

YOUTH'S DEPARTMENT--MY FIRST BOOK.

BY THE EDITOR.

I WELL remember my first book, for children's books were not so plenty then as they now are. I was about six years old, and my good mother taught me the many good things there were in it. I can almost see her now as she sat by me and asked me such questions as: "Who was the first man?" Adam. "Who was the first woman?" Eve. "Who saves lost men?" Jesus Christ. I remember, also, the little prayer in verse, which my mother taught me in this primer.

THE CHILD'S EVENING PRAYER.

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

I have said this little prayer a great many times since I was a child. It is a sweet prayer, for my mother, now gone to heaven, taught it to me. And I wonder the good man who made it did not also make a morning prayer in verse, for we should pray both evening and morning. I subjoin a child's morning prayer—

THE CHILD'S MORNING PRAYER.

Jesus, Lord of life and light,
Thou has kept me all the night;
Thou wilt hear me while I pray,
Bless and lead me all the day.

The mother of John Quincy Adams, it is said, taught him when a little boy, that child's evening prayer—"Now I lay me down to sleep"—and even when a member of Congress and President of the United States, to the day of his death, he always said it before going to sleep at night.

Nor should the morning prayer be forgotten. A little daughter about four years old was taught by her pious parents to say the evening prayer, of which I have spoken. And one morning, she got out of her little bed, and on her knees, began to say, "Now I lay me down to sleep," without being told to do it. So her father thought it too bad that the little thing should not have a prayer for the morning, and he made one for her.

In my first book or primer, there were also prayers in prose by Dr. Watts. I give them here :

THE CHILD'S MORNING PRAYER.

Almighty God, the maker of everything in heaven and earth, the darkness goes away and the daylight comes at Thy command. Thou art good, and doest good continually. I thank Thee, that Thou hast taken such care of me this night, and that I am alive and well this morning. Save me, O God, from evil all this day long, and let me love and serve Thee forever, for the sake of Jesus Christ, Thy Son. AMEN.

THE CHILD'S EVENING PRAYER.

O Lord God, who knowest all things, Thou seest me by night as well as by day. I pray Thee, for Christ's sake, forgive me whatsoever I have done amiss this day, and keep me all this night while I am asleep. I desire to lie down under Thy care, and abide forever under Thy blessing, for Thou art a God of all power and everlasting mercy. AMEN.

Besides these, there were also in my primer very short prayers, called grace before meat, or grace after meat, for a child.

GRACE BEFORE MEAT.

Bless me, O Lord, and let my food strengthen me to serve Thee, for Jesus Christ's sake. AMEN.

GRACE AFTER MEAT.

I desire to thank God who gives me food to eat every day of my life. AMEN.

Once, when a little child, I made up my mind not to eat even alone with my little dish or plate, without saying this grace before eating, and that after eating; and for some days I kept up the use of these little prayers, as I could not always take my food at the same time the older folks did.

And I used to say these prayers, together with our Lord's prayer, on going to bed and rising in the morning. And I

made a mark on the side of the room where I slept, every time I prayed. If the room had not been changed, the marks would be there now.

To be sure, I had rather strange notions of prayer, thinking that when I died, I would go up to God and tell Him I had prayed so many times! I am afraid my prayers were not made as they should be, by faith in Christ alone, for He only can save, and our prayers must lead us to Him. Still I did pray thus, and it was a good thing that I learned to pray when young. It kept me from sin and folly. It made me think of God, and of Christ, and heaven.

And further, my first book had some beautiful hymns for children in it, such as :

How glorious is our heavenly King,
Who reigns above the sky!
How shall a child presume to sing
His dreadful Majesty!

And there was that other one :

How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey all the day
From every opening flower.

And there was still another one :

Though I am young, a little one,
If I can speak and go alone,
Then I must learn to know the Lord,
And learn to read His holy word.

'Tis time to seek to God, and pray
For what I want for every day;
I have a precious soul to save,
And I a mortal body have.

And then there was the child's catechism, with such questions and answers as these, "Who made you? God. Who died to redeem you? Jesus Christ," and so on.

The Assembly's shorter catechism, also, was in my first book, beginning with the question and answer, "What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and enjoy him forever." These, too, I learned, in older years, before I got above my book.

I bless God for my first book, and for a pious mother and father to hear me and teach me in it. It was better to me than all the other books of my childhood. I have even forgotten the names of some others, but this little child's book is fresh in my memory. There was the picture of Zacheus "climbing a tree, his Lord to see;" of John Rogers burned at the stake, for believing in Jesus Christ, and above all the cross representing where

Christ crucified
For sinners died.

The truth to be drawn from this story of my first book is this: First feelings and thoughts, first lessons and objects in life are never forgotten. Fill the mind with good thoughts and feelings in childhood, and in youth, and mature years, and old age, the lines of the first book will be written on the memory for all this life and the life to come.

God blesses early impressions. He loves the little child so easily turned to think of Jesus. And, if the little one dies in childhood, it has begun thus to learn of heaven, where by the spirit of God it may be prepared to enter.

MY SCHOOLS AND MY SCHOLARS.

Among other schools, I taught in Canandaigua Academy in 1831, and again in 1836-38, and also in 1849—nearly three years in all. And I purpose to publish some crumbs of correspondence of pupils and parents, illustrating early life. In general, names are represented only by initials.

We preface the article on Schools and Scholars with a Latin poem, translated by Mr. Stevenson, an early principal of Canandaigua Academy; he was a jolly old man when he gave the translation to the editor, then a classical teacher in the Academy. Also, a sketch of Ezekiel Cheever, the first teacher of note in New England.

Would all parents be as faithful as N. W. H. to his son P. for truancy, teachers would fare better.

The letters of Mrs. Spencer reminds me of her poor son Philip, who was hung at the yard-arm at sea, by order of

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