

KEEPING OUR WORD

By ARTHUR MEE

LIFE is not worth living if people break their word. If we cannot believe a person we can have no dealings with him, either buying or selling.

We buy a thing in a store, believing it is what it is said to be; we take the shopman's word, and if he speaks the truth we buy from him again. If he sells us brass and tells us it is gold, we buy from him no more. If he keeps that thing going, his trade will be ruined. Men cannot prosper on a broken word.

We could have no home to live in if people did not keep their word. We live by the side of many people who could rob us or poison us, but they live at peace with us instead. They have given their word, and we believe them. We go to bed at night, we leave our homes by day, because we believe that our neighbors will keep their word.

We could not travel about even in our own homeland if people did not keep their word. We go into another province, into a strange place, and trust our lives and our money to people we have never seen before. But there is the honorable understanding of people who keep their word. A stranger takes care of our personal belongings, another takes our money, another carries an important letter. We go on our way because we trust them all. We take their word.

We put our money into the bank, we leave our watch at the watchmaker's, we trust some one with an important piece of information, we risk our very lives, on the promise of a word.

Keeping our word means keeping it, no matter what the cost. A ship's captain takes his vessel to sea filled with valuable

freight and carrying people who trust their lives to his care. They trust him and the owners trust him, because he has given his word to "stand by the ship" to the end. The vessel may run on the rocks. The life-boats are lowered and the passengers and crew go to safety. But the captain remains and goes down with his ship. He is keeping his word.

Bankers say that the best security for the money they lend is the word of an honorable man, for the value of an honorable word never fails.

Our nation trusts its people, keeping police for those who break their word. The people of our nation must protect themselves against those who break their word—thieves, robbers, murderers. But if each one would keep his word by being honest and upright, such protection would not be necessary.

Boys and girls, if you would help make your country a great country, learn early in life to keep your word.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is it necessary for a person to keep his word?
2. Do you always keep your word?
3. Make a list of people in your town such as merchants, officials, etc. who always keep their word. Do people respect and trust them?
4. Have you ever heard of a person who kept his word even at the risk of his life?
5. Why are prisons necessary?
6. How can you help to make the Philippines a great country?
7. Is it important that boys and girls should learn to keep their word? Why?