

THROUGH STUDY WINDOWS: TWENTY-SIX ADDRESSES TO CHILDREN

by H.H. Snell

A collection of articles and writings by H.H. Snell from Through Study Windows: Twenty-Six Addresses to Children, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

32 Chapters

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Through Study Windows: Twenty-Six Addresses to Children

Preface

SECOND EDITION,
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THIS LITTLE BOOK
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED
TO MY WIFE.

I HAVE looked out "Through Study Windows" upon the world as I see it and remember it and believe it to be, in order to find something to say to boys and girls about our Father in Heaven, and the life which we all ought to live as His children.

These windows give me a view of a stony road, the topmost branches of the trees of Bold Venture Park, a hillside made up of many fields, with here and there a lonely farmstead, and, upon the summit of the hill, twelve hundred feet above the level of the sea, the Tower which celebrates the loyalty of the people of Darwen to the Throne. That Tower constitutes a landmark, which is visible for I know not how many miles around. From its top one gets the widest possible view of far-stretching moorland, hills and woods and valleys, and industrial towns buried under the smoke of their tall chimneys; and, on fine days, I have seen the hill country of Westmoreland and Cumberland, the mountains of Wales, the waves of the Irish Sea rolling in upon the shores of Morecambe Bay, and the ships plying to and from the docks of Preston upon the waters of the Estuary of the Ribble.

As I have looked out of my windows, memory has come to my aid, and I have recovered scenes from other lands, stories from the Bible and other books, and things which have interested me in other places where I have lived. When I see the Table of Contents, I am astonished at the strange and unreasonable medley of subjects, but my only excuse is that I have put them down just as I happened to think of them. At least they all illustrate one great theme—that wondrous Life to which an ancient poet pointed when he said, “God is my High Tower.”

And my hope is that some who read these Addresses may be able to see “Through Study Windows” right up to that Tower.

UPLANDS, DARWEN.

JUNE, 1912.

1. Thankfulness

“IN everything give thanks.”

Always try to look at the bright side. And when there is no bright side, polish up the dark side.

I think the best people in the world are the thankful people. They are the nicest to walk with, to talk with, to live with—to do anything with.

David, the shepherd boy, who afterwards became a King, was one of the most thankful men that ever lived. He was a busy man, but he was always playing and singing in-between-whiles. They called him “the sweet singer of Israel.” When he kept his father’s sheep, there were plenty of long dull hours of weary watching, but he used to take his lyre out with him, and play and sing to make the time pass as pleasantly as he could.

That reminds me, boys and girls, of a word of advice I want to give you—don’t grow up without learning to play on some musical instrument. Go on asking your father to buy you a flute, or a fiddle, or a banjo, or a drum. It doesn’t matter if you plague him a bit, as long as you learn to play something. If he won’t buy you anything, then whistle; whistle all the tunes you know, and all you don’t know, until you do know them. Perhaps your father will buy you a flute to stop your whistling.

David learned to play so well that he was welcome everywhere. When King Saul was “down in the dumps” and hid himself away in his tent, they sent for David to cheer him up.

We have got a great many of David’s songs still, and they are full of thankfulness to God.

Doctor Oliver Wendell Holmes was walking one day through a cemetery, when he came upon a plain, upright, marble slab, with an epitaph of only four words— “She was so pleasant.” That was all. But it was enough. It meant that the one who lay sleeping there had had the music and song of thankfulness in her life. We all know a few people like that; happy people, who try to make the best of everything.

Jesus once healed ten lepers, and only one of them remembered to come back and thank Him. It was so striking that He made a remark about it: “Were there not ten healed, and only this stranger returned to give glory to God?” Only one in ten! That would be a very serious state of things if it were always like that, wouldn’t it? Do learn to say, “Thank you”; it is such a pretty word, and has so much to do with making life pleasant.

Once there was a man whose name was Homer,

Who used to live on Grumble Corner;

Grumble Corner in Cross-patch Town,

And he never was seen without a frown.

He grumbled at this, he grumbled at that,

He growled at the dog, he growled at the cat;

He grumbled at morning, he grumbled at night,

And to grumble and growl were his chief delight.

But one day, all that was changed, and when a friend met him on the street, he didn't know him. He said, "I may be mistaken, but aren't you Mr. Homer, that used to live at Grumble Corner?" "Yes." "Well, what has come to you?" "I've changed my residence; it wasn't healthy there; you'll find me now in Thanksgiving Street."

Where do you live, children? Grumble Corner or Thanksgiving Street?

The sunshine was pouring into my room when I was writing this address to you, and I think some of it got into the address. And I am sure it improved it. That reminds me of a little girl who was eating her breakfast when the sunshine was on the table, and who said, "Mother, I've just swallowed a spoonful of sunshine."

Beethoven used to have his piano carried out into the sunshine, and there, in the fields, with the birds and the flowers around him, he composed some of his happiest pieces.

Take the drops of happiness as God gives them every day. A thankful heart always finds plenty to be thankful for. If someone gave me a dish of sand, and told me that there were tiny particles of iron filings mixed up with the sand, what would be the best way of finding them? To fumble with my fingers? No. But to take a magnet and push it through the sand, and it would come out with the filings sticking to it.

So with the day; let the thankful heart sweep through it, and it will find God's mercies. Only, God's mercies are all golden.

2. Eyes and No Eyes

“The wise man’s eyes are in his head.”

What does that mean? Are not everybody’s eyes in their head? No, they may be on the face, on each side of the nose, but that is a different thing from being in the head.

One afternoon, your father sends you to the toolbox for the hammer. But, though you rummage through all the tools, you cannot find the hammer. So you come back and say “I can’t see it, it isn’t there!”

“That’s just like you,” says your father, “you can never find things.”

Then he goes for it, and, catching hold of the toolbox impatiently, pushes it against the wall. “Why, what is this behind the box?” says he, pulling out the hammer, “why don’t you use your head?”

If you had had your eyes in your head, you would have seen that the box did not go flat against the wall, and would have felt behind it.

Two boys took the same walk, one day, across the fields. When they got home, they were asked what they had seen.

One of them said that he had been past the Hill farm, and through the woods to the river, but there was nothing to see, nothing that he hadn’t seen a hundred times before.

The other had been having “a ripping time”; at the Hill farm there was a crabapple with mistletoe growing on it, and, coming through the woods, he had seen a pecker running up and down the trees and rapping after his food; but better still, he had startled a water rat, and watched him swimming right across the river, and just when he was lying down by the weir and thinking that he should see nothing else, there came a kingfisher, and it was the biggest fun in the world to see how he carried on.

If you have your eyes in the place where you do your thinking, it is really wonderful what you can see. What, for instance, are those wasps doing by the side of the muddy pool? They are coming in pairs, and flying away in pairs. One of them picks up a little pellet of mud, and the other fills his mouth with water. When they reach their nest, the one sets down his little bit of mud, and the other throws over it his tiny drop of water, and then they puddle it and fly away for more.

Or why is that lapwing circling round your head, and making those strange cries? Why does it shoot down close to you, and then dart away in front as if it wanted you to follow? You have come too near the nest, and the wise bird is doing everything it can think of to attract your attention and draw you away.

John Ruskin was a great lover of pictures. And he found them everywhere, in the galleries, and in the streets, on the clouds, and on the rocks. He has helped us as much as any man to see the beauty of the world. When he was a boy, he used to be delighted with the column of water that

rose from the main when the turn-cock was watering the sewers. He saw the same beauty in that little fountain that he afterwards beheld in the leaping waterfalls of Italy and Switzerland.

One day, when he was grown up, he was out walking with a friend, near the time of sunset, in wintertime; as they were going past a tree, he stooped down, and put the branches between himself and the sun, and gently drew his friend down to him so that he could see the wonderful network of the tree against the and gold of the setting sun. "Look there," said he, "isn't that beautiful?"

It would never occur to most men to find any beauty in that tree, just because most boys would only look at a fountain in the streets as making a stream to jump over or to paddle in.

There was once a very poor woman living in an out-of-the-way spot in Australia. A traveler came to the door one day, who asked her a few questions as to how she made a living. She told him that since her husband died she had stayed on in the same house doing a little washing, but found it very hard to make enough money to keep herself. The stranger was looking round at the things in the hut while the woman was talking. The clothes which she was washing were contained in a big wooden tub, which stood on a great slab of quartz. Said the stranger at last, "Why, my good woman, your washing-tub is standing on enough gold to make you rich for the rest of your life." And it was true.

When God made the eye, He made a most wonderful thing, and He intended us to use it. We need never be dull, and never poor if we are wise enough to have our eyes "in the head."

"The world is so full of a number of things that we all ought to be as happy as kings."

If we use our eyes properly, we shall grow up to be useful, and when others want to know things, they will learn to ask us. The man who found out more about the stars than anyone else in his day was Galileo. He was always looking at things with his eyes in his head. He went one day into a cathedral at Pisa, and saw a lamp swinging. That suggested to him the pendulum. And that was the first idea towards making a clock.

Looking at things doesn't cost much, and it doesn't hurt anyone. What you see, no one can take away from you. You'll always be the poorer for what you miss seeing, but the things you see will help to make you rich.

3. With All Thy Might

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.”

Thomas Carlyle often quoted that sentence, and one day he had a great chance of proving that he tried hard to practice it.

He had written the story of the French Revolution, and had lent the manuscript to his friend, John Stuart Mill, who wanted very much to see it before it was printed.

One evening, Carlyle was seated in his study, after a hard day's work. A hurried knock sounded at the front door, and heavy steps came up the stair. Mill entered, looking deadly pale. “Why, what's the matter?” said Carlyle, leading his friend to a seat. Then Mill told, in broken sentences, how he had left the manuscript lying on a table, and someone had burnt it. It was all gone. Five months of hard work were lost!

When Carlyle had thoroughly recovered from the shock of the bad news, he bravely set to work, and wrote it all again. If you have ever had a long sum in arithmetic to do before you were allowed to go out to play, and if, when you showed your work to the master, he tore it up and told you to do it again, you will know something of Carlyle's feelings.

Each one of us has a work to do in this world. That is what we are here for, and our happiness depends on getting it done. Everything worth doing at all is worth doing well. If we put all our might into our work, we shall get the most out of it.

I was travelling by train the other evening. Three young men got into the same carriage. Directly the train started, one said to another, “Have you got it with you?” I did not hear what it was he asked for, but I should not have been surprised if it had been a pack of cards, for I have seen many silly young men waste their time in railway carriages in that way. But no, it was a piece of a man's skull. They took it in their hands, and passed it from one to another, having great fun in naming all the parts of it. They were medical students coming home from a lecture at the University, and, so that they might not waste their time, they were going over all that they had learned about the marks on that bone.

An eminent merchant said that he once learned a very valuable lesson when he was eleven years old. “My grandfather,” he said, “had a flock of sheep, and my business was to look after them. As I could not do it all by myself, a boy was sent to help me. But that boy was more fond of putting his head into a story book, than of looking after sheep, so that, mostly, the work was left to me while he lay under the trees and read. I did not half like it, and, at last, I went to my grandfather and complained. The old gentleman said with a smile, ‘Never mind, my boy; if you watch the sheep, you will have the sheep.’ ‘What does grandfather mean by that?’ I thought; ‘I don't expect to have the sheep, I don't want to be a farmer.’ I did not understand, but I trusted him. I thought it would be sure to be all right, and went back to my work.

“In the field I could not keep the words out of my head, ‘If you watch the sheep, you will have the sheep.’ Then I thought of something I had heard on Sunday, ‘Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.’ I began to see through it. It meant this: ‘Never you mind who neglects his work; be you faithful, and you will have your reward.’”

Whatever you have to do, do it as if you wanted to finish it. Do it as if it were of the greatest consequence to get it well done with, and out of the way. To see some men work, you would think that they wanted to spin it out as long as they could. They look as if they expected they would never get another job in this world after that was done. The only real way to work is to put your back into it. I don’t suppose that many people work because they like it, but because they have to do it. And yet the most miserable people are generally those who have nothing to do.

Jesus said, “My Father worketh, and I work.” Our Saviour belongs to a working family. And I hope you do, too.

4. La Corbière

“GOD is my Light.”

On the coast of Jersey, there is a grand lighthouse called La Corbière. It is built of stone, and is perched high up on the rocks, so that you have to climb a very steep flight of steps to reach it. At high tide it is cut off from the mainland, when it looks like a little fortress in the midst of the sea, with here and there tiny islands of rock around it. When the sea is rough, of course its inmates are quite prisoners, but electric wires give them the power of sending messages to the shore. At low tide, the jagged rocks come into view, and you see the terrible dangers that threaten vessels which get out of their course. Thousands of people travel far to look upon that lighthouse, for it makes a very striking scene in all states of the tide; the lonely headland, the heather-clad heights, the stretching bays, the brown rocks in every conceivable position, now high, now low, sometimes covered by the water, and sometimes peering above it like dragons waiting for their prey, and, far out as one can see, the great channel on which move the steamships, the yachts and fishing vessels, all heedless of La Corbière and her terrors—for it is day.

But at night time it is a different story.

Then the headland is blotted out or wrapped in shadowed gloom, and far over the waters the light from La Corbière is streaming. And miles away the man on the bridge of some vessel in the Channel sees it and knows it, remembers the terrible rocks, and is thankful for the lighthouse.

When you are young, you sometimes think it troublesome to be told about God and His Commandments, and such solemn subjects. But when you grow up, you will be glad to see His Light and recognize it, and remember the Commandments and the perils of getting out of your course.

Meanwhile, it is a good thing to learn all about your Heavenly Father, and especially about Jesus, the Light of the World, though there may not be much, perhaps, that you can understand.

A little further on, and only a few miles from La Corbière, there is Fort St. Heliers, with two harbors, one behind the other. It is because of that harbor, and of the number of ships that want to reach it in safety, that the lighthouse of La Corbière has been built. Of course, there are other lights besides that one, to show the way into St. Heliers, for the passage between the great rocks at the entrance to the harbor is very narrow, and a few yards out of the way would mean all the difference between safety and destruction. So the ships move carefully on from light to light, and as they are able to keep in line with the various lights, so they know that they are steering straight for the harbor-mouth.

And that is the way it is with us. We are all making for a harbor, and it is because of that, that we need God for our Light. And if we look carefully in our chart, and follow what it tells us, we shall safely make the harbor.

At La Corbière, when the morning comes, the men in charge of the lighthouse have their work to do. When the lamps are out, they must be cleaned, and all the glasses and reflectors made as bright as can be. And in the afternoon, you may see a man coming across the space to the foot of the steps, wheeling a barrow with a big can of oil. That is needed every day to feed the lamps.

God is our Light. But, if the light is going to shine in our hearts, there is something which we ought to do every day, and that is—keep our lamps bright and clean. Learn to think good thoughts and do right things. Light springs up for those who do right.

5. Flowers

“The flowers appear on the earth.”

“How they grow; they toil not neither do they spin.”

A poet called flowers “the favorites of Heaven!” They may be, but I am sure of this, they are the favorites of earth. Everybody loves flowers. If anyone were to say that he did not care for flowers, we should think there was something seriously the matter with him.

Look at the fields in springtime, covered with buttercups and daisies, graceful lady smocks and purple clover. Was there ever a carpet that could compare with these for loveliness?

This year the roots of all the trees were well drenched with April rains, so that plentiful supplies of sap ran up into all the leaves and buds. Then there came day after day of warm May sunshine the whole month through, to the utter astonishment of the oldest inhabitant of Darwen, who had never seen such a sunny-faced, merry month of May in all his life before. And the result was that the flowering trees in Bold Venture Park excelled themselves. It was a real feast of color, a banquet of beauty. All people that came and looked were satisfied, and yet nothing was taken away save the picture of it; as many more might have come and found the same pleasure in the loveliness.

Of course, you were among the visitors; you went up to the fountain, and saw the hawthorns red against the lawn, and the drooping branches of the witch elm heavy with flowers of green. And then, you turned round and looked at the bank of rhododendrons, hawthorns, and laburnums that stretched up to the roadway, and at the dark face of the old quarry cliff just peeping out here and there from among the masses of foliage and flowers that almost covered it.

No King's robes at Coronation ever looked so gloriously beautiful as the laburnums. Tailors and seamstresses were at work for months on the dresses and robes worn at the Court on the Coronation days; many a laborious and anxious hour they had, and at close of day often went home tired, so tired that they could hardly sleep; but, with all their skill and pains, and notwithstanding all the money spent on silk and satin, ermine and lace, gold and pearls, they were not able to make anything so perfect, so wonderful, so strange, so beautiful as the flowers on one of those trees.

The Master said, “Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

Let me try to tell you why.

1. No one saw the workmen that made the flowers. God's workmen were busy during the Winter and the Spring upon those robes of Summer, and yet they were out of sight and out of hearing all the time. The work went on in perfect quietness.

If you had gone into any of the rooms where the Court dresses were being made, you would have seen the workers, and would have heard their voices and the sounds of tools and machines.

But not so with the flowers; the gardeners were often in the park, digging and planting and pruning and tidying, but they did not do the real work. That was all out of sight.

2. These clothes grew out of the trees.

For the Coronation robes, the ermine may have come from the Arctic regions, the wool from Australia, the cotton from Egypt, the gold from America, the diamonds from Africa, and the pearls from the West Indies. And when the garments were finished, they were put on, I suppose, by maids of honor and gentlemen of the royal chambers.

But the red blossoms grew out of the hawthorns, the golden chains grew out of the laburnums, the magenta robes grew out of the rhododendrons; little by little, the trees made their own clothes, and put them on from within. If you ask me how it was done; well, that's another matter!

3. These flowers help the life of the trees.

Our King and Queen looked very grand during the great Coronation ceremonies in Westminster Abbey, but I think they must have felt rather nervous and anxious, and, if the truth were told, they really began to enjoy the day when it was all over, and they were able to take off those clothes.

Now the trees are never so happy as when they are in flower. You see, they cannot move about the world, so they have to win other things to come to them, and bring them what they want. They need the help of the bee, the ant, the fly, the butterfly. And so, these flowers are made with perfumes to attract, with beautiful colors to please, and with sweet nectar to persuade their little visitors to come and stay a long time, and enjoy themselves until their business is finished. And that is how the flowers grow into seeds, and the seeds spread the new trees into other soils.

These are some of the reasons why the garments of flowers are more wonderful than any worn by kings and queens. We are always finding out new flowers, and new things about the old ones. And everything that we discover makes us wonder more and more at the power and wisdom of our Father in heaven.

"He who grows them, great or small,

Deems them none too many,

And says, smiling on them all,

'I can spare not any.'"

6. The Golden Rule

“All things that ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.”

This rule is called Golden, because it is so precious. I know a book that is called “The Golden Treasury,” because it is made up of the best poems in the English language.

When Saint John saw the City of God in a vision, it seemed to him that every street was paved with pure gold.

If you learn to keep this rule of life, you will grow up to know what it means to walk in those golden streets.

Our Lord Jesus Christ gave us the Golden Rule, and there is no one who ever lived who kept it like He did. If He ever saw anyone in trouble, He put Himself in his place and helped him out of it, just as He would have liked others to do for Him.

If we could get the Golden Rule carried out, there would be an end to everything that is bad. The other day there was a man who tied up a cow to the stall, and then thrashed her cruelly. But when they brought a rope and a big stick to do the same to him, he objected. There would be an end of all unkind treatment of dumb animals, if men kept the Golden Rule. There would be no more thieving, because no one would steal from another, unless he wanted the other to steal from him.

It is a simple rule for us to understand. All we have to ask ourselves is, what should we like someone else to do to us? We don't like pain; well, don't give it. We do like things that give us pleasure; well, do them.

Two boys were playing on the heath. The bigger boy put the other one's shoe into the pond. The little chap pulled it out. To give more annoyance, the other lad pushed the shoe further in. Then a man interfered, and rescued it. But the poor little youngster went home crying because his shoe was soaked. I don't call that fun, I call it silliness and unkindness.

Abraham Lincoln, when he was a boy, was serving in a shop. He sold a woman eight shillings' worth of goods. He took her money, and gave her change. When she had gone, he found that he had given her sixpence too little. It was evening time, so he locked up the shop, trudged two miles to the place where she lived, and gave it back to her. That was what he would have liked her to do for him, so he did it for her.

We should make people kind, and we should make them honest, if we could get them to keep the Golden Rule.

There were two boys in a school who proved themselves the best swimmers in a lot of races. So they had to swim a final race for the prize. One of them came forward with a request that the race be put off for a quarter of an hour. There was no reason given, but the request was granted. Then the judge thought he would like to find out the reason. He was told that the second boy had been seized with cramp, and that his rival had been generous enough to ask for more time, so that he

could have a chance to get over it. And the generous lad was discovered in one of the tents rubbing his rival down so as to make him as vigorous as possible for the race. That was what he would have liked the other to do for him, if he had had the cramp.

Ah! if only we could get this beautiful rule carried out, what a different world it would be! Truly, it is the Golden Rule.

I see good things painted sometimes over doors and over mantel-pieces. This ought to be painted in golden letters. Paint it how you like on the tablets of your heart. Only, do not forget it.

7. Asking Questions

“Both hearing them and asking them questions.”

One day, when Jesus was twelve years of age, his parents lost Him. They found Him in the midst of the Teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. It was not surprising that He “increased in wisdom.”

If you don't know a thing, ask about it. What little Bob doesn't learn, big Robert won't understand. There is no better time to ask questions than when you are young. Older people expect children to ask questions, and think nothing of it. But when you grow up, they will think you rude and troublesome, and expect you to know without asking.

But, no doubt, you ask enough questions already. Your father and mother think so, and will not thank me for telling you to ask any more. Well, all I have to say is, Ask the right sort of questions.

Jimmy Ferguson was a peasant's son. He wanted to know how to read. So he listened to his father teaching his elder brother, and then he asked an old woman to teach him. When he was eight years old, he was very anxious to find out how watches go. His father would never let him have a watch to play with. But one day, a stranger came, and Jimmy asked the time. Then he asked to be allowed to look at the watch.

“What makes that box go round?” said he, after listening to what the stranger told him about the works.

“A steel spring,” answered his tutor.

“But how can a steel spring, shut up in a box, turn it round so as to wind up all the chain?”

The gentleman explained again.

“I don't see through it yet,” said Jimmy.

“Well, now,” said the other, “take a long thin piece of whalebone, hold one end of it fast between your thumb and fingers, and wind it round them. It will then try to unwind itself, and if you fix it inside a small hoop, it will turn the hoop round, and wind up a thread on the outside.”

“I see it, I see it; thank you very much,” said Jimmy.

Not long after, Jimmy made a wooden clock for himself, which he showed to a man who became very interested in him, and took him into his own house, and encouraged him to go on with the drawing of designs, and the making of models of machinery.

You will not be surprised to hear that Jimmy grew up to be a man of science, a clever designer of machines, and a distinguished astronomer.

A lady, who was walking along a country lane, was astonished at being asked by a boy whom she met, whether he might go with her.

"Certainly," said she, "if you are going my way."

Presently his eyes seemed taken up with the trees on either side of the road, as he asked,

"What makes those trees grow?"

"They push down roots into the earth," said the lady.

"But what makes them grow?" he repeated, laying a heavy weight on the last word.

"They suck up food through the roots," again began the lady. "You see, there are lots of different ways of growing. Some things grow down only, some grow up, some grow up and down. People only grow up."

"Not my grandfather," answered the boy, "he's grown down a lot this year."

The lady smiled, and the lad repeated his question, "But what makes them grow?"

"Do you ever ask your mother questions?" said the lady, trying to draw him off from the trees.

"Yes, and mother she says, 'Stop it, Tommy; wait till your father comes home, and ask him.'"

"And what does your father say?"

"Father? oh, he says nothing mostly. He sits and smokes and smokes, and sometimes he says, 'Run away, and don't worry me; ask your teacher.' But she doesn't understand what I mean."

"I expect she understands you all right, little man. But the truth is we none of us know."

"Oh, well," said the little fellow, with disappointment in his voice, "if you don't know, I'm not going any further with you; I'll run home; good-bye." And off he went.

You know what a Note of Interrogation is, of course. It is a little crooked thing that asks questions. Be Notes of Interrogation, without being crooked if people cannot tell you all you want to know.

And one question I should like to ask. What are you going to be? Something big? A doctor? A mill owner? An Inventor? A merchant? The more you know, the better you can do your work, whatever it may be. Whether you are going to be a tinker or a tailor, a weaver or a sailor, learn all you have the chance of learning. And remember this, that there is one thing bigger and better than any of these things.

Jesus was found by His parents in a school. He had gone there of His own accord. It was a school in His Father's house, and He had gone there to learn His Father's business. When He grew up to be a man, He was going to give Himself to that. Be sure you follow your Heavenly Father's business; He is busy doing all the good He can. Ask some questions about that.

8. Figs

“Figs, the good figs, very good; and the bad, very bad.”

If you were going round the market in Guernsey, you would, at the end of summer, see baskets of a certain kind of fruit, which we never meet with in the markets in our part of the country. And that is—green figs. The reason is that they need very hot summers to ripen them, so they are only grown in old-fashioned gardens in the South of England, in the Channel Islands, or in Southern Europe.

They are a very delightful fruit, like a very small pear, and they must be eaten when they are just ripe; then, they are as sweet as honey, with a beautiful flavor that belongs to no other fruit. But they very soon grow rotten if they are kept.

Well, the prophet Jeremiah saw two baskets full of figs. One basket contained nothing but good figs, very good; and the other nothing but bad figs, very bad, which could not be eaten, they were so bad.

They were grown on the same tree, and under the same sunshine, and yet their fate had been very different. One basketful had been left a little too long, till one or two figs rotted, and then they rotted all the others.

And this is a fact worth remembering; the better a thing is when it is good, the worse it is when it is bad.

There is another fruit, which is called the medlar. When picked, it is as hard as a stone. When it is rotten, it is fit to eat, but that is all that can be said of it. It is just tolerable. But when the fig is rotten, it is so bad that it cannot be touched. Medlars are nothing very much at the best of times, and they are uneatable when they are sound. Figs are exquisite when they are quite ripe, and disgusting when they are bad.

That is the way with the tongue. When the tongue is good, it has the power of saying beautiful things—things that are kind and sweet, comforting and friendly, helpful and encouraging, great and wise, true and gentle. But when the tongue is bad—alas! there is nothing too bad for it to say; as a wise Christian once said, “It is full of deadly poison.”

A man once told his servant that he was going to have some friends to dine with him, and she must get the best thing there was in the market. When they came to sit down to dinner, she had tongue at every course. The master was very angry, and said that, if that was the best thing in the market, he would just as soon have the worst. The next day, there was tongue again provided. When the servant was called, she said that tongue was both the best thing and the worst thing in the market, for with it we could bless God, and with it we could curse men.

If you are keeping a basket of fruit for any length of time, it is necessary to look at it, day by day, and to throw out the bad ones, or they will make all the rest bad. So, if you would keep the tongue

right and wholesome, you must be careful not to use evil words, or they will spoil all the good words that you say.

I heard of a man, the other day, who, when he was in a temper, used bad language, and people who had heard him give way like that could never forget it. And even when he spoke gently and kindly, they remembered the strong language they had heard him speak, and his better words did them no good.

Habit is everything in speech. Accustom yourself to use good words, and they will come to your lips without thinking about them. Don't pick up the bad words that you hear; throw them down if they come your way, for they will spoil all the others. John Ruskin's mother made him learn a great part of the Bible by heart, and that is how he was able to use such grand and beautiful words. Choose the best, and habit will make it the easiest.

It is the same with the ear and the eye, with the hand and the memory, and with every good power that we possess. The better they are when they are good, the worse they are when they are bad. Whatever is good, and keeps good, is likely to become better. If you like to use your powers well, it will be harder for you to do ill with them. If you train yourself to hear bad stories, you will not be satisfied till you hear worse. An ill-trained ear helps the eye into bad ways. Wrong hearing and wrong seeing make wrong memories. You can always make good figs bad by putting them with bad ones.

The best way to live is to learn to love the good, and the true, and the beautiful, for that keeps the heart right, and then everything is as it should be.

9. A Wreck

“The way of a ship in the midst of the sea.”

No one knows what it will be. When I see a great passenger steamer preparing to start from the quay, I wonder whether she will have a prosperous voyage, and safely reach her destination. How full of interest is the scene! For the last hour there has been the bustle of wagons, carts, and carriages bringing freight and passengers. The tall cranes have been hoisting bundles of luggage into the hold; boxes and baskets have been sliding on board; people have been hurrying down the gangway. Passengers lining the deck have been interchanging their last jokes and farewells with friends upon the shore. A stream of porters has been flowing into the ship and out again, after depositing their loads. Then the bell rings. “Any more going ashore?” is the cry. A minute’s wait, and then the captain’s whistle is blown, the ropes are cast off, the screw revolves, and slowly the great ship moves away from the shore.

So, when a young man goes out into the world for the first time, to earn his living, I ask myself, what is the voyage going to be?

When we went to the Channel Islands this summer, we started from Weymouth in foggy weather, in the “Ibex.” Everyone on board seemed nervous, for two days before, the “Roebuck,” a sister ship of the same line, had been wrecked off the coast of Jersey, in a fog. For three hours the “Ibex” steamed carefully upon her way, sounding her fog-horn every two or three minutes. Now and again we heard the answering horns of other steamers. At such times the greatest caution was used by those upon the bridge, lest the sounds should come too near, and great was our relief as soon as we noted that the signals were moving further away. At the end of three hours, the fog lifted, and the rest of our voyage was without anxiety.

How was it that the “Roebuck” was wrecked? She had started from St. Helier’s as usual, with about three hundred passengers on board. Half an hour out from harbor, she ran into a bank of fog. Then we do not know exactly what happened. The Captain was so familiar with his course that he thought he knew where he was, and went ahead. Whether the speed of the vessel was “Dead slow” or “Half-speed,” we cannot say. But we suppose that, as he turned Norman Point, he thought he was further out to sea than he actually was. Instead then of going across St. Brelade’s Bay, so as to clear the rocks of La Corbière, he was steering straight for the cliffs without knowing what he was doing. But before reaching the cliffs, the ship ran on the rocks; she struck the rocks, leaped upon them, plunged forward again, and then settled down, held up on either side as if in a cradle. Then ensued an exciting scene. The boats were launched after great difficulty, and, loaded with people, pulled for the shore. The hot dry summer had opened the seams of the boats, and the water poured in, so that, even with energetic baling, the poor passengers sat nearly up to their knees in water. But, happily, the shore was not far distant, and eventually everyone safely reached it. It was an ugly experience, and those who were on board the “Roebuck” will never forget that voyage.

We are in too much of a hurry about almost everything, now-a-days. Years ago, a captain, caught in a fog on such a coast, would have let down his anchor at once, and stood where he was till it was clear weather. But the captain of the “Roebuck” knew that there was a train waiting for him on the other side, and that it would throw many things out of gear if he did not arrive to time. So he took the risk and ran on.

And oftentimes we notice that boys are in too great a hurry to be men. They hasten to talk like grown-up men, and to adopt their habits. It is a mistake. I would like to caution the lads against it. Do not hurry to grow up; else you may run on the rocks of bad habits.

The error of the captain of the “Roebuck,” in rounding Norman Point, must have been a very slight one. It was only a small mistake at first, but it went on getting bigger and bigger, as he steamed across the bay, until at last the boat was altogether out of her course.

So we may only get a little bit aside from the right course at the beginning. If we have time to see our mistake, we may correct it. But if we get into a fog, or if, through any other cause, we are unable to detect our mistake and alter our course, it may mean disaster.

But I think the most wonderful lesson of this wreck is that God's mercy is greater than all our mistakes. The only spot in St. Brelade's Bay where the “Roebuck” could have gone upon the rocks and be held up against sinking was the one she blindly found for herself in the midst of the fog. If she had reached the cliffs for which she was making, and then struck, she would have rebounded into deep water, and almost everyone would have been lost. But it was not God's will that any should be lost. Whose hands but His could have guided that ship to the one place of safety?

He holds the sea in the hollow of His hands.

“The way of a ship in the midst of the sea,” truly, none knows—but God. His Mercy is mightier than all our errors.

10. Michael Angelo's Statue of "David."

"I shall be satisfied with thy likeness."

When Michael Angelo was born in 1475 according to the custom of the time they took what is called his "horoscope." That is to say, they observed the day and the hour at which the birth happened, viz., the 6th of March, between four and five o'clock in the morning, and then they noted the stars as they happened to be placed with regard to one another. With this result in the case of Michael, that they concluded he was born under a lucky star, and therefore they might expect wonderful things from his hands, and from his brain in the years to come.

And the stars were right. For when he was yet a boy, he astonished his people with his powers. Indeed, he made his father very angry by the way in which he was always drawing something or other instead of learning his lessons or doing the work he was told to do. But it began to dawn on them all that there was something very extraordinary about Michael's drawing. That they could not make him stop it, was certain. The only other thing to do was to encourage him to go on with it, and this they did. His father sent him to a painter's studio, where he might be taught properly. And we know that he grew up to be one of the world's greatest painters and sculptors.

Now, one day, in Florence, where Michael lived, the overseers of the Cathedral wanted a giant statue of "David." So they asked a local artist to execute the work. For a year or more this man was busy with the statue, and then the overseers desired to see what progress he was making with it. But when they saw it they were dissatisfied. For the artist had tried to carve a king, and it looked no better than a rude shepherd. So they told him it was of no use to them; he might finish it or not, just as he liked, but they refused to have anything to do with it. Then the angry sculptor left the half-finished statue in the Cathedral yard, where he had been working, and there it lay, neglected and useless, for nearly forty years. During that time, of course, the marble got stained and discolored and chipped, and some of the overseers died who knew the story of it, and others were appointed in their places. One of these came and looked at the fallen statue, and said it was a pity that such a beautiful piece of marble should be wasted. Surely something might be done with it. Why not ask Michael Angelo what he thought about it?

In the meantime Michael had been growing famous, and the overseers thought that, if anyone could use the marble to good purpose, it would be he. So they consulted with him. It was a very difficult thing, of course, to adapt another man's work. It is always easier to begin anything than to alter it after someone else has begun it, especially when it is the case of a marble statue that has been cut and carved into a figure of "David," and nearly finished. Michael would have preferred to take a new block, and work his own thought out of it, instead of trying to correct another man's mistake. But he determined to do his best with the statue, and to make a figure of "David" out of it after all.

So he began. He erected a shed in the Cathedral yard, and worked away at his idea. First of all he made a model in wax, and then he mounted the scaffolding, which had been raised around the

statue, and began his chiseling. It was a painfully slow proceeding. It took him three years before he could transform that poor old discolored and unshapely figure into something that was worth beholding.

At the end of that time, thirty of the best men of Florence, and among them, the most famous artists of the city, came to view it. They were delighted with it. For there stood "David," just as he might have looked when he was called to face the giant—with one foot advanced, his left hand over his shoulder grasping the sling, and his right hand holding the pebble ready to put in it. It was David the shepherd lad, but looking every inch the King.

The greater part of them declared that the statue must stand in the square that was in front of the palace, so that the fathers of the city might look upon it day by day, and learn the lesson that they ought to defend the city with courage and govern it in righteousness.

It took four days to erect the giant figure in its place in the square.

Its unveiling was an event for the city, and the descriptions of the ceremony were carefully written down in the year-books and preserved.

For nearly 400 years, the work of Michael Angelo stood in the palace square of Florence. Before the end of that time, it occurred to the citizens that the weather was not improving their beautiful statue, and that it would be wise to put it under a roof.

In the year 1873, it was taken down from the square, and placed in the Academy, while a copy of it in bronze was erected in the Piazza Michael Angelo, on the south side of the city.

Many times has the story been told of that old misshapen block of marble, in which none could see any beauty, and with which nothing could be done till Michael Angelo saw that there was in it that beautiful work of art, the noble and manly figure of the Shepherd King.

God is a greater sculptor than Michael Angelo. His work is to fashion and carve the character into a thing of beauty and strength. Other people may see very little in us. God sees the perfect form of the King's son or the King's daughter, which was in His mind when we were made. What we have spoiled He is willing to transform into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

11. Wasps

“A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.”

Wasps have not won for themselves a good name. No one likes them. Most people detest them. Many people never see them without wanting to kill them. And yet, really, they are very useful creatures, and, if the truth were known, they probably do a great deal more good in the world than harm.

Besides which, they cannot be said to be bad-looking. It is not their looks which get them disliked. In their coats of glittering black and gold, with their gossamer wings and knowing little heads and slender waists, they are very beautiful indeed.

How is it then that they have not got a better reputation? For we might certainly apply the proverb to them, “Give a wasp a bad name and knock her down.”

Well, I think that the first reason is that “they have tails and stings,” like some queer creatures that are described in the Book of Revelation. As a little boy once said about them, “they hurt where they sit down.”

Another reason is that they are very fond of fruit. The owner of orchards knows that. He goes to his apple trees one fine morning, and he finds choice apples, which are nothing but skin and core. The wasps have been inside, and cleared out the whole of the nice sweet juicy fruit. But, after all, we must admit that it is very cleverly done. And wasps are not so bad as greedy birds, who will eat all the damsons off a tree. Or like mice, who will come into the cellar where the apples are stored, and nibble first one apple and then another, spoiling every one they touch, and never finishing any. Wasps will come back again and again to the same apple, and finish their work properly. And it is very little harm they do, compared with the good.

But the thing which has spoilt their good name more than anything else is their quick temper. One would have thought that the amount of sugar that they like in their food would have helped to sweeten their disposition, but it is not so. They are a great trouble to housekeepers when there is any sugar about. When the good wife is making jams, or cakes, or puddings, and the wasps come in and besiege the pots and basins, and she gets flurried and whisks a cloth at them, and they get angry and buzz round her, and she has to run out of the way because she does not care to be, stung—that is the way that they earn a bad reputation. If anyone happens to be stung by a wasp, he never forgets it. For, sometimes it is very dangerous, and at all times very painful.

Now, let me tell you something about wasps that will help you to have a better idea of them.

1. They are very wonderful and very clever creatures. God has made them for a special purpose, and He has fitted them exactly for the work He has given them to do. In the springtime, the queen wasp comes out of the hole in the ground, or from the sheltered nook under a stone, where she has been asleep all the winter, and flies around to find the best place in which to build her nest. She generally fixes on some nice quiet little burrow that a mouse or other creature has once used.

When she has found it, she goes off to some wood palings, and tears off enough wood to make a sort of wood pulp, out of which she turns the paper covering for the cells she has to build. In these cells she lays her eggs. When the eggs are hatched, she has to feed her young, and very hard she has to work. When the young wasps are old enough, they begin to help the queen build more cells. And so the nest grows, tier on tier of cells, with the openings downwards, and with passages between each story. A truly wonderful structure it is, when finished, and manufactured, all of it, out of wood pulp. If anyone kills a wasp in summertime, it only counts for one. But if he kills a wasp in the spring, it means 10,000 wasps destroyed, for that wasp will be a queen wasp that is busy making her nest, and rearing her young.

2. They are very useful in the garden and the orchard. Their stings are given them, not to sting people with, but to sting and kill their prey. And they feed on flies and maggots and caterpillars. A wasp will attack a caterpillar three or four times her own size, and carry it off to her nest. Now, caterpillars are great plagues in a garden; they will go on eating until they ruin a tree. Maggots, too, are killed by wasps, and maggots are nothing but nuisances; they creep into the fruit and into the trees, and destroy them. Flies carry disease with them into our houses, but the wasps kill them and help to keep their number down.

Wasps, then, are more the friends of the gardener than his enemies. And if they ask for an occasional plum or peach for wages, or if they take them without asking, it is not so very unreasonable. When, of course, they positively swarm in numbers, after a long dry summer, as they have done this year, they do not limit their demands to one or two things. But that is only because there are so many of them, and they can't help that, and they can't help being hungry either.

3. They are really very gentle creatures, and, generally speaking, will never sting anyone who does not interfere with them. They only ask for a little sweet stuff; they are very clean, and will do no harm, if they are left alone. But they are very sensitive, and very highly strung, as we should say, and so they are quickly irritated. And when they are hit, or when any of their number is hurt, their temper quickly rises. But I don't think that is very strange, for they have never been taught, like you, to control their temper.

And so, the great lesson that I learn from the wasp is this. It doesn't matter how clever you are, or how useful, or how really kind at heart, it may all be spoilt by a bad temper. The wasp has lost her good name, entirely by her quick temper. People forget all about her pretty dress, and her delicate poise and her elegant ways. They forget all about her cleverness, her usefulness, and her gentleness. Indeed, they don't believe she is gentle. They only remember that she is a regular little vixen for her fiery temper, and they don't like her.

A good temper is one of the greatest treasures you can have; indeed it is great riches.

"There's not a cheaper thing on earth, nor yet one

half so dear,

'Tis worth more than distinguished birth, or

thousands gained a year,

A charm to banish grief away, to snatch the
brow from care,
Turn tears to smiles, make dullness gay, spread
gladness everywhere,”

12. The Little Foxes

“TAKE us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.”

In our northern climate, the grapevine cannot grow in the open. If it did it could only have leaves, or the very sourest of grapes. But it may be grown under glass, with the help of a fire.

In the south of England, I have often seen the vine growing up the walls of houses, and with plenty of grapes upon it too.

The only time I ever saw vineyards was on the sides of the Rhine. The river flows between very high and very steep banks, and in summertime the sun pours down upon those banks with a wonderful heat, making most suitable spots for vineyards. So the people have cut terraces on the banks, and dug the soil, and planted rows of vines, which they twine around stakes, like hops. And I can understand that when the fruit is ripening, they have the greatest trouble to guard it against the thefts of birds.

In the Eastern lands, where grapes are also much grown, it would seem that not only the birds were a trouble, but that the little foxes got into the vineyards, and spoiled the vines when the grapes were young.

I am thinking that there are other vineyards where the vines are in blossom, or where the grapes are young. And there, too, little foxes may spoil the vines and take the grapes. The vineyards of which I am thinking are the characters of boys and girls.

If you had a vineyard, and you saw a little fox creeping into it one fine morning, to get at the grapes, what would you do? Why, chase him out, of course. Well, I'll give you the names of the little foxes; then you can be on the lookout for them.

First of all, there's one called BY-AND-BY. Says father, “I see some boots that want mending; Johnnie, take those boots to the shoemaker's.” “All right, father,” says Johnnie, “I'll take them, by-and-by.” Or, perhaps, it's a letter that is to be posted, or a box that is to be split up for the fire. “By-and-by,” thinks Johnnie, “I'll do it.” If he would only do it right away, he would chase that little fox out of the vineyard.

Another one is called I-FORGOT. This is a brother to BY-AND-BY, only bigger and fatter. If you don't chase out BY-AND-BY, his brother always comes in very quickly after him. “Johnnie,” says father next day, “I suppose those boots were taken to be mended, eh?” or “Did you post that letter?” or “Was that box split up?” And Johnnie's head hangs down with shame, as he tries to find an excuse for himself; “I really meant to do it, father, but I forgot.”

Another little fox's name is I-CAN'T. Annie received a very pretty book as a present from her Aunt Polly, and she was so pleased with it that she took it to bed with her every night for the first week. “Annie,” said her mother, “I want you to write a letter to your Auntie, and thank her for that book she sent you.” “I can't, mother, I'm sure I can't, I can think of nothing to say.” “Well, you've had the

book?" "Yes." "And you're glad you've got it?" "Yes." "Then write a letter and say so." "I'll try," said Annie— and she did, and chased that little fox right out of the vineyard.

There's just one other little fox I should like you to watch out for, and his name is I-DON'T-CARE. Suppose your teacher says to you, "You don't speak the King's English," and you think to yourself, "I don't care." Or suppose one of your friends finds fault with your untidy ways,—your unbrushed coat, your soiled collar, and your dirty hands; and all you say is "I don't care." If you are sensible, you'll say, "I'm sorry," and drive that little scamp of a fox out of the vineyard with such a fright that it will be long before he ventures to come again.

Do not imagine that because these foxes are little ones, they are therefore hardly worth mentioning. They are big enough to spoil the vines. And they will grow bigger, and run faster, and give more trouble, if they think that nobody is on the watch for them. It is much easier to frighten them and drive them out when they are little ones.

Four little foxes prowling round;

Carry no flag and make no sound.

There's BY-AND-BY with sleepy eyes,

And I-FORGOT, of larger size,

I-CAN'T is creeping on behind,

And I-DON'T-CARE not hard to find.

So I tell you what you've got to do

With a very big whip to be there too,

With a right good will to chase them away,

And they'll not come back for many a day.

13. Bees

“As bees do.”

Wild bees chase their enemy; so do bees that are kept in hives. And the best thing that the enemy can do is to run for it. The bee is a very little fellow, but when he has made up his mind about anything, he is very determined; he would rather die than be beaten. If he stings you, he will die, because he always leaves the sting in the wound, and it hurts him so much that all he can do is to go away and die.

You will find, as you live and grow up, that your worst enemies are all inside you—in your own heart—things like selfishness and rudeness, and laziness; and the best day’s work you can ever do is to make up your mind to be like the bees, and chase your enemy out, whenever he shows his head.

In the 16th Century, during the confusion following on a time of war, a mob of peasants, assembling at a town in Germany, tried to pillage the house of a minister. Having used all his eloquence to dissuade them, but in vain, he ordered his servants to fetch his beehives, and to throw them in the middle of the furious mob. The effect was sudden. The people scampered off in every direction, and happy were they who escaped un-stung.

Bees are very cleanly creatures; they love clean people, and quiet orderly ways. If you are neat and tidy and clean, and go about your business without flurry and excitement, they will let you handle them, without any trouble. I have often put my hand at the mouth of a hive, and allowed the bees to run over it and play about on it, and they have never offered to sting me.

The hives are a model of neatness. All the honey is stored away in little cells, which are of exactly the same shape, and so contrived that the greatest amount of honey can be kept in the smallest possible space. Any piece of rubbish or dirt that gets into the way of their working is brought to the front and thrown over. If an uncleanly or strong-smelling person tries to come near the hive, they will attack him at once.

It is a thing worth thinking about that the Bible never tells us to store up honey like the bees. I expect the reason is that only the very young and the very poor need this lesson. Most people do too much of that sort of thing, without any teaching.

But Solomon does tell the sluggard to be like the ant, “which provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.” We are all to begin to work in the early hours of the day, and to work while it is light, as heartily and thoroughly as we can, because the time will come when we cannot work. If you don’t learn some things when you are young, the chances are that you never will.

But the ant does not lay up any winter store, although she is very industrious in providing daily food. She lives on flesh and insects, and that kind of stuff cannot be kept very long; it has to be eaten when it is fresh. It is true that she gathers corn, but only to keep her nest dry. In winter, she

needs no food, because she dies.

When we come to think of it, the Bee is not such an admirable creature, in this respect, that he does nothing else but hunt around for honey, sucking the sweetness out of every flower. People who do that sort of thing are generally selfish, with hardly any interest in the world but looking out for their own enjoyment. Men have been clever enough to make use of this greediness of the Bee. We know that he will go on storing up honey till he has filled his hive, so we give him a comfortable, roomy box to live in, and provide him with nice clean wooden cupboards, and the silly fellow fills them all. When he has finished, we take away the cupboards, and the honey too.

Honey is sweet, but the Bible says that there is something sweeter than honey—the Commandments of God; “sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.” Yes, when God whispers to your heart that a thing is right, and you give up your own wishes and your own pleasure, in order to do it, you will find that the feeling afterwards is sweeter than honey.

I think that the Bee is a beautiful illustration of the wisdom and goodness and power of God. Within so small a body, only half an inch long, and weighing only two grains, there is machinery for changing the nectar of the flower into one kind of food for himself and another kind of food for the young, and another kind of food for the queen; machinery for making glue for sticking down the coverings of the hive, and for blocking up the holes and keeping the home warm; machinery for making the wax for the cells, and the poison for the enemy, and the honey for the store; together with a trunk almost as long as the body, and a sting so sharp as to be invisible, even when magnified; all this, and a brain besides, scarcely larger than a pin’s head, that knows how to do so many curious, wise things; surely, altogether, the Bee is a wonderful example of the wisdom and goodness and power of God.

14. Gold

“A candlestick all of gold.”

You have seen candlesticks of tin, of brass, of copper, but have you ever seen a golden candlestick? Gold is so bright, so strong, so heavy; it lasts so long, and is so easily cleaned it is so valuable and looks so fascinating, that, if you had a real candlestick all of gold, for your very own, you would be very proud of it. I can see only one drawback to your having it, and that is, that, before very long, you would think your candlestick was very lonely, and you would wish for another one like it so that you might have a pair, and you would be unhappy till you got it.

The other evening I was coming back from a walk over the Moors, and I was taken up with noticing the big battalions of blue-black clouds with which the sky in front of me was filled, so that it never occurred to me to look behind. But, when I reached the top of a hill, I paused for a moment to take breath, and then I did turn round, and I saw a great “candlestick all of gold,” with a stream of golden light pouring out from it and holding in check the angry masses of dark clouds which were doing their best to extinguish it. It was a splendid battle between darkness and light. But I did not stop to see the end. I knew very well that the river of gold would die down to a thread, and that the black battalions would cover all the sky.

Gold has drawn men to Africa, to Australia, to California, and many other places to hunt for it. In the countries where it exists, it is sometimes washed down by the little streams, and then men peg down sheepskins or ox-hides, so that the water runs over them and deposits the tiny fragments and films of gold upon the hair. Or else they dig for nuggets of gold with pick and shovel. Or they crush the lumps of quartz rock in great machines, and extract the gold with chemicals.

Some years ago, two miners set out from Cornwall for the gold mines in Australia, and worked together for years, but hardly found enough gold for a bare living. Then they moved to another mine, where they found a few small nuggets, but afterwards nothing. They were getting very discouraged, because they had to borrow money for their food, and people were hardening against them, and refused to help them. One day the man at the stores said they could have no more food there, till they had paid their bills. So they had to go off to work without any breakfast. Hungry and gloomy, they shouldered their tools, and resolved to have one more try. They arrived at the diggings and began. As they were breaking up the earth around a tree, one of their picks struck something hard, and bounded back. The miner called out, “Look here, see what this is!”

It was gold, a nugget of gold, a foot long and a foot broad, the largest that ever was seen, and so heavy that they could hardly lift it together. They took it on a wagon into the town, followed by an admiring crowd. There they sold it to the bank for thousands of pounds, and then, what do you think they did? They went away, and had some breakfast.

So you see that it is not always a bad thing to go to work before breakfast. And, however discouraged you may be, that it is not wise to give up till you are obliged.

"A candlestick all of gold." This one that I am thinking of was seen by a man in a dream. It had a bowl upon the top of it, and seven lamps were resting on the seven arms of it, and there were seven pipes leading from the bowl to the lamps, and two olive trees were growing beside the candlesticks, one on the right side and the other on the left.

And in his dream the man saw the oil of the olive trees flowing from the branches like a stream of gold into the golden bowl, and thence through the golden pipes, to the golden lamps, on the golden arms, and the lamps when lit shone with a golden light. So it was all of gold, and the dream means that, if we try to do the will of God, we may make our life pure and shining and beautiful throughout, and throw a light like golden sunshine into dark places.

"God, make my life a little light

Within the world to glow,

A little flame that burneth bright,

Wherever I may go."

I have a golden candlestick at home. It is a book bound in leather, with big brass clasps to it, and on it the letters I. H. S. It was given me by my father when I left College, and I often read it. It shines with a light all golden. Can you guess what it is? The Bible is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path. And the letters I. H. S. mean "Jesus, the Saviour of Men." He is the Light of the world. If we follow Him, we shall not walk in the darkness, but shall find our way to that beautiful City whose streets are paved with pure gold.

15. The Brightest Thing in the World

“As light that shineth in a dark place.”

If I were to ask you what you think the brightest thing in the world, I dare say there would be many different answers. Some of you might say that there is nothing very much brighter, in your eyes, than a nice new sixpenny piece, fresh from the Mint. For an active-minded boy can do a great deal with sixpence. Your mothers would probably say that the brightest thing in the home is a shining morning face, belonging to a boy who comes downstairs in good time for breakfast, with his hands clean, and his hair brushed, and everything about him neat and spruce. On a Saturday, when you are going to have an afternoon holiday, and when you know very well what you want to do with it, the brightest thing in the world to you then is a fine dry day. But have you ever noticed how often it rains on Saturday afternoons? It was always the same when I was a boy. I never could find out the reason.

Will you picture to yourselves a country road, on a summer morning, just about the time when children go to school? The boys have all finished their game, and they are clustered round the schoolhouse, spending the last few minutes before the master comes, in larking with one another, or in finding their books and caps, and otherwise getting themselves ready for school.

The master arrives, and, of course, there is not a single boy who is not delighted to see him. He greets them in his usual way, “Good morning, boys!” And they answer back, “Good morning, sir!”—and all troop after him into the schoolroom.

When they are seated and the master has called for silence, he opens the Bible and reads a few sentences, and then he asks for God’s blessing on the work of the day.

Then follow the lessons, and somehow or other they all seem to be expecting something special that day, for even the laziest boy in the school has not to be found fault with for his work. The lessons are got through in double quick time, and then the master calls them all around his desk.

He opens it, and exhibits a box with queer figures of birds painted upon it, that looks as if it had come from a foreign country, and from this box he takes out just the very things that boys most like—knives and tops, and whistles, and candy—and distributes them, till everyone has something. Then he shows them a little white statue of an angel, with hands folded over her breast, and face looking upwards as if it were full of happiness, and the boys wonder whatever that can be for, and who is to be the lucky possessor of such a prize as that.

The master says, “And now, lads, I come to the last and best of all. Tomorrow morning I will give this white angel to the boy who brings me the brightest thing in the world.” Whereupon, they all stare with open eyes, and some of them open their mouths as well. For it puzzles them to know what the master means. And all the rest of that day those boys are skirmishing around, searching for the brightest things they can think of.

Next morning, it was a very excited school that gathered in front of the master's desk. Each boy had got something in his pocket that he felt sure would win the prize.

One had brought a polished stone, all smooth and shining like glass. Another had got a crystal, which had once been in a watch; he thought he had never seen anything brighter than that. The master took them and smiled, and laid them on the desk.

Another, with a bit of a jest inside him, had brought a piece of coal; "Nothing is brighter than coal," said he, "when you set it on fire"; and he expected that his joke would win him the prize.

Another had polished a piece of metal till it shone again, and another stepped out of the class, and caught a ray of sunlight on a little mirror that he held in his hand, and flashed it right on to the master's face. The master laughed, and said, "Very good, very good; but we will see them all first."

Then a lad named Henry, who was the son of a well-to-do farmer, pulled out a breast-pin, which his father had given him, and in the center of it there was a diamond. A long "Oh!" came from the class, and many voices cried, "Henry is the winner!"

"Wait a little," said the master, "I must see them all; where's Karl?"

Karl was absent, and no one had thought of him till that moment. Just then, the half-open door of the schoolroom was pushed inwards, and in ran Karl, with something in his hands.

He came quickly forward, and, though a little out of breath with running, said, "Oh, sir, I was looking for the brightest thing, and I didn't know what to bring, and I saw some boys throwing stones at this bird, and I couldn't stand it, so I picked it up, and it's hurt, and I'm afraid it'll die."

It was a dove, and there were stains of blood upon its snow-white breast. The master looked at it, and examined it as it lay in Karl's hands. "Poor thing," said he, "its wing is broken, and it is hurt here as well; we can do nothing for it."

And even as he spoke, the dove's head fell, and its eyes closed, and it was dead.

Then this happened. Two big tears came out of Karl's eyes, and rolled down his face. And Karl roughly brushed them away with the back of his hand.

The master opened his desk, and took out the white angel.

And the whole school cried, "Give Karl the white angel!"

And the master said, "Yes, boys, Karl has won the prize—the brightest thing in the world is the tear of Pity."

16. Giotto's Tower

"God is my high tower."

I want to tell you something about one of the most beautiful towers in the world—the Campanile, or Bell Tower, which stands beside the Cathedral of Santa Maria at Florence, and was designed by the great painter, Giotto.

But, first of all, who was Giotto? He was the son of a peasant, so poor that, when Giotto was a boy, there was nothing better that his father could think of giving him to do but to look after sheep. But Giotto was happy enough, because he was a busy little fellow, and could always amuse himself in betweenwhiles by drawing pictures of everything he saw around him. One day, a painter from Florence, named Cimabue, found a boy, about ten years old, sitting near the road and drawing with a piece of charcoal on a piece of tile. It was Giotto. Cimabue took the tile into his hands, and looked at it, and saw the picture of a sheep. He was so pleased with the boy's skill that he went with him to his home, and asked permission to make him one of his pupils. The father delightedly gave his consent, and so it came about that Giotto got his training in the painter's art.

As the long years went by, and Giotto grew up to be a man, picture after picture came from his brush, which made his name famous. But there was nothing that he did which brought him so much fame as the design of the Bell Tower at Florence, and of the west front of the Cathedral. Unhappily, the Cathedral front no longer remains as he designed it, but the Tower is there still, and those who understand such things tell us that nothing more beautiful has ever been made by the hands of man.

I shall never forget the day, the only day on which I saw it. It was Easter Monday, in the year 1902. I had just spent my Sunday morning in the great Church of St. Peter's at Rome, and, after a part of the night in the train, had arrived in Florence, in time to see the Cathedral outlined against the stars.

When I climbed up the long flights of steps of Giotto's Tower, I stopped now and again at the little windows to peer out upon the city. Before I reached the belfry, the bells struck the hour, and the whole tower seemed to shake with the sound. People on their way down the steps, stopped and held on to the rail and listened. When I at length reached the top, I was rewarded with a grand view of distant hills and blue river, and the gardened roofs of houses, and the roof and dome of the Cathedral; while down at the foot of the tower the people looked like dwarfs, and the carriages like doll's perambulators.

After feasting my eyes on such things, I came down again to study at my leisure the sculptured stones at the base. It seemed as if Giotto had tried to represent the art of every worker. There were builders, and potters, and weavers, and fishers, and hunters, and traders of every kind. There was Jubal, the father of all who play on trumpet or harp or organ. There was Tubal Cain with his anvil in front of him, and a wedge of bronze, the father of all who toil at the forge. But, really, I have forgotten the names of the others. Two impressions remain with me, however; that nothing is

more beautiful than white marble stones covered with sunshine, and that nothing is more interesting or more necessary in this world of ours than Work.

And as we think of Giotto's Tower, so strong and lovely, it is good to remember another shepherd-boy, who, long before Giotto's day, found out the truth that God is a high Tower, stronger and lovelier than anything that man has made.

If I were to see Giotto's Tower every day in the week, and every week in the year, I should grow so used to it that I should not admire it. The more we know of man's work, the less we think of it. But we never get tired of God's work, and never come to the end of our wonder about it.

God is a high Tower which we have to climb.

Beginning at the bottom with work and obedience, we learn more of Him the higher we go, and love Him more with every step's ascent. I think we shall never really reach the top, but we may go up high enough to have grand far views of the world which is the work of His hands, and to see His face, and to be sure that His heart is kind.

17. St. George and the Dragon

“It shall devour all things round about.”

Hundreds of years ago, there used to be a city called Silena, in Libya, in N. Africa. This city was built in the midst of a sandy desert, and not far from the gates there was a lake, in which lived a monstrous dragon.

Every day, this dragon used to come up out of the water in search of prey, and woe betide any hapless creature whom it found.

In order to prevent the monster from attacking the city, the people gave it each day a sheep from their flocks, or a heifer from their herds. But at last they had no flocks nor herds, for the dragon had devoured them all. Then they cast lots among themselves, and every household upon which the lot fell had to surrender some member of the family as an offering to the beast.

One day, the lot fell upon the royal house. Now, the King had one daughter only, a beautiful girl, whom he fondly loved. He offered great rewards if any man would surrender his own child instead. But the citizens would not allow the exchange. They said that they had been obliged to make the sacrifice, and so must the King.

Then he asked for eight days' delay, during which he might prepare his daughter for her death, and bid her the last farewells. This was granted him, and during those days the hungry monster's rage increased to so great an extent, that it came up against the walls of the city, and breathed its poisonous breath until the sentinels were overcome and fell down senseless.

On the eighth morning, the beautiful girl bade farewell to her friends and to her father, and, with one last embrace, the King parted from her at the gates, and she went forth alone upon the plain. Many of the people gathered on the walls to watch how she met her fate.

Now, it happened that St. George came riding that day across the plain, in search of someone whom he could help. He saw the maiden, and enquired of her why she was alone, and why she looked so sad, and what was the meaning of all those people on the walls?

The maiden entreated him to fly while there was yet time.

But St. George said, “Nay, I will not go till I have some answer to my questions.”

Then the princess told him her story, and again entreated him to seek safety in flight ere the dragon appeared. But St. George laid his hand upon his sword, and swore that, in the name of Christ, he would stay with her and fight the dragon.

At that moment the waters of the lake parted, and the enraged monster, catching sight of its victim, rushed towards her. Then St. George lowered his lance, and spurred his horse, and galloped at full speed, and his lance went right into the dragon's open jaws with such tremendous force, that the beast was overturned, and lay senseless on the plain.

The Knight then bade the maiden loosen her girdle, and, as he uttered holy words over the prostrate body, to bind it round the dragon's neck. This she did, with the result that when the creature's life returned, she led it quietly to the gates of the city, where the frightened people were assembled, full of wonder and amazement at the unexpected issue of the fight. She led the dragon through the gates and into the streets of the city, but the people showed so much fear of their old enemy that, at last, St. George drew his sword and severed the dragon's head from its body. Then they manifested their delight by gathering round the hero, embracing him, and shouting loud his praise.

Whereupon, St. George mounted his horse, and preached to them about Christ, whose power had enabled him to deliver them from their enemy. The people listened, and believed, and the whole city was baptized.

And St. George caused a noble Church to be built, where Christ's name might be honored, and His truth be taught. And from beneath the altar of that church there sprang a stream, which flowed right through the doors and down the steps, and out into the city, and thence into the world. And that stream is running still.

And, the next time, that you have a golden sovereign in your hand, if you will look, you will see the picture of this fight between St. George and the dragon graven upon it.

The meaning of the story is that the maiden is the Soul, whose life is endangered by the presence of a dragon. That dragon is the Devil.

It may be Cruelty, or it may be Laziness, or it may be Selfishness that threatens the life of the Soul, but it is always Something desperately ugly and always Something devilishly strong. Every one of us may be like St. George, but only if we kill our dragon.

When they made a knight in olden times, these were the words they said to him, "Be gentle, be brave, be fortunate." Good words indeed, for without them no one will ever become like St. George, and slay the dragon.

The late Dr. Arnold, the great headmaster of Rugby School, used to say, "I am tired of boys who love God; I want boys who love God and hate the Devil."

If we don't hate the dragon, we shall never kill him.

18. Little Things That Hurt

“Is it not a little one?”

More than twenty years ago, the good ship “Orsino,” from Newcastle-on-Tyne, was drawing near the coast of Virginia. It was a fine night in August. We were up on deck, between two and three o’clock in the morning, for our first sight of the New World. We could just see two shore lights showing in the distance—those of Cape Henry and Cape Charles. How great was our delight during those early hours, after many days at sea, to watch the shoreline coming nearer and nearer, and to guess what the little points were which, as by magic, grew before our eyes into real things.

Before long, we were in and anchoring in the Hampton Roads. Then the boat was lowered, and we went on shore with the captain. Among the things that I remember, there are two that I should like to tell you of—a big thing and a little thing.

There were many sharks in that harbor, but none of them came near us. You know that a shark is a great, strong, cruel thing that can tear a man to pieces. But we were safe from them while we were in the boat. They were more afraid of us than we of them.

But there was a tiny thing, no bigger than a pin’s head, called a mosquito. It was the first time I had seen this gentleman. He had no fear. He came to us on the ship, as soon as we cast anchor; he came to us in the boat; and he came to us on the land. And he had a way of settling on your hand or on your neck, when you were thinking of something else. He alighted so gently, you did not notice him at all. The first thing you knew was a little stinging sensation. Then you saw a red, angry mark on the flesh where the mosquito had bitten you. The disagreeable little rascal had swiftly put a morsel of poison into you, which went on irritating you all day.

It is not always the big things that give the most trouble. Fierce Mr. Shark kept his distance, but Master Mosquito was a nuisance. You may think that if you steer clear of the big bad things, you are all right; that if you don’t tell lies, and don’t put another fellow’s ball in your pocket while you help him look for it, and don’t quarrel and fight with your brothers and sisters, you are very good. Well, I am not quite so sure that there are not some little things that hurt a great deal more. There are many little stinging words, and little bursts of nasty temper, and little careless actions, that you may think nothing of at the time, but that go on irritating other people and poisoning your pleasure all the day.

One Sunday afternoon, in May time, a southerly wind blew over the Bristol Channel, and brought into the docks at Cardiff, millions of flies.

Now, a fly is a little thing. But a fly can make himself a nuisance if he likes. Especially if he chooses to take an afternoon walk on your face when you want to go to sleep. And there’s nothing that a cheerful fly likes better than that. Well, these Cardiff flies were rather worse than usual. They had longer bodies, crawled very slowly, and bit very badly. And there were so many of them.

People were taking their Sunday afternoon stroll round the docks, but they soon gave up the idea. They found the flies too much for them. Next day, the dock workmen had to give up their work. And even the able-bodied policemen in charge of the gates had to take to their heels, and run into their watch-houses and shut the doors.

"What, they were not afraid of a fly?" No, they weren't, but a swarm of flies is a different matter. There was nothing to be done, but to wait for a strong wind to blow them away again.

That southerly wind was like a nasty temper. It is of no use arguing with anyone in a nasty temper. You've just got to wait till it's over. I've heard bad-tempered people excuse themselves in this way, "Why, I only said this, or I only said that; there was no harm in it; surely one can make a remark."

Quite so, we are not afraid of a remark; but the remark that comes out of a nasty temper, we are afraid of. Because we know that if we answer that, there will be another one afterwards, and when that is done with, another one after that, without an end, and every one that comes rather worse than those that went before. And the only thing for us to do, if we don't want to get into a nasty temper too, is to run away into silence, and shut the door, and wait for a good wind, which will blow all those biting flies into the sea.

Big things only happen now and then. Little things are always with us. Our life is made up of little things. And, therefore, it is the little things that give most pleasure, and it is the little things that can spoil it. Most of us are on the watch against having our heads broken, but we think very little of giving way to bad temper. Very few of us are likely to suffer from a broken head, but as to the other thing, well, I had rather not say.

It was only last year, I think, that there was a terrible explosion at a seed-crushing and oil-cake mill at Liverpool. It cost the lives of many workmen, and brought suffering to many more. And it was all caused by little particles of dust that had collected, and had been allowed to remain, instead of being cleared away. A driving belt on one of the engines broke, and carried away the top of a dust collector, and fused at the same time an electric wire. The flame caught the flying dust, and it exploded. Such an accident would not be likely to occur more than once in a hundred years. But what I want you to see is, that it could not have occurred even once, if it had not been for hundreds of thousands of little bits of dust that were flying through the air.

So, you may think that it was very unkind of your mother to be so angry with you yesterday for leaving your cap lying on the hall-floor. But that was not why she was angry. It was because, the day before yesterday, that same cap could not be found at all until it was found in the backyard; and because, the day before that, your boots were left at the top of the cellar steps instead of being taken down and cleaned, as you were told; and because, that same morning, you had to be pulled up for a dozen other little bits of carelessness and laziness.

It is not one little thing that hurts; it's the swarm. It is not one particle of dust that makes the explosion, but it's the tiny spark and the flying cloud of dust, together.

19. God's Handwriting

“Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground.”

A poet once said, “Flowers are Nature’s scripture.” I should like to change that a little, keeping the same meaning, but so that you can see it more plainly— “Flowers are God’s Handwriting.” So, when Jesus said, “Consider the lilies, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin”: He meant that God had stooped down and written lessons on the ground for us to learn. In every flower God has written something, and if we are wise enough to find it, we shall be wiser still for remembering it.

Let me take three flowers, and tell you the lesson which I think God has written in them.

1.—Lilies of the Valley

You know them, of course, with their tiny bells of pure snowy white, hung upon a slender stem. They are so graceful and so modest, sheltering among broad green leaves, and always loving the shade. Their gentle, pale faces turn towards the earth, and their beautiful fragrance spreads all around.

It always seems to me that God has written this in lilies of the valley— “Be true, be pure, be modest, and your life shall be sweet and beautiful.”

2.—Wallflowers

These flowers are honest, brave things—just what you would expect from their name. They grow best on walls and ruins, in dry barren spots, where no other flower could find a living. Their flowers are brown, of the color of faithfulness, like the eyes of a collie dog. They are hardy, wiry, and contented. You may neglect them as much as you like, but they flourish. They have a heart like oak, and a constitution like iron. Wallflowers are the little brown friends of duty.

I think that God has written this lesson in them— “Be faithful, be honest, be brave, and do your duty.”

The difference between being bad and being good is just this; the bad man does what he likes, the good man does what he ought.

A camel driver once said to his camel, “Which do you prefer, to go up hill or down hill?”

The camel replied, “If I go up hill, shall I have to carry anything?”

“Yes.”

“Shall I have to carry anything, if I go down hill?”

“Yes.”

“Well, I don't mind whether it's up hill or down hill, for I shall have to carry something, either way.”

The wallflower always carries a cross. It belongs to the cross-bearing family. Look at its brown petals, they are in the form of a cross.

Some people think that all heroes are in red, like soldiers. But I know heroes who just go stumping along to their work in plain brown corduroys, every day of the week, in rain or sunshine. I know heroes within four walls who do the dullest duties and seldom get a word of praise. There is more heroism in the plain brown clothes of the friends of duty than ever we dream of. “Be faithful, be honest, be true, and do your duty.”

3.—Pansies

Pansies are for thoughts. They are like Joseph's coat, of many colors. They may be yellow, or white, or purple, or blue, or gold. You can have them growing, if you will, all the year round. And the more they are moved, the better they grow, and the richer their colors. You must pick their flowers as fast as they come, or you'll get very few. They ask for a lot of care. If you forget them, they will become very plain-looking, not to say common-place.

It seems to me that God has written in the pansies, as plain as could be: "Think and remember, but above all remember to think."

Stephenson was asked how he invented his locomotive? And his reply was, "By thinking, thinking, thinking about it."

The Bible says that we shall grow like Jesus if we think about Him.

We are told, in one place, to think about all things that are lovely, so that we may grow lovely too.

"Remember Me," said Jesus, because He knew that if we did we should be able to grow the best of flowers in that inner garden of ours, which He has given us to enjoy. For, do you know?—another name for Pansies is Heart's-ease, and if you want to grow Heart's-ease in your very own garden, you must go and get Forget-me-nots out of the Bible, and plant the Heart's-ease right in the middle of the Forget-me-nots. Then it will grow.

20. Business

“What is your occupation?”

That was the question which a King of Egypt once put to five brothers who were presented at his court.

“What is your occupation?”

And they replied, “We are shepherds.”

In very early times, a man's name was often taken from his occupation. If he made shoes for horses, his name was Smith; if he looked after sheep, they called him Shepherd. In that way a great many of our common surnames originated.

If you were called by your occupation, I wonder what it would be. What do you do? Nothing? Suppose then we call you John Nothing, how would you like that? It would be very hard lines, of course, for boys and girls to be called names of that sort, before they have been long enough in the world to choose an occupation for themselves. I am not saying that it would be fair to expect you, at your age, to have earned a name like Carpenter or Taylor or Fisher or Paynter. But there are some things which you are constantly doing which would look very funny if they were put into your names. If, for example, a girl were called Mary Meddler because she was always putting things into disorder, or a boy called Richard Pockets because he was everlastingly dawdling around with his hands in them.

The time will come along quickly enough for you to have a serious occupation, and I don't want to hurry you in the least. Your business just now is to play all you can, and learn everything that comes in your way. But still, if there is one name better than another that I would like you to be called by it is this— “Helper,” because your occupation is to be on hand when you are wanted to do something useful and helpful for somebody else.

Johnny “Helper,”—that is what his real name was, according to his occupation. And one day, his mother, looking out of the window, said, “Dear me, if that isn't old Mrs. Brand coming up the road!”

“Yes, it is,” said Johnny.

“She'll be sure to stay to tea. I won't say I'm sorry she's coming, but my work's all behind today. And my last jar of raspberry jam's been working, so it isn't fit to eat, and I haven't a bit of fruit for tea.”

Johnny wanted to ask what kind of work the raspberry jam had been doing, but he knew it was no time for questions when his mother was worried. So, he said,

“Mother, I think I could find enough strawberries for tea, if I look hard.”

“No, Johnny, I'm quite sure there are not enough of them ripe.”

“But if there were only a few,” insisted Johnny, “you could flatten them out in the dish so they’d look like a good many; and when you said, ‘Have some strawberries, Johnny?’ I’d say, ‘No thank you, Mother,’ and then they’d go round, you see.”

His mother laughed and shook her head, but she said, “Well, you may go and try,”— and, as Mrs. Brand came in at the front door, Johnny slipped out at the back, with a basket in his hand.

“I’ll see, anyhow,” said Johnny to himself, lifting up the biggest strawberry leaves, and delighted at seeing some nice ripe berries; “I thought so, I thought we hadn’t had these two hot days for nothing.”

He bent eagerly over the bed, being careful not to miss any, and wondering all the time why raspberry jam had any work to do, and if it worked as hard as his mother did, or as hard as he was working to get these strawberries. But as the basket filled up, he forgot all about the hard work, as he thought how pleased mother would be to see so many.

When at last he carried them in, his mother was just finishing setting the table for tea, and thinking how trying it was to have nothing but a dish of honey, when Mrs. Brand had bees of her own, and was probably tired of the sight of it. She was just as surprised and delighted as she could be when she saw the strawberries.

“Well, done, Johnny—you are a blessing.” And Johnny sat down to tea as pleased as could be—and when the berries were helped, he said, with a very big smile on his face, which only mother understood, “Yes, if you please, mother!” And she gave him plenty.

Yes, make it your business to be a “Helper.” You are old enough to do that, every one of you.

Some boys are always looking out for the next thing to do for themselves, but it never seems to occur to them that they are in the world to be of use to anyone else. They know when the next cricket match is coming off, but they never know where to find things when they are wanted in the house. They can find time to go and hear the band play in the park, or to see a menagerie coming up the street, although half-an-hour before they were so awfully busy about their lessons that they couldn’t possibly be disturbed to run an errand. “I’ll tell you what it is, Dick,” said his father— “when you want to do anything, nothing’ll stop you, and when you don’t want, nothing’ll make you. What you’ve got to learn is, to think of somebody beside yourself.”

There is no room for lazy people in this world. They are like nettles—a nuisance in gardens, where we want to grow something better. They are only fit for rubbish heaps and ditches, and we leave them there, because it is too much trouble to cut them down.

Take those hands out of your pockets. What is your occupation? Thomas Lazybones sounds bad. Johnny Helper is better.

21. Our Wonderful Life

"I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

"Martin," said a wise grammar-school boy to his little brother of six, "come here and tell me what you have inside you."

"Nothing," said Martin.

"Yes, you have. Listen! You've got a whole telegraph stowed away in your body, with wires running down to your very toes and out to your fingertips."

"I'm sure I haven't," said Martin, looking at his feet and hands.

"You have though, and that isn't all.

"There's a big force-pump in the middle of you, pumping, pumping 70 times a minute, all day long, like the great engine I showed you the other day at the locomotive works."

"There is no such thing,"—

"But there is, though; and besides, you've got a tree growing in you, with over 200 branches."

"I've not, I'm sure I've not," persisted the little fellow, almost ready to cry— "I can feel myself all over, and there's no tree or engine, or anything else except flesh and blood."

"Oh, that isn't flesh and blood," replied his learned brother, "that's most of it water. This is what you're made of—a few gallons of water, a little lime, phosphorus, salt, and a few other things like that."

Of course, the grammar-school boy was quite right in his information; the telegraph is the nerves, and the force-pump is the heart, and the tree is the system of the veins and arteries that carry the blood to all the different parts of the body.

But it was not very good form to show off like he did, and try to frighten his little brother who had never been to a grammar school. I don't think he need have been so conceited; he would never have known, if he had not been told.

But, really, it is remarkable, when you come to think of it, that, with all these wonderful things inside us—the telegraph, and engine, and tree, and all the rest of them, fitted in together in as small a space as could be imagined—we are able to move about so comfortably and well. The wonder is that some part of us is not always getting out of order. How grandly every little nerve and artery does its work, and the beautiful life goes on! How thankful we ought to be to God who made it, and who lets us enjoy so much health and strength!

For we know little about the machinery, and it is not through any wisdom of ours that it keeps going. If God did not constantly think of us and care for us, it would get out of, order very quickly.

Life and health are given to most of us for a great many years, and what we have to do is to thank God for them and use them wisely, and work with all our strength and take as much care of them as we know how. Yes, thank God every morning for giving you life, and that giving of thanks will let the sunshine into the day. Be as happy as you like, for happiness is like putting the hands together at the table and saying grace.

There was an old Cornishman whom my mother used to know, named Billy Bray. He was a good man, who couldn't help praising God; his heart was always full of thankfulness. He used to say, "As I go along the street, I lift up one foot and it seems to say 'Glory!' and I lift up the other and it seems to say, 'Amen!' and they keep on like that all the time; one foot says 'Thanks!' and the other says, 'That's so!'"

At another time he said, "Bless the Lord, I can sing; my heavenly Father likes to hear me sing. I can't sing so well as some, but my Father likes to hear me sing, as well as those who can sing better than I can. My Father likes to hear the crow as well as the nightingale, for He made them both."

At Boscastle, in Cornwall, there is an old church looking out upon the sea. The tower was built for bells, but no peal has ever sounded from it. The townspeople heard the bells sounding sweetly from Tintagel, and they thought that they would like to have some too. So a set of bells was ordered in London, and sent round to Boscastle by sea.

When the vessel, in which they were being conveyed, was off Tintagel, it was close enough to the coast for those on board to hear the bells pealing across the sea. It was a welcome sound to the pilot, for it told him that he was near home. "Thank God!" he said, "I shall be ashore tonight."

The captain heard him, and replied, "Thank the good ship rather."

"No," said the pilot once more, "we should thank God on the sea as well as on the land."

Now Boscastle is a terribly dangerous place, and as the ship neared the narrow entrance of the harbor, black clouds covered the sky, a storm burst over her with the force of a hurricane, and in front of the steep rocky wall, she went down, and all were lost but the pilot. The bells never came to Boscastle, and the tower is empty to this day. And so there is many a life without bells, and without music, because the heart never learned to thank God.

22. Falling Leaves

“When they cast their leaves.”

It is one way of knowing that Autumn is come and Summer ended, when we see the leaves fluttering from the branches, or lying in their hundreds of thousands, helpless on the ground. Even the fresh green beauty of the Spring, or the wealth and fulness of the Summer, present no more varied and lovely sight than these scenes of Autumn.

The waterfall dell in Bold Venture Park never looked more beautiful than it did when the trees were half-stripped of their summer robes and the fallen leaves covered the green sward with spots of brown and yellow, red and gold. The gardeners alone do not relish the Autumn, for it always brings them so much work. They have to keep on sweeping up the paths, lest the leaves choke up the drains, and the heavy rains have no channel through which they can run away.

I wonder if any of you children know what work the leaves do all through their lives—or how clever and unselfish and useful they are. When you see the great wooden ship floating on the sea, you would hardly think that the leaves helped to make it.

Or when you breathe the pure air of the morning, do you ever remember that its purity is partly the work of the leaves?

Or do you know that the apples and pears and nuts, which you so much enjoy, were fed by the leaves before they were able to feed you?

Or more wonderful still, that the streams, which come tumbling down the sides of the hill for the cotton-mills, and the lodges gathered in the hollows for the drink and comfort of the town, and the great rivers like the Ribble and the Mersey, are all indebted to the leaves for a portion of their water?

Let me try to tell you how.

In the cells of leaves the sap which rises from the roots is changed by the sunbeams into the hard stuff which forms the trunk of the tree. That is the way the leaves help to build the big ships.

Then again, every leaf sucks out of the air what is poisonous for us to breathe, and gives back what is good, so making the air more pure.

Of course, you know that the leaves feed the fruit. If a caterpillar eats the leaves, there will be no fruit worth having.

But, perhaps, you do not know that the leaves draw water out of the ground, and give it out to the air in vapor, which goes up to the clouds and falls again in rain, and forms the rivers.

Countries that have no trees have little rain. Wise men recommend the planting of trees, for one reason, that they will help to bring the rain.

So then, what a mistake it is to think that all the leaves have to do is to dance and play in the sunshine and the breeze, to look pretty for a while, and then fall off! They prepare abundant supplies for men and beasts—fuel for warming our homes, roofs which cover us, ships and wagons which carry our goods. They help the hills to make the rain which waters our gardens and fields, and when they die, they fall upon the ground to make fresh soil, and to come up again in new forms of life and beauty.

Things are not what they seem. We love boys and girls to have a good time—to laugh and play, to sing and dance; and we would, if we could, keep hard work away from them altogether. But God has given everything its work to do. And very pleasant work is yours, if you only knew it. You are here to bring sunshine and beauty into older people's lives. And you can help them do the serious work of the world, too, by smiling and being kind, by obedience and good temper, by your laughter and innocent play. And all the time you can be learning how to be of still more use when you grow up.

Believe me, it is very hard to find a place for useless people. But if you can work, and will work, there's room for you somewhere, and, like the leaves on the trees, you will not only find your place and your duty, but you will add to the loveliness of the world, and we shall all miss you badly when you go.

23. Courtesy

“Be courteous.”

If you will look at the word Courtesy, you will see that it carries its meaning on its face. It is the grace of Courts. And as we are all sons and daughters of a great King, it is something that all of us have to learn.

The Bible is the book of the great King, our Father, and, as we might have expected, there are many things in it about Courtesy. It tells a story of Moses, which proves that it was not for nothing that he was brought up at a Court. When he was a young man, he was travelling on foot through the land of Midian, and, becoming tired and footsore, he sat down beside a well to rest. While he was there seven girls, who were sisters, came with pitchers, and began to draw water from the well to fill the troughs for their father's flocks. With ready courtesy, Moses jumped up from his seat, and offered his help. Tired though he was, it was too good a chance to miss. The girls at once accepted his services, and the work was going merrily forward, when up came some discourteous shepherds, who said they were in a hurry, and must have their turn before a lot of girls. Moses hardly thought they were serious, but when they began to catch hold of the draw-rope, and to elbow the girls out of the way, he soon let them know he would stand no nonsense. Seizing the foremost man by the girdle, he hurled him off the well with a suddenness that surprised him. And then he said with a determination that cowed them all, “Stand aside there; the girls are in possession of the well, and I'll see to it that they have their turn first.”

To give way to a woman with courtesy is always the mark of a gentleman, and to accept the kindness with a courteous word of thanks, the mark of a lady.

I remember going into the beautiful gardens of New College, Oxford, and seeing the words over one of the gates, “Manners makyth man.” And truly, good manners is not only the making of a man, but of a great deal of the pleasure of life. In some letters written by an Englishman, living in Japan, there is a story of good manners which some of you may think rather too good to be true. But I believe it really happened, all the same. A Japanese admiral was dining out at the house of a lady, when he observed a caterpillar crawling among some salad which had been served to him. The hostess happened to be looking down the table at that moment, and she saw the creature too. She was horrified to think that such a thing should happen to one of her guests. But the admiral deliberately took the caterpillar with some salad, and swallowed it. Nothing was said, and no one noticed the incident, but afterwards, when the hostess was apologizing to her guest, he said, “Do you think I was going to spoil your evening for the sake of a miserable caterpillar?”

I expect that you are not always so good but that you have sometimes been told to behave properly. It may have been when you were getting excited, and talking loud, or jumping on the chairs and running the risk of knocking something down, and your father came in and caught you and called out to you sharply, “Now then, Jack, behave yourself” He meant that your energies were running loose like an unruly dog, and that you were to hold yourself in, as it were, with a

collar and chain. And that is the general notion of good behavior. But Courtesy is something better than that. You can only learn it by having as great an opinion of others as you have of yourself.

And then, whatever you have to say to them, you say it as if you were a duke addressing a King. And whatever you do for them, you do it as if you had been waiting all your lifetime for that golden moment, and as if you never expected a greater honor. How very few dull times we should have, and what a pleasure it would be to meet one another on the street, if we were all studying to be first in this grace of Courts.

Lord Rosebery once entertained to dinner a number of people, many of whom were quite unaccustomed to the ways of big houses and rich folk. Among them was a plainspoken, honest farmer, who had never seen an ice pudding before, and did not know what it was. When he saw the pretty-looking stuff on his plate, he took a big mouthful of it, and suffered agonies of chill. With a kindly thought for others, the sufferer went to the host, and said that he thought some mistake had been made. Lord Rosebery listened very earnestly, tasted the stuff, and, thanking the farmer, said he would speak to the cook. His lordship came back with a relieved face, as if he had really found out something very important, and said to the farmer, "It's all right; they tell me it's a new sort of pudding that's frozen on purpose." That was true courtesy: it would have been very easy for Lord Rosebery to make fun of his guest's ignorance, but, instead of that, he hid his own knowledge, and put himself on a level with the ignorant farmer in order to save his feelings.

I am not so foolish as to suppose that all lords and ladies of high rank understand what it is to be courteous. In this matter we all have to go to school at the court of King Jesus, and it is only as we have a loving and humble heart, which is able to render all honor to others, that we can find the courtly word, and practice the courtly action.

Jesus Christ was the first perfect gentleman that ever walked the earth. He never talked with a poor woman or even with a bad woman, without making her feel that He thought she was a King's daughter. Men whom others treated as outcasts and of no account, He visited in, their homes, and sat down to dinner with them as if they were King's sons.

One day, He had healed a great many sick people, and it had taken His strength, and had been talking a long time to great crowds, and felt very tired; as it came towards evening, He put off in a boat with His disciples to get to the other side of the lake into a quiet place where He might rest. When He got there, He found that the crowd had run round the end of the lake, and were on the shore waiting for Him to talk to them again. What would you and I have done in such a case? Most probably we should have been vexed with the people for their want of thought, and we should have said, "Now, you good people, this is carrying it rather too far, I've talked and done enough for you today, I should be glad if you would run away home, and let me have a little rest." The disciples suggested that their Master should say something like that, and send them away. But the Lord Jesus said, "They must be very tired and hungry, make them sit down on the grass; we must not think of sending them home before they have had something to eat, or they would faint by the way."

24. Ending a Quarrel

“A soft answer turneth away anger.”

Esau and Jacob had a quarrel. Esau was the stronger, and Jacob was the offender, and Jacob had to run away from home. Years passed by, and they had never made it up. Years passed by, and they were both of them grown up into men, and still there was no peace between them.

Jacob became rich, and then the longing came to him to go back to the old country and see the old home once more.

On the way, the angels of God met him. What they said to him I can only guess. I think it was something like this, “Before you see the old man Isaac, your father, first be reconciled to your brother, Esau.”

So Jacob turned aside to Esau’s home, and sent messengers to tell him that he was coming to ask his forgiveness. But the messengers brought back the bad news that Esau had heard of his being close at hand, and was coming to meet him with four hundred armed men.

Jacob did not know what to do. He thought that it was all over with any chance of making up the quarrel. But he did not run away this time. He prayed God to show him the wisest thing to do. And then, getting up from his knees, he chose a splendid lot of ewes and rains, and goats, and camels, and cows and bulls, and sent them as a present to Esau. He thought that was the best way to prove to his brother that he was sorry. It was a hard thing for him to do, for he had worked many years to get all those cattle together. It was a noble gift. But still nobler was the desire to end the quarrel.

Esau’s heart was touched by Jacob’s generosity. He was a careless, good-natured giant of a fellow. All the keenness of his anger had long since gone. A grudge was left, no doubt, but a present so big and rich as Jacob sent showed that he was really sorry, and the grudge went clear out of his heart when he saw his brother. He simply ran to meet him, and put his arms round his neck and kissed him. And they wept together.

I have heard that builders, when they want to lay one fine polished block of marble on another, so that the edges touch one another exactly without getting chipped, put lumps of sugar at the corners and along the edges, then lower the marble, and adjust it till they get it into the right position except for the sugar. Then they wet the sugar, and lower the marble again; the sugar melts, and the two blocks are left exactly together. Whether that is so or not, I am not workman enough to say, but it sounds all right, and seems a very artful thing to do.

But this I do know; it is the best way to end a quarrel, and to get two friends square with one another again. Suppose your friend is very cross with you, because you have offended him. He is snappy and disagreeable, whenever you try to speak to him. What are you to do? Naturally, you think you’ll be just as cross, and give snarl for snarl, and angry word for angry word. But that is to own yourself beaten. It is another way of saying that you cannot end the quarrel, so you will make

it worse. Angry words will only make him more angry. But try the sugar. Try what sweetness will do. Find out a way of doing him a good turn. You are his friend, you know what he likes best. See that he gets it. Return a smile for the frown, courtesy for rudeness, good temper for anger. You may not win at first. But you will win. Temper is nine-tenths of Christianity. That is to say, it is nearly all of it good temper, kindness, generosity, peaceable-ness, patience. We sing about "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild," and yet we do not always remember that all the sweetness and the light and the goodness in our land has come from this same "Gentle Jesus."

One afternoon, I went to see some military sports. Among the interesting things I saw, there was a swordsman, who showed us what could be done with a strong and skillful hand. They hung up the whole body of a sheep, and with one blow of his sword he cut it right through the back, so that one-half remained hanging, and the other fell to the ground. Then they placed an apple on a boy's outstretched hand, and with a stroke of his sword he divided the apple into two pieces without so much as touching the hand. Again they placed an apple on the back of a boy's neck, with the same result. But there was one thing which he did not attempt, a feat which ancient swordsmen are said to have accomplished. And that is the hardest feat of all, to cut through a pillow of soft down. That requires the greatest skill of all, because the softness of the down turns the edge of the sword.

"Is every word of the Bible true?" a girl once asked her mother.

"Why do you ask?"

"Because the Bible says, 'A soft answer turneth away anger,'—and when Annie spoke to me in a rage, I gave her a soft answer, but it didn't make any difference."

The Bible does not promise that it will always succeed, in every case and at once. But it is the best way. A soft answer is a shield from which arrows fall away harmless. Mohammed and Ali, his friend, were out walking. They met an old man who began to abuse Ali. At first he bore it patiently and silently, but at last he gave way, and answered back, scorn for scorn. Then Mohammed left him. Ali was offended, and when he met Mohammed again, he said, "Why did you leave me alone to hear that man's abusive speech?"

Mohammed said, "Ali, while you were silent, I saw ten angels round you, who answered for you. But when you began to be angry, one by one the angels left you, and I also came away."

25. Tale-Bearing

“And Joseph brought the evil report of them unto their father.”

Jacob and his large family settled down in the old country where his father had lived. There were twelve sons, all of them at home, all shepherds, all at work, helping to keep the home together.

Joseph was the youngest but one. He was seventeen years old, and his father was very fond of him. He was his favorite, and Jacob spoiled him. Jacob ought to have known better, for that kind of thing always brings trouble into a family.

Jacob gave Joseph a coat of many colors, so that he was clad more grandly than all his brothers. And they didn't like it. They were older, and did more work than he. Every time they saw him with it on, one of them said to another, “What is Joseph doing, pranking about in that coat? He thinks a precious deal too much of himself. Why doesn't he do some work? It's not fair.”

The pretty coat did Joseph no good. It gave him a great conceit of himself. People naturally think themselves very important, when they are dressed in fine clothes. But clothes don't give people brains. It is better to have many colors in your thought than on your back.

Thomas Carlyle used to wear a very big hat. One day, a gentleman, riding on the box seat of a London omnibus, pointed him out to the driver, “That man's got a big hat on.” “Yes,” replied the driver, “but wouldn't you like to have the head underneath it; that's Mr. Carlyle.”

Joseph thought he was marked out for great things, and rather looked down on his brothers. One day he made matters much worse. He happened to see his brothers doing something that Jacob had told them not to do. And he went and told his father.

That did not make them more affectionate. They were angry, and called Joseph a sneak. They began to hate him, and there were no friendly words between them. If Joseph had not been so wrapped up in his own conceit, he would have seen that his brothers disliked him, and would have mended his ways. Instead of that, he thought he had got a perfect right to do differently from them all. And Jacob backed him up in it.

Joseph now began dreaming his dreams of the greatness that was coming to him. It is all very well indulging in dreams of what we are going to do when we grow up. But do not let us imagine that other people are anxious to hear them. Joseph, silly fellow, made this mistake too. He told his dreams. That filled up the cup. His brothers only waited for a chance of having their revenge. The chance came when they had him all to themselves, a long way from home. Then they took him, and put him down a pit. It was very cruel. But it was the best thing that could have happened to Joseph.

No doubt he was full of fear and trouble while he was down in the pit, not knowing what was going to happen to him. But it made him think. And, though he blamed his brothers for putting him there, and wished himself a thousand miles away from them, he could not help remembering that it was

partly his own fault. He felt that if the situation was disagreeable, he had to thank himself for it.

The pit gave him much leisure for reflection. He had not meant to anger his brothers so deeply. He had been thinking too much of himself, and too little of them. Instead of taking those tales to his father about their disobedience, he ought to have been silent. They might perhaps have told tales about him, if they had thought it worthwhile. He came to the conclusion that to be silent at the right time is better than much eloquence. And this conclusion was the beginning of wisdom with him. If only he could have his time over again, he would do differently.

There is a proverb, which says, "Let a man turn and look at his own front door; he'll find something there to sweep away." Do not let us be in so great a hurry to see others' faults. We are sure to have some of our own. No carter always drives his own team straight. Sometimes he gets the wheels into the ruts. No ploughman ploughs so well, but he sometimes draws crooked furrows.

If you were only to have your breakfast, when you had learned all your lessons the day before, and omitted nothing you were told to do, how many times you'd have to start the day hungry!

Anyone of Joseph's brothers might justly have said to him, "Do you look first at yourself, and then you may correct me."

Never tell tales out of school. You wouldn't like them told about you; well, then, don't you tell them about another.

"What is bearing false witness?" asked a teacher of his class. And the best answer that was given was this, "When nobody does nothing to nobody, and somebody goes and tells."

A great preacher, named Philip Neri, lived at Rome in the sixteenth century. Once, a woman came to him to confess. She said that she had one great fault; she found herself often telling mischievous stories about her neighbors. "Do you frequently do it, you say?" asked the reverend father.

"Yes, father, very often."

"My dear child, your fault is great, but the mercy of God is greater. For your penance, do as follows. Go to market and buy a chicken, just killed and covered with feathers. Then walk a mile, plucking the bird as you go along. Then come back to me."

The woman went and did as she was told, strewing the feathers on the road as she walked. When she returned to Philip Neri, he said, "You have done the first part well; now retrace your steps, and gather up all the feathers you have scattered."

"But," said she, "I cannot, the wind has blown them in every direction."

"Well, my child, so is it with your tales about your neighbors; call them back if you can."

26. Hard Things

“Give me this mountain.”

At the time when the Israelites were invading Canaan, they found a mountain, which was fortified with walled encampments. And they heard that these camps were defended by giant warriors. How could they take the mountain?—that was the question.

Then there stood up a brave soldier, who said, “Leave this mountain to me!”

And Joshua did so. He knew the man he was dealing with. And Caleb, for that was the soldier’s name, went up against the mountain with a number of tried and trusted comrades, and took the camps that were on it, and drove out the giants.

He was a man who loved doing hard things. When he was a boy at school, if there was ever a daring thing to be done, Caleb did it. If there was a river to be crossed, or a tree to be climbed, or a cliff to be scaled, that defied the strength of the rest of his companions, then Caleb was sure to distinguish himself by his courage and patience and skill.

A great many people go through this world shirking difficulties. It is enough to tell them that a thing is hard; at once, they don’t want to do it. They are never the heroes. They never take the mountains, and never drive out the giants.

George Washington once wanted a man to cross a frozen river, and get news of the enemy. He told one of his officers to do it. The officer came back, and said that the ice was broken up, and that he couldn’t get across. Washington replied, “Go, and send me a man!”

In one of the battles between the Dutch and the English, Admiral Norborough found himself hard put to it to save his ship from falling into the hands of the enemy. If he could only get a message carried to one of his ships, he might yet win the fight. He said, “Will any man volunteer?” At once several sprang forward, and with them a cabin-boy.

The Admiral looked at the boy and smiled. “Why, my lad, what can you do?”

“I can swim, sir,” said the boy, “and if I don’t get there, I shall be no great loss.”

The boy swam to the ship, and the battle was won. Things that are well worth doing are always hard things. Life is a fight with mountains. How can you learn a foreign language? By starting in, after knowing a few words, and trying to talk it. But you say, “I can’t do it.” It is by trying to do the things you can’t do, that you learn to do them. The only way to take the mountain is to go up against it with all your might.

William Hunt, when he was a boy, wanted to learn to play the violin, but a man dissuaded him from trying, because it was so hard.

Afterwards, when he grew up, he said he would like to kick the man who gave him that advice. It is easier to eat buttered toast than to play the violin, but it is not so satisfying.

Napoleon used to say, “‘Impossible’ is very bad French.” Napoleon is not one of my heroes, but there was this about him— he never hesitated because of a mountain.

The other day, there was a big market in one of the towns in the South Tyrol. And in this market there were some hundreds of ladders for sale. Among the crowd gathered round these ladders, a young monk stood looking at them with longing eyes. He knew that his monastery needed a tall ladder, but times were bad, and there was no money to buy one. He made up his mind he would have a ladder, and a good one. So he went up to the man who was selling the smallest ones, and asked him very gently if he could not present him with a little ladder for the use of the monastery. The man was a good Christian, and a little ladder did not cost much, so he readily gave him one. Then the monk blessed the generous giver, and took the ladder, but, instead of going home, went to the next stall, where there were some larger ladders. Then he asked the tradesman, in the name of the Blessed Virgin, if he would be so kind as to exchange his little ladder for a larger one. He spoke so humbly and so sweetly, that the tradesman consented, and gave him a ladder taller by two rungs than the one he had before. Again the monk went to another stall, where there were still larger ladders, and repeated his request for a slightly larger one. And so he went on, patiently going up the line of ladders, and exchanging his ladder at every stall for “a slightly larger one, for the sake of the Blessed Virgin.” At last, he got the tallest ladder in the market.

Do what you can’t do, else you’ll never do what you can. Believe that you can, and try. You never know what you can do till you try.

There is a mountain which we are all expected to take over and over again, on our way through this world. And it is better to begin as early as possible, because no one is properly educated who has not many a time beaten this mountain.

I do not know the name of it. I think it has different names. But it is the mountain that gets in your way when you want to do the right thing. It is a travelling mountain. Well, the only thing to do with it is to take it and make it travel.

The Lord Jesus said that if we only had a very little bit of confidence, we could say to this mountain, “Don’t stand there in my way, be off with you and throw yourself into the sea!”

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