said I, "what makes you think that?"

"Oh, I do n't know," he answered, "but you do."

"Do you suppose," said I, "that when Jesus lived in this world he went about with a sad face and a grave manner and only spoke in solemn tones? No, indeed. If he had been like that, people would not always have been asking him to dinner and to supper and trying to get him to stay with them at night. He would not have been a welcome guest at wedding-feasts and happy gatherings like that. No. He was cheerful himself and he loved to have every one about him happy, and he was always trying to make them so."

Of any sort of honest, wholesome fun no Christian boy need be afraid to take his share, and he will be apt to have a better time than

any one else, for who will have so light a heart as he? Only take care that no slightest hint of ill-temper or unfairness on your part shall mar any of your games, and you can be sure that your Best Friend is glad to have you happy, and that you can serve him in your play as well as in your work.

And if any boy who does not yet know Jesus will try to get acquainted with him in the way that I have told, he will soon come to know Him, and when he knows Him he will love Him, and when once he loves Him he will be proud and happy to be His friend and servant until the day he dies.

ON BEING A CHRISTIAN.

When a boy gets one good look at the Saviour and realizes something of what he is and what he has done for us, it is not often that that boy turns away and leaves him; for after such a look one can hardly help loving Christ and trying to serve him. But sometimes a boy's idea of what constitutes a Christian life is not very clear.

I asked one of my boys once how any one could tell whether a boy was a Christian or not.

"Well," answered Tom rather hesitatingly, "if a fellow is a Christian he goes to church and

to Sunday-school and to prayer-meeting regularly, and he reads his Bible and all that."

"But," said I, "I am sorry to say that I have known some people who have done all those things which you mention, and yet I did not feel sure that they were true Christians. Is there no other way in which you can tell? How do you know that Will Barrett is a Christian, for instance?"

"Why," said Tom at once, "*by the way he acts.* He is n't the same fellow at all."

"Ah," I responded, smiling, "now you have explained it perfectly; *he is n't the same fellow at all.*"

It is not any one thing which a boy does, but a change occurs which penetrates his whole life. That is what we mean when we say any one has been "converted," or has had a "change of heart." It is what the Bible means when it speaks of being "born again," or of "becoming a new man in Christ Jesus." The change is radical, and a boy who has been through that experience is not the same fellow at all that he was before it happened. It is not only that he takes a deeper interest in his church and all its services than he ever did before, or that he reads his Bible more faithfully or prays more earnestly, but the change affects every action of his daily life; it makes more thorough the way

he works or studies or plays; it makes him braver, gentler, pleasanter than he ever was before. But the change is shown most of all in the way he fights and conquers his own besetting sins. And when a boy's companions see such a change as this coming over one of their number they know beyond all doubting that he has become a Christian, and such is the test which a boy's friends always apply to him.

Once, not many years ago, a boy went to college, and he was just the handsomest, wittiest, pleasantest, and most "taking" boy in his class. He had plenty of money, everybody liked him, and he was sought after by all; but he made friends with the faster and more reckless set, and for two years he went dashing on, and there was nothing too mad or too foolish for Jack Sanborn and his friends to do. But in one vice he was worse than all the rest: he was exceedingly profane. The habit grew upon him until he swore without knowing it, and it was second nature to him.

One day he chanced to be sitting in his room alone when some one came to him. He never could tell how it was, but it seemed to him that Christ was there—the Christ of Calvary. He had heard the Bible read thousands of times, indeed, he had been taught to read it and to pray when he was a little boy; but it had all

been to him as an idle tale. But in that hour Christ came to him and called him, and he heard and answered, and forsook all and followed Jesus as truly as did those fishermen friends of Jesus so long ago by the Sea of Galilee. His comrades noticed the change in him, of course, and they watched him, half laughingly, half curiously, but very closely. He was just as friendly as ever with them, but to their wonder not one glass of wine would he touch, not one bit of dissipation would he indulge in, and strangest of all, not one profane word passed his lips. For the rest he was much as usual—better at his lessons a good deal, but happier and more full of life than ever. He was deeply interested in the inter-collegiate games, and he was highly excited over a certain coming football match which, according as it was won or lost, would be the glory or despair of the collegiate year.

"I will tell you what, fellows!" said one of his friends, "if Sanborn gets through this football match without swearing I shall think his change of heart is a genuine thing."

When the decisive day came Jack drove a party of friends to the game on his drag.

"It will be a dry lunch, fellows," said he when he invited them. "Nothing but Apollinaris water."

But his friends knew very well that there would be a delicious luncheon provided, and one who voiced the sentiments of all remarked that he "would rather go with Jack Sanborn and Apollinaris water than with any other fellow and champagne." So they all accepted the invitation, and they every one agreed to watch closely and see if some time during the day Jack did not forget himself and swear. But Jack never dreamed that he was under such a close surveillance.

The game was an exciting one, and Jack and hundreds of others like him screamed and shouted and cheered their favorites on. The excitement became constantly more intense. The team of Jack's college was losing ground. Jack was half beside himself as he stood upon the seat of his drag. Suddenly there was a suspicion of foul play on the other side, and that roused Jack's blood to fever heat. His lips opened with a hoarse cry, but no words came. He clinched his teeth just in time. His shut fists plunged into his coat pockets, a great vein swelled out on his forehead, and he sat suddenly down, gazing straight ahead, never seeing that struggling heap in the field which a minute before had held his whole attention, for he realized that he had very nearly disgraced his Lord and Master. There was one instant's

prayer, an unspoken thought, and he was self-controlled once more and turned his attention to the game again. He never knew that his struggle was noticed, but every one of his companions upon the drag had seen it, and they knew better than any one else could know what an effort it was for Jack to so control himself.

Not long after this there was a revival in that college, and it began among Jack Sanborn's set. The old president — a saintly man — was filled with wonder, and called it a "marvellous providence," as indeed it was. Jack himself never knew that he had anything to do with it, but it is true that the sight of that noble resistance of his to sharp temptation convinced all who saw it of the reality of his religion, and made them long to know for themselves this Master whom he served so truly; and so in the most natural way the beautiful influence spread, until more than a hundred young men sought that Saviour whom Jack had found and promised to love and serve him for ever.

And so, my boys who are Christians, never, *never* forget that it is by the common acts of your daily life that you are going to be judged; it is by them that you will stand or fall; it is by them that you will influence others; and it is the smallest things sometimes that are the most significant.

I think that one of the best texts for a Christian boy to guide his life by was given by St. Paul; for he was a man who understood boy-nature very well, and boys just growing into manhood were always very near his heart.

This is the text I speak of, and I will leave it with you, making it the closing sentence of my book:

"*Therefore, whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*"