

BOYS' AND GIRLS' DEPARTMENT.

LEARN A LITTLE EVERY DAY.

Tiny seeds make boundless harvests,  
Drops of rain compose the showers,  
Seconds make the flying minutes,  
And the minutes make the hours.  
Let us hasten then and catch them  
As they pass us on the way,  
And with honest, true endeavor,  
Learn a little every day.

Let us read some striking passage,  
Cull a verse from every page;  
Here a line and there a sentence,  
'Gainst the lonely time of age.  
At our work or by the wayside,  
While the sun shines making hay,  
Thus we may, by help of study,  
Learn a little every day.

LITTLE FOXES.

Some years ago I read a book for grown people called "Little Foxes," which I don't suppose many of you ever read. But I think children as well as grown people have a great deal to do with these same troublesome little animals that "spoil the vines," and I mean to show to you, as the little book showed me, what some of them are called, and what is some of the mischief they do. Then, whenever you come across them, you will know them at once, and can set as many traps for them as you please.

I suppose of course you have seen foxes, and have heard people tell about the naughty things they do. But if you had never heard these stories of plundering chicken roosts, you would think, to look in their faces, that they were the meekest, gentlest, most kind-hearted little creatures in the world.

I have no doubt you have heard of the little fox who fancied the grapes must be sour because they were too high for him to reach, but did you ever read in the Bible of foxes who really reached the grapes, and spoiled them too?

There is a verse in the "Song of Solomon" which reads in this way: "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes." Now of course you think that Solomon meant real, living "little foxes," and real, growing "tender grapes," do you not? Perhaps he did, but I think underneath this meaning—as the book showed me—he had a deeper and better one. And little children as well as children who are older, have a deal to do with these same little foxes who "spoil the vines," and eat up the "tender grapes."

Did you ever see a little boy very content on some wonderful story-book, quite hidden away perhaps, in an easy chair, with his feet on the fender, and no eyes or ears for anything but the story!

His mother says: "Johnnie, won't you run around to the store and get me a spool of thread?"

Johnnie heaves a long sigh, and keeps right on with his reading.

"Johnnie, my son, don't you hear?"

"Oh! ma," says Johnnie, 'can't you make that thread do? I'm so tired, and 'Thomas' is just going to be shipwrecked."

Mother sighs and wonders why Johnny can't be more obliging; and unless she speaks again in two minutes he has forgotten all about it.

Do you see how the little fox "Unwillingness" is spoiling all Johnnie's "tender grapes" of obedience and love?

If he had put his book by, and

in the midst of that wonderful ship-wreck, long enough to do that little deed of kindness for his mother, how much more he would have enjoyed the story, and his warm corner when he came back to them; and how much more comfort his mother would have had in her boy. I think you little ones don't quite understand, how we who are older, feel our hearts warming towards you with love and admiration, when we hear you say to one and another "Oh! let me do that for you," or "What is it you wanted? I'll run up stairs for it at once."

This is a very small fox, you think, but oh! how he grows and thrives upon grapes!

Then there's little fox 'Wait-a-while.' Do you think you ever heard of him before? He gets at a good many vines, and spoils more tender grapes than you would suppose. He is such a well-looking little fox in the face, with very innocent eyes, and seems to mean no manner of harm. But all the time he is enfeebling our wills, overturning our resolutions, and working a great deal of harm. This harmless-looking fox is very greedy indeed.

"Jenny, you must put away your hat and saccue," says grandma, 'don't leave them lying about, my dear.'

Jenny has just come home from school, and is busy cutting a dress for her doll—very busy, indeed.

'Yes, grandma,' she answers, 'I am going to put them away in a minute.'

The minute passes and the half hour too, very likely—the dress is cut and almost fashioned.

'Jenny,' says Grandma, coming into the room again, 'your things are lying there still.'

'Oh! I forgot grandma; just wait till I put in these last few stitches.'

And after a while grandma, who is a little too indulgent, quietly carries off the hat and saccue and hangs them up herself.

'Jenny,' says mother, coming in presently from a sewing-meeting, 'are your lessons learned my little girl?'

'Oh! ma, I'm going to learn them after supper; it's a great deal nicer.'

Mother says nothing, having weightier cares on her mind, and after supper tired little Jenny falls asleep on the sofa, and is sent up early to bed. She comforts herself with the thought that she will get up early in the morning, and have plenty time for study before breakfast, which she thinks is really the best plan, for one feels so much fresher in the morning. But alas! mother calls a great many times, and the breakfast bell rings before this sleepy little girl can summon resolutions to jump out of bed, and hurry on her clothes. Then with no word of prayer to help her through the day, she goes down to a cold breakfast, and begs to have an excuse for the history lesson, that little fox 'Wait-a-while' has kept her from learning.

This is a very mischievous little fox, for beginning with a few grapes, he climbs up to the large and beautiful bunches, and if he is not caught will likely be the cause of very great sorrow and ruin.

There is a little fox blacker than either of these, a very bad looking, dangerous little fox, called "Ill temper." There is one strange and alarming thing about him, which is this: he never keeps little, very long, but grows

and grows like Jack's wonderful fairy bean-stalk, until he is no longer a little fox, but goes about like a great wild beast, preying on far choicer things than grapes.

At first, however, he is a little fellow, and he rather charms and amuses us sometimes. Take the very baby brother, who only creeps about on the floor and laughs at you; who gets into all manner of mischief; who would put his hand in the fire if he could reach it, and tips over mama's work-basket a dozen times a day. You see him put up his pretty lips, and strike out with his fat little hand at sister, because she won't let him help himself to a bowl of sugar; and don't you laugh and think it is the funniest sight in the world? Such a wee, dainty fox as this can never do any harm!

But wait till he has grown a little. Then some day while you sit in a corner reading, you may hear the same little brother say to one of his school-mates:

"Bob Jones, you've taken my new top, I left it just here on the table."

"Hum," says Bob, "I haven't any such thing; think I want your old top-penny totum, Johnnie White?"

Johnnie flushes like a full-blown poppy.

"Guess I know where I left my own top, and you'd best own up."

And Bob answers back, and Johnnie gets very angry and gives him a blow in the face perhaps; and if you, like a good sister, don't stop them at once, no one knows where it would all end.

So you see how the little fox has grown in a few years, an how it may grow in the years to come, unless Johnnie looks for God's grace to strangle it.

There are a great many other little foxes; for I have only told you of three, and if we began to count them on our fingers, perhaps we should hardly know where to stop. Can any of you tell me how to catch and kill them? Of course, the very best time is to begin at once, and strangle them while they are little, before they have grown so great and fierce as to master us entirely. But we cannot kill them of ourselves. Asking the Lord to help us, we must pray and watch. If your little fox shows the least tip of his nose, put out all your strength to push him down, or else he will spoil the tender grapes that are growing in your hearts.

Love for Children.

Among the amiable characteristics of noted men none are more pleasing than the ease with which they attract, and the faculty with which they adapt themselves to children. The late Rev. Dr. James W. Alexander was gifted with this power. The writer once saw him quiet, in a stage coach, a fretful child who was very annoying to its mother, and not a little irritating to the passengers. By a few words he attracted the child's attention; a little incident, told in three or four short sentences, quieted it; and then, for some half hour, child, mother and passengers were all interested, as the learned divine improvised a story.

In the days when Daniel Webster and Henry Clay were rival leaders of the old Whig party, a writer quite accurately set forth the difference between the temperaments and characters. He said that if a child should meet Daniel Webster on the road, it would step aside, put its hands

behind its back, and, with open mouth, stare at the great man. If, however, it should meet Henry Clay, its impulse would be to run up to him, catch him by the hand, and say, "Won't you let me go with you, Mr. Clay?"

We recently met with an anecdote which shows the love of Washington Irving for children. Its purports to have been told by a lady in Sacramento Cal., as an incident of her early life:

Travelling in a coach in a thinly-settled part of Alabama with her parents, she gave utterance to the enthusiasm of a young girl at the romantic scenery. Her father apologized to a fellow-passenger for her exuberance. The stranger answered,—

"Do not check her; enthusiasm is a gift of God." And then he began, in eloquent language, to tell of scenes he had gazed upon, and lands he had visited, dwelling alternately on the majesty of the wilds of the West, and the splendors of the highest civilization.

The girl's fancy was all aflame, and she led the stranger to speak of foreign lands, and at last of Spain, until, forgetting himself, he spoke of scenes and narrated legends in words which disclosed to her his identity. Clapping her hands, she cried, "You are Washington Irving!" They made a covenant of friendship then which was close and warm to the day of the author's death.

THE GIANT BIRD.

The Marabou crane is a native of West Africa. When full-grown it will often measure seven feet; the head is covered with white down thinly spread over it, and is not unlike that of a grey-headed old man.

A young bird, about five feet high, was brought up tame, and given to a chief of the country, and being accustomed to be fed in the great hall, soon became familiar, duly attending that place at dinner-time, placing itself behind its master's chair, and often before the guests entered. The servants were obliged to watch it narrowly, and to defend the provisions with switches; but, notwithstanding, it would often snatch something or other off the table. Every thing is swallowed whole; and so wide is its throat, that a shin of beef broke asunder serves it but for two morsels. It has been known to swallow a leg of mutton of five or six pounds weight, a hare, and also a small fox.

Do you ask of what service is this giant bird? We would answer—In very hot countries, as Sierra Leone, in West Africa, all food soon becomes corrupt, and all dead birds, and animals, as well as all refuse, would quickly decay, and cause fever to the people of those lands. But this bird acts as a sort of scavenger. Its great appetite makes it ready to devour anything that comes in its way, and its large bill is a capital scoop and shovel; so that in a short time it clears away that which, if left, would endanger human life. Every creature is made for some wise purpose, though at all times we may not be able to know why.

Never reproach a child with the misdeeds of its parents, no matter how deserving they may be of your censure. It is the very refinement of cruelty, and in the heart of the child there will spring hatred for you which will never be eradicated.

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