To Ward Clark
from his Uncle James
1868.

THE BATTLE.

HELPS

OVER HARD PLACES.

STORIES FOR BOYS.

BY

LYNDE PALMER.

PUBLISHED BY THE

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

28 CORNHILL, BOSTON.

GEO. C. RAND & AVERY,
STEREOTYPERS AND PRINTERS.

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

To my Dear Young Friends,

The Boys

If any of you were going a very long journey over an untried road, which you had heard was rough and dangerous, would you not be very glad to hear that some one had been over it before, and arrived safely at his journey's end? And when you started, in your turn, and before many steps found yourself upon the borders of a great swamp, where your feet sank, and the blackened waters spattered your clean garments, would you not be pleased to see a little notice on a post hard by, saying, —

"A little further down you will find a board laid across this swamp, by which I, Tom Masterful, got safely over"?

And if, on going a little further, and finding the sun very hot, you should see a pleasant, shaded

path leading away into the loveliest green forest, as you were just turning aside, would you not be very thankful if your eyes fell upon another notice,—

"Do not enter here! There is a fierce lion back in these woods! I, Joseph Easy, have just escaped with my life"?

And if, a little further still, when you were *very* tired, you should come to a great hill, and should be so much discouraged that you would say, "I can not bear this road, with its swamps, and lions, and hills. I will lie down among these pleasant flowers and sleep a little while;"—would you not start, half in terror, half in gratitude, if you saw another little notice, very plainly written,—

"Whoever sleeps here will never wake again; for a serpent will creep out of these crimson flowers, and sting him so that he will die. But whoever climbs that hill will see from the top the golden spires of the city which lies at his journey's end; and while he rests, he will breathe the sweet air from its gardens of delights"?

And then, if you saw written, just under, —

"I, Sam Sterling, am determined to climb this hill," and under that, — "I, Dick Hardy, ditto," wouldn't you straighten up, shoulder your carpet-bag, and cry, cheerily, —

"If Sam Sterling and Dick Hardy were not afraid of this hill, I am determined to conquer it, too"?

And now for the application. I hope all my young readers have either entered, or are striving to enter, at the strait gate, and are all wishing to walk in the King's highway, which leads to the beautiful, golden city. This is the only safe path for young or old feet; and yet, I must confess, it is not perfectly smooth, and you may often come upon very "hard places." But a great many travelers have passed over this road before you; and I think it might be some help to you to know how other boys *felt* when they came to these "hard places," and what they found to be the best way of getting over them.

For this reason I offer you this collection of little

stories.* I hope you will be pleased to read of the boys who were nearly swamped in many evil habits, and how they got over at last, and left their good examples, like nice, firm planks, for the help of all other boys who should come to the same places; and of the boy who resisted temptation, when the wrong path looked so much easier than the right one, and thus avoided the great enemy who goes about like a raging lion; and of the boy who conquered the big hill of *self*, when every stone on the way was either pride, or anger, or revenge, and you may know it was very painful to the feet. But when he had at last *overcome*, how sweet it was to rest in the light of God's smile, and how much nearer seemed the heavenly city, where a crown was awaiting the happy conqueror!

Dear young pilgrims, standing doubting and tearful at the foot of some stubborn hill, may God bless to you these simple records of struggle and victory, and grant that to many tired feet they may indeed prove "Helps over Hard Places."

L. P.

* A portion of these were first printed in the "Congregationalist."

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

I.

THE YOUNG CONQUEROR.

The retiring bell had rung in Mr. Avery's large boarding-school for boys, and one by one, like the closing of so many little twinkling eyes, the lights were extinguished, and the old gray house seemed fast asleep. But in one of the rooms, flooded with the light of the full April moon, lay four wakeful boys, engaged in some eager discussion.

"I say, Hal," cried Bill Massey, exultingly, "I believe I can beat any boy in school in running and jumping. And just feel of these muscles; do you think one of you could stand up a minute, if this arm said '*go down?*'"

"I think Hal Gray could," responded Bob Wilson.

"Yes, I think he'd have a tough time with me," cried Hal's cheery voice.

"Well, perhaps so; and we'll try it to-morrow. But it's a great thing to be *strong*, and when I'm a man I shall enter the army. I shall soon be promoted on account of my *bravery*, boys; and then how I'll lead my company on to battle! We'll be like Napoleon's Old Guard. Nothing shall stand before us."

"But," interrupted Hal, with a shiver, "don't you think any thing of shooting people down, killing them all in a minute? I'm sure there could be no glory in battle for me, when I heard the dying men groaning on every side, and thought of the poor mothers and sisters watching and waiting for friends they would never see again."

"My dear chicken," replied Bill, "of course I could not walk right up to a man and shoot him coolly through the heart. But you see it will be all excitement, — horses and men all mixed in together, — officers shouting and urging one on, while the guns and cannons make roar and noise enough for fifty 'Fourths of July.' Then you know our country's enemies will be before us, and you wouldn't

want them to beat *us*. No, indeed! so I, for one, should rush in, dealing blows right and left; and by and by the battle would be over, and some proud, rich city would be conquered. Then, in a most magnificent carriage, I should ride through the streets, while the crowd hurrahed, and the band played 'See the conquering hero comes!' What do you think of that, boys?"

"All very well," laughed Hal Gray, "if, in the first place, you only get promoted, and if, secondly, you are not killed yourself upon the field of battle. Two rather important *ifs*."

"Oh, captains are never killed," responded Bill.

"Well, I'm going to fight in a safer field," said Bob Wilson, "and perhaps I shall have full as much glory, after all. I'm determined to be *wise*. There shall not be one difficult study that I will not conquer. I'll fight all the knotty problems. I'll make all the sciences my slaves. I'll lead the languages captive; and then, when Bill is flourishing his sword and gun in the midst of danger, I shall sit quietly in my room, and, with a few strokes of my pen, conquer a nation.

Yes, indeed! I intend to be *strong*, and to *conquer*, but I shall be what Mr. Avery calls an '*intellectual* giant.' I intend that my name shall be one of the first in the temple of fame."

"You've got the best of it, Bob," cried Hal's clear voice. "I like your way of fighting, and I think you'll stand the best chance of glory, too. I mean to try as hard as you for the prize that Mr. Avery has offered."

"Boys," said a childish voice, and the pale face of lame Jemmy Packard was raised from his cot. "I should like to tell you of something else you ought to fight against, and, if you conquer, you will have far greater glory than any you have spoken of yet."

"What is it?" said the boys, good-naturedly.

"'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city,'" repeated Jemmy, emphatically.

"Oh, you miserable little Puritan! shut your eyes and go to sleep," cried Bill Massey.

"No," said Hal, "fair play. Jem has as good a right to speak as any of us, and he shall tell us all about it. Now, Jemmy," continued he, laughing, "that would be the hard-

est kind of a fight for me; do tell us what reward we would have, after our uncomfortable struggle?"

"There are so many rewards," cried lame Jemmy, "that I hardly know where to begin."

"Oh yes," said Bob Wilson, impatiently, "you've been sick so long, you're always thinking about these things. All you mean now is, that people, if they are good, will go to heaven. But if I should get there some day, there are so many great angels there already, that nobody would take any notice of me. Now *I* want to occupy a high place, and make my name known."

"I don't think you have quite the right kind of ambition, Bob," said Jemmy, meekly; "but if you struggle all your life for earthly fame, it will be nothing compared to the glory given to the conquerors in this nobler battle."

"Tell us about it," said Hal.

"These are the words of the promise," replied Jemmy: "'To him that *overcometh* (you know what kind of enemies, boys) will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne; and I will confess his name before my Father and before his an-

gels.' Oh, Bob, isn't that a greater throne than any you can reach on earth, and isn't that a very glorious company to be all listening when the Saviour speaks your name?"

"Would he speak my name, my very name —*Bob Wilson?*"

"Why, yes," said Jemmy, with strong faith. "At least, every one in heaven would know who you were, and that you were the Saviour's friend."

"Are there any more promises?" asked Hal.

"Oh, a great many; you must read about them all. He will give you to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God. He will give you the 'morning star,' and you 'shall not be hurt of the second death.' I can not remember them all, but it's a very great reward."

"I believe Jemmy is the wisest of us all; don't you think so, boys?" asked Hal.

But there was no reply, and the low, regular breathing from that side of the room proved that they had both fallen asleep.

"Yes, Jemmy," continued Hal; "I know you are right. It is just as mother has always taught me; and sometimes I do try to

rule my spirit. But I get angry so easily, and when all the blood rushes to my head, and my heart thumps so fast, I have to do just the first thing I think of, and that is sure to be wrong. It isn't because I'm ashamed or afraid to do right."

"No, I knew you were not afraid the first night you came, when you kneeled down before us all and said your prayers."

"But, Jemmy, when the boys provoke me, I can't bear to take it so meekly, and, as the good people say, 'turn the other cheek,' but I want to defend myself — show them it won't do to plague such a boy as I am. As Bill says, I want to *conquer* them. I always thought if ever I were an angel, I should want to be one of those who 'excel in *strength*.'"

"Dear Hal," said Jemmy, "I'm afraid you have a great many victories to gain before you could be the poorest kind of an angel. It is very easy for such a strong boy as you to have all sorts of triumphs like Bill Massey's, but can't you see how much nobler and grander it is to conquer one's self?"

"Yes, I *do* see it, and I *will* try. It will be hard, but I'll have no mercy on myself.

Down envy! down pride! down passion! What beautiful promises to 'him that overcometh!' Pray for me, Jemmy, that I may be one of the right kind of conquerors, for they *are* better, far 'better than the mighty!'"

It was a warm morning in the latter part of May, and Hal Gray, on his way to chapel, — arm in arm with lame Jemmy, — met Bill Massey.

"Good morning, Puritans," said he, with a kind of wicked smile. "You'll be apt to see some fun at prayers this morning."

"What do you mean?" asked both together.

"Oh! you two boys are always talking about being so good, and 'overcoming,' and all that; perhaps you'll see old Prex overcome this morning, or *come over*, just as you please to take it."

Harry immediately suspected some trick, and begged Bill not to do any thing to hurt the feelings of kind Mr. Avery. But he could draw nothing further from his mischievous schoolmate, and so went reluctantly on.

As he entered the chapel, he looked hurriedly around. Every thing was in its place, and he felt somewhat reassured. Presently

Mr. Avery appeared, and walked, with dignified step, to his chair. Hal watched him, with painful interest; nor were his fears in vain; for, as the worthy man seated himself, the chair suddenly gave way, and he was prostrated on the floor. A few silly boys laughed, but the hot blood rushed to Hal's cheeks and brow, especially when he saw that Mr. Avery had so sprained his foot as to be unable to rise without the assistance of an under teacher. The chair was immediately examined, and it was discovered that one of the back legs had been sawed off.

Mr. Avery turned very sternly to the assembled boys, and demanded who had dared perpetrate such a miserable joke.

The most profound silence followed the question, but as Mr. Avery's keen eye swept round the room, it rested on the embarrassed face of Hal Gray.

"What do *you* know about it, sir?" he asked suddenly.

The crimson grew deeper upon Hal's cheeks; but he drew himself up a little proudly, as he firmly replied, "I did not do it, sir."

"Do you know who did?" persisted Mr. Avery.

Harry hesitated, and at last said, faintly "I would rather not answer, sir."

"But I command you. Come, I am waiting for the name," said Mr. Avery, with growing impatience.

Harry hesitated, and a low murmur of disapprobation ran through the ranks of boys, most of whom had imbibed that false idea of honor which makes it very contemptible to inform against a schoolfellow, no matter how deeply he is to blame. Harry had a vague idea that such a cowardly act ought to be punished, but it was *so* hard to speak; besides, what *proof* had he, after all, that Bill Massey was the rogue?

"Please excuse me, sir," pleaded Hal; "I can not tell that."

"*Can not?* and why?" cried Mr. Avery, a little angrily. But poor Hal could only repeat, "Please excuse me, sir."

"Very well," said Mr. Avery, thoroughly vexed at what he called Harry's obstinacy, while the growing pain in his foot tended to increase an irritability in which he seldom indulged. "Very well, sir; if you have nothing further to say, we may reasonably conclude that you are the guilty one yourself,

and will proceed to award your punishment."

"I did *not* do it, Mr. Avery," interposed Harry; but that gentleman, with a hastiness he afterwards regretted, proceeded to say, "Harry Gray is suspended from his classes for one week, and ordered to remain in his room during the hours of recreation for the same length of time."

Lame Jemmy interposed tearfully, "Will this prevent him from taking the prize at the end of this term, sir?"

"Of course," said Mr. Avery, briefly, and proceeded with the morning exercises.

This last was too great a blow for Hal. He had striven so hard for that prize, and meant so to delight his mother, and now to lose it all in a minute! It was too much, and leaning back in the shadow of the chapel pillar, he with difficulty restrained his tears. And then, too, how hard to have Mr. Avery think so ill of him. Surely Bill would not have the heart to leave him in such disgrace, —he *would* confess. But no, not a word more was said upon the subject; and presently the boys dispersed to their different class rooms, giving Hal many a look and word of sym-

pathy as they passed, for he was a great favorite in the school.

At the hour for morning exercise, Hal could not resist hurrying down for one minute's talk with Bill Massey. "Bill, Bill," he cried, as the boy tried to evade him, "surely, you do not mean to make me lose the prize. You *will* tell Mr. Avery, won't you? I know he won't scold very hard, now it's all over; and you know *you* can't get the prize, any way. *Won't* you tell him, Bill?"

"I don't think I shall do any thing of the kind."

"You won't tell him?" cried Hal, with indignant surprise.

"No," said Bill, doggedly.

The bright color leaped into Hal's cheeks, and his eyes flashed with anger.

"Well, then, you're a mean-spirited fellow, and a coward!" cried Hal, his fiery temper entirely getting the mastery of him.

"No boy shall call me that," said Bill, coolly rolling up his sleeves.

"Come on," cried Harry, excitedly. "I'm ready to fight, if that's what you mean."

"Hal, *dear* Hal," pleaded lame Jemmy, and his clinging touch was upon the boy's arm.

Hal's eyes softened a little, as he said, "Go away, please, Jem; I might hurt you."

But Jemmy clung the tighter. "Dearest Hal, you are not the right kind of a conqueror now. Oh! think, Hal, 'to him that overcometh,' the tree of life, the morning star, the paradise of God. Now is the time to fight hard, '*down* passion, *down* revenge.' Be a conqueror, Hal, but be *sure* and strike in the right place."

Hal's anger rapidly cooled as Jem spoke, and at last he threw his arms around his little friend, exclaiming, "Jemmy, I believe you are my good angel." Then turning to Bill, he said, with an effort, "I am sorry I called you names, but I can not fight with you."

Bill broke into a loud, sneering laugh.

"That's a good way to get out of it, you miserable sneak. Why don't you say you don't *dare* fight, instead of playing good, and trying to imagine you're a martyr just ready to be taken out of a wicked world?"

Hal was about making an indignant reply, but checked himself just in time, and rushing to his room, threw himself upon his knees, repenting bitterly of this outburst of passion, and humbly asking help for the future. Harry

bore the remainder of his week of disgrace with quiet gentleness and patience, and Mr. Avery more than once regretted the severity of his sentence.

A few more weeks passed, and found Hal still fighting the good fight, with his proud, young spirit under firm control.

In the long twilight of a lovely June evening, Hal was walking with Jemmy by the river, watching Bill Massey, as he taught a troop of young boys to swim.

"There is one thing troubling me, Jemmy," said Hal, at length. "I do not think I feel quite right towards Bill Massey yet. I don't like to have him near me, and I would rather oblige any boy in school than him."

"Well, it *is* hard, but I suppose it is another feeling to be overcome. We must pray for strength to fight it down."

"I *do*, Jem," said Hal, with sweet seriousness, "and I wish *you'd* pray for me."

"You're not such a bad boy, after all," cried Jem, lovingly, looking into Hal's clear, honest eyes. "I believe if there were some great service to be done for Bill this minute, you'd be the first to offer."

"I'm not so sure of that," returned Hal, laughing.

Just then there was a great commotion among the swimmers, and some little boys on shore cried out, "Bill Massey is going down! he has the cramp; he will drown!"

"Ah, that is true!" cried Jem; "and those little fellows can only keep their own heads above water. Oh, why *did* he go out so far?"

Hal did not stop to think twice, but, pulling off coat and boots, plunged into the water, and with swift strokes approached the drowning boy. Bill was a long distance from shore, and it was almost by superhuman efforts that Hal managed to reach him as he was sinking for the last time.

"There, he has him!" shouted the little boys. "Hurrah!" But Jem's anxieties were not over. "Poor Hal is so tired," he thought, "how will he tow in that heavy Bill Massey?"

Slowly, and with painful effort, carefully keeping the head of his companion above water, the brave swimmer struck out for the shore. At first he came on gallantly, then his strength seemed to flag, and once or twice both disappeared from sight.

"Oh, if I were only not quite so helpless," groaned Jemmy; "run, call some of the big boys, quick, or they will both drown!"

What an endless time it seemed before help came. Ah! there was Hal's curly head again, nearer, nearer. "A few more strokes, dear Hal," cried Jem. "You are almost in."

Here the little boys set up a wild shout, as two or three of the older students arrived just in time to draw the exhausted pair from the water. Part of them then applied themselves to the task of reviving Bill Massey, while the rest crowded around Hal, congratulating him, and warmly shaking his hand. Hal smiled faintly, and tried to thank them; but suddenly he turned deathly pale, a stream of blood gushed from his mouth, and he fell fainting in Bob Wilson's arms.

"What is it?" cried Jemmy, in terror, as they laid him upon the grass.

"Call Mr. Avery, and run for a physician," cried Bob, giving quick orders to the little boys. Jem, in the mean while, knelt down, and drew the dear head upon his breast. Smoothing back the wet curls, he whispered anxiously, "How do you feel, darling?"

Hal opened his eyes, and with his own bright smile, ever mindful of the feelings of others, replied, "It is nothing; I do not suffer any."

But with the exertion of these few words, the life stream gushed forth so violently that the boys turned pale, and looked at each other with a terrible fear.

Presently good Mr. Avery came hurrying down. "What is this, my dear, dear boy?" he cried, as he saw his favorite pupil extended, apparently lifeless, before him.

A few hurried words explained the whole matter.

"What can be done for him?" he cried, as the physician made his appearance. "Dr. Brown, you *must* save this noble boy."

The doctor knelt beside him a moment, with a very grave face. "He has broken a blood-vessel," he whispered to Mr. Avery. "I'm afraid he will live but a few minutes."

"Oh, do not say that," groaned Mr. Avery. "Make every exertion for his life — leave no remedy untried."

Just then Hal opened his eyes, dreamily, and seeing the pale, grave face of his teacher bending over him, he said, anxiously, "Do you still think I did it, sir?"

Bill Massey broke through the crowd, and, in a tone full of anguish and remorse, cried out, "Oh, Mr. Avery, if he means the chair,

I did it, I did it. Oh, Hal, you must, you *must* forgive me."

A look of satisfaction passed over Hal's pale face, and he turned smilingly to Mr. Avery.

"Is it all right now, sir?"

"Oh, my darling child!" sobbed Mr. Avery, and could say no more.

All remedies were in vain, and the young life ebbed fast.

"What is it, dear Hal?" wept Jemmy, putting his ear close to those loved lips, to catch an almost inarticulate murmur.

"The morning star," whispered Hal, faintly; "the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God!"

"'To him that overcometh,' to *you*, dear Hal; but ah!" cried lame Jemmy, with a sudden burst of anguish, "will you leave *me* behind, O Hal!"

Harry Gray did not seem to heed those once familiar tones, but, opening his clear eyes once more, he gazed lovingly around the weeping circle, gave one last, bright smile, and the last enemy was destroyed, even *Death*.

That night, as Bob and Jemmy watched

in the room where the young conqueror slept peacefully after the battle of life, the door softly opened, and Bill Massey stole in.

Jemmy half shuddered when he saw him, but the boy was so changed, so pale and broken-hearted, Jemmy could not say a word to reproach him. For a while he mourned and wept bitterly, then, drawing forth a wreath of laurel, he laid it reverently upon Hal's soft, bright curls.

"He is a greater conqueror than ever I shall be," he sobbed, as he rushed from the room.

"Yes," added Bob, "and he has won a greater prize than I have ever striven for."

"And I believe," cried Jemmy, almost with exultation, as he kissed the fair brow, "I believe God has made him an angel, *excelling* in strength."

II.

TENDER-HEARTED, FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER.

In the sweet June twilight, Willy Carter came slowly through the clover-scented fields, carrying very carefully a little willow basket, with the cover tied fast. A very satisfied smile was tugging at the corners of Willy's red mouth, and happy thoughts were dancing like fire-flies in the twilight of his great gray eyes. It was so pleasant walking there so quietly, with the red sunset still burning in the west, and the birds crooning so sleepily from the trees; and then when, once in a while, he took a delighted peep through the crevices of the basket, how could he help smiling more and more?

But suddenly, as he lifted his eyes, he saw Jack Dawkins standing by the stile at the end of the meadow. Now Willy was quite afraid of Jack, who was rather a mischievous boy, loving to tease his companions, and so he turned quietly to go in another direction.

But Jack saw the intention, and called loudly, —

"Here, Will Carter, you little blockhead, where are you going so fast, and what have you got in your basket?"

Willy knew it would do no good to run, and so he thought he would just try to be very pleasant and polite, and perhaps he would have no trouble. So he went forward as cheerfully as he could, saying, —

"Oh! Jack, what do you think! I have been over to grandmother's, and she has given me the most beautiful kitten in the world!"

"Let's see her," said Jack.

Will lifted the cover cautiously, saying, "She's so lively, she'd be out in a minute, if you didn't take care. Now did you ever see such a beauty?"

Jack peered in curiously. "She *is* pretty, that's a fact — just as white as snow."

"There isn't a black hair on her, anywhere," cried Will, with enthusiasm; "and I'm trying to think what name to give her. Pearl is good, and Snowball, but grandmother called her Lily, and I guess I will, too. Oh! you ought to see her run after a string. She

rolls over and over, just like a little ball of wool."

"What will you take for her?" asked Jack.

"Oh, I don't want to sell her," said Will, with great apprehension, sliding the cover over the basket.

"I'll give you my top."

"No, I don't want it."

"My kite?"

"I've got one of my own."

"Well," urged Jack, "what if I should give you my knife with two blades?"

"Ah," said Willy, thoughtfully, "maybe you'd want it back again; and, any way, I think I'd rather keep the kitten."

"You're a mean, stingy fellow!" cried Jack, angrily, "and I've a good mind to take it away from you this minute."

"Jack," pleaded Willy, "you wouldn't like to give me your little dog, Spot, would you?"

"No, indeed; I love him as well as I do myself."

"Then, why won't you let me keep my kitten?"

"Well, you're such a girl-baby, you don't know half the funny things you can do with her."

"Why, what are they?"

"Let me take her a minute, and I'll show you."

Willy didn't dare refuse, and tremblingly handed out his little pet.

"Well," said Jack, "in the first place, you can play *hand-organ* with her. You just take her by the back of the neck, *this* way, and then take her tail and turn it round and round — just so. There," said he, laughing loudly, "do you hear the *mew*-sic?"

The poor kitten stretched out her little velvet paws, and mewed piteously, while the tears started to Will's eyes.

"That's *too* cruel, Jack; you will twist her tail *off*."

"Well, then she'll be better off; for suppose my dog, Spot, chases her, and she runs for some hole, and *just* has time to squeeze in, won't she be a great deal happier if she don't have her tail to look after?" and Jack laughed loudly at this poor attempt at wit.

Poor Will now begged very hard that Jack would put the kitten back in the basket, but all in vain; and he was just ready to despair, when he saw the school-teacher, good Mr. Hope, who was taking his evening walk

through the fields. This gentleman, who had heard the latter part of the conversation, now stepped up quickly, and ordered Jack to restore the kitten, while he gave him a severe reprimand for his cruelty. Jack colored with rage and shame, and whispering to Will, "I'll pay you for this, some day," he darted across the fields, and Will hastened home to his mother. You may be sure he had a long story to pour into her sympathizing ears; but at last, as he finished, saying, "Now, mother, did you ever know such a hateful boy? I declare, I can't bear him; and I almost wish somebody would cut off Spot's tail," his mother looked very sad, and said, —

"My dear, dear son, you do not know what you are saying. I am afraid our great Father in heaven sees very little difference in the hearts of Willy Carter and Jack Dawkins. I am sure Willy has been a sinful child today. He has been cross, thoughtless, disobliging, selfish, and has cherished many unkind thoughts. Oh! how very sad it would be if God should remember my little son's morning prayer, 'Forgive us *our* trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us,'

and should say, 'I will forgive Willy Carter just as *he* forgives Jack Dawkins.'"

"Oh! mother," said poor Will, with streaming eyes, "I never thought of that. Do kneel down with me, and ask God to forgive me, and help me to forgive Jack."

So they prayed a long time; and when, at last, they rose from their knees, Willy looked as if he were at peace with all the world. Then his mother kissed him, and said, —

"I have a little Bible verse which I wish my son to learn and always remember. It is this: 'And be kind one to another, *tender-hearted, forgiving one another*, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Willy learned it perfectly, and then, before going to bed, went out to find a good place in the barn where Lily might lodge for the night. As he left her nicely curled in the straw, he heard a slight noise, and thought he saw, through a knothole, the envious eyes of Jack Dawkins. But they were gone in a minute, and he concluded it was a mistake.

The next morning he rose early, and ran out to have a scamper with Lily before breakfast; but, to his surprise, she was not in the barn. A hasty search through the garden

and kitchen was equally unsuccessful; and so he ran very swiftly across the fields to grandmother's, to see if the kitten had grown homesick and run back to her brothers and sisters. But no, she had not been seen since they squeezed her little white back under the cover of Willy's basket. Poor Will came back slowly and heavily, had no appetite for his breakfast, and sat down to his lessons with a very sad heart.

In the afternoon a small box was left at the door for Will. The little boy tore off the wrapper, and read, printed on the box in straggling letters, "A *pond* Lily for *Miss* Willy Carter." He opened the box with a queer choking in his throat, and a vague suspicion that all was not right; and there, indeed, lay his little white kitten, with filmy eyes, draggled, dripping, *drowned!* Willy gave one look, and threw himself, sobbing, into his mother's arms. He could not speak for a long time; but at last exclaimed, passionately, —

"Oh, Jack, Jack! how could you be so cruel? It's too mean, *too mean!*"

"Tender-hearted," whispered his mother "forgiving one another."

"Oh, I can't *now*," sobbed Will, "but I'll try by and by."

And he *did* try very hard, and, going to his own little room, he prayed so earnestly for help, that God gave him a "tender heart," and took away all anger and desire of revenge.

That night, as Will stood sadly in the garden, over the spot where he had buried his kitten, he heard a sudden cry of "fire!" Soon men came hurrying past, and little Will, carried away by excitement, joined them. "Where is it?" cried one. "Neighbor Dawkins' barn, and he away at town," was the reply.

It was almost dark, and Will stood gazing at the flames, with mingled fear and delight, when he heard the melancholy howl of a dog, and it flashed across his mind that poor Spot was chained in the barn, and Jack had gone off with his father.

"Ah! how terribly Jack will feel to have Spot burnt up!" thought Will. "I wonder where the poor dog is."

He ran hastily around the other side of the barn, and caught a glimpse of Spot, jumping furiously the length of his chain, and then giving a long, despairing howl.

The sympathy in Will's great, big heart drove out every thought of fear, and, seeing that that part of the barn was not yet in flames, he sprang through an opening, into the midst of the smoke, unchained the trembling little Spot, and escaped safely into the open air.

"Why, boy, are you crazy?" cried the stout fireman, catching him up. "It was only a dog."

"Oh! I could not bear to see him burn up; and then *Jack loves* him so dearly."

Just then Jack came rushing up. "Where's Spot?" he cried, in a trembling voice. "Did nobody unchain Spot?"

"Here," said a man, "*this* little fellow periled his life to save him for you. He must think a heap of you."

Jack turned crimson, and took the dog without a word, while Willy ran home.

An hour afterwards, as Willy still lingered upon the piazza, talking with his mother, Jack came suddenly running up the steps, and threw his arms around his neck.

"Dear, good Will," he sobbed, "can you *ever* forgive me? See, I have brought you Spot. He is more yours than mine. Oh,

will you be my friend, and help me to be a better boy?"

"I've forgiven you long ago, Jack," said little Will, giving him a kiss of peace; "but I do not want Spot. I could never feel happy to take your own little dog you have loved so long."

But Jack could hardly be comforted, till Willy's mother, taking his hand, talked kindly to him a long time, and taught him Willy's sweet verse. Jack went home that night with some new thoughts in his head, and he made a firm resolve, with God's help, to lead a different life. The next morning he walked two miles to get another kitten for Will; and I am happy to say that these two boys did become so kind, so tender-hearted, so forgiving to one another and to all others, that we have every reason to believe that God, for Christ's sake, has fully forgiven them.

III.

BUYING THE TRUTH.

"WHAT are you doing, Bob?" cried a cheery voice, one pleasant Saturday afternoon; and down the neat gravel walk tripped a sunny-faced little girl of about seven years. Brother Bob lay under the great elm tree, at the foot of the garden, with a little book open before him, and a very puzzled look in his usually happy face.

"Don't trouble me, Katie," said he, rather shortly; "I've such a long lesson to learn for to-morrow."

"Oh, Bob," said she, coaxingly, "let's learn it together."

"Why, you little simpleton!" cried Bob, laughing with such a funny face, that Katie, although somewhat grieved, was obliged to laugh too. For when Bob had a merry thought, it was not content with stretching his rather large mouth, but it ran all over his face, twinkled in his eyes, jerked up the

corner of his eyebrows, and finally played hide and seek in two or three curious little holes which mamma called dimples, but where Katie contended the good angels had touched him when he was a baby.

"Now, Bob," said she, rather reproachfully, when he was through laughing "all over," "now, Bob, what did I do?"

"Why, pet," said Bob, "you haven't known how to read long, and have to spell all the hard words, now; you wouldn't be any help at all."

"But perhaps," persisted Katie, "if you'd read the lesson, I could *explain* some of it, for mother and I have such long talks together while you are away at school."

Bob shouted again, and said, —

"Just to think of your explaining any thing to *me*, when I am four years older, and a *boy* besides!"

Katie turned away with eyes like violets after a shower.

"Well, well, come back, little sister," cried Bob, half sorry that he had grieved her. "Come back; I should like to ask your opinion on something."

Katie paused, with a doubtful face.

"What does this mean?" said he — "Buy the truth, and sell it not?"

"Why," said Katie, twisting her small fingers nervously, "what do *you* think, brother Bob?"

"I *don't* think," said Bob; "that's just the trouble. I suppose I know what *truth* is, but I didn't know any body kept it to sell, and I don't know how much I'd have to pay for it. If I could find it I'd buy a great deal, and wouldn't sell it very soon, either; for Mr. West told me last Sunday that a boy couldn't have too much of it;" and Bob laughed, forgetting his own perplexity in watching his little sister's anxious face.

"Bob," said Katie at length, "I believe you are half making fun of me. Nobody keeps truth to sell just as Mrs. Mills does oranges and candy; but I think it is something God keeps, and when we ask Him for it, we don't pay for it with money, but, but" —

"But — but" — repeated little teasing Bob.

"*But*," continued Katie, laughing away her momentary vexation, "we will go and ask mother."

Mrs. Lane was just starting upon a walk to visit some poor neighbors, who lived more

than a mile away, but when she heard the eager questions of her children, she permitted them to accompany her across the fields, that they might talk the whole matter over together.

"Katie is right," said mamma, after listening to the little girl's statement of the case. "We must go to God for truth."

"Do you mean," asked Bob, "that we must ask God to help us to *speak* the truth?"

"Yes, that is part of it; but there is a wider meaning," said his mother. "When we ask God for truth — when we pray, 'Lead us in thy truth,' we pray that God would make us Christians — would make us pure and holy like himself; for he is perfect truth."

"Then, mother, if he *gives* us all this when we ask him, how can we pay him?"

"My dear Bob, you could never pay him for all he has done for you. The greatest angel in heaven could not *pay* God; but he offers the greatest blessings 'without money and without price.'"

"How can we *buy* truth, then?" said Bob, with a dissatisfied air.

"Ah," said his mother, "I see your trouble now. The meaning of that little verse is

only that we must be willing to give up every thing for the truth — be willing to give up all earthly happiness, if God is only our friend. This would be no *pay*, after all; but we should be willing to make any sacrifice to show our *gratitude* to God."

"What must we give him?" asked Katie, earnestly. "What could *I* give him?"

"A great deal," said her mother. "You can say, 'Here, Father, take my *hands*. They are small now, but they are ready for any work thou hast for them to do. I give thee my *feet*. They shall never grow tired in thy service. I give thee my *tongue*. Oh! let it never say any thing to displease thee. Open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. And, above all, I give thee my heart. Fill it with thyself, fill it with thy truth.'"

"Why, mother, you will give me most all away," cried Katie.

"That's a great deal to give," said Bob.

"No, very little," replied Mrs. Lane. "Hundreds of people have given up friends, money, their native land, and even their lives. They thought nothing too precious to be given for the truth."

"Tell us about those people," said Bob.

"But a short time ago," continued his mother, "in some countries Christians were so cruelly persecuted, that they were not sure of their lives from one day to another. They could not stay in their pleasant homes as we do, but were forced to wander among the mountains, and live in dreary caves. Many perished from hunger and cold; but that was better than dying by the hands of their cruel enemies. Sometimes, on the holy Sabbath day, they would meet very secretly in the depth of some forest, and try to have a little service together. But often, while they were in the midst of singing and praying, an alarm would be given that the soldiers were coming, and the little band would hastily break up and run to hide themselves. And often the attack was so sudden, that many of the weak, frightened people could not run fast enough; and the rough soldiers would come thundering along on their strong horses, and catching the poor hunted creatures, they would carry them back into the city."

"What happened to them then?" said Bob, with reddening cheeks.

"Oh, they were taken before a cruel company of men, and asked if they would give up their religion; that is, if they would sell the truth. Then, if they nobly and bravely refused, they were taken into a room of torture, and made to suffer most terrible agony."

"What was done to them?" asked Bob, shuddering.

"Sometimes their thumbs were put into a screw that pinched them tighter and tighter, till they were completely crushed. Sometimes their bare feet were roasted upon a fire; and a great many other cruel things were done, which I will not tell you now," said Mrs. Lane, as she saw Katie quietly crying to herself.

"Well, didn't any of them ever give up?" asked Bob.

"Yes," said his mother; "sometimes the agony was too great, especially for the young and tender ones. But they were very few in number, compared with those who were 'faithful unto death.' Some children, not a great deal older than you, boldly confessed that they had 'bought the truth,' and no torture could make them sell it. One little word could have saved them from being

burned alive, but they would not say it. So their poor bodies were surrounded with wood, the cruel flames rose around, and the little martyrs were wrapped in fire."

"Oh, mother! didn't they cry out then?" said little Katie, vividly remembering the pain of a recently-burned finger.

"Why, I have heard," replied her mother, "that many of them were so happy that they did not seem to feel the pain of the body, but sang the most triumphant songs, as if the wreaths of fire were only crowns of glory. They sang, 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for *Thou* art with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.' And though it was a fearful path, they knew it led to heaven. It was only a little while to suffer, and their enemies could not hurt their souls. Oh, what a glorious moment it must have been, when the soul at last struggled from the poor blackened body, and, soaring above all the taunts and torments of its persecutors, exchanged the sufferings of earth for the sweet peace of heaven! One moment writhing in the cruel fire, the next, reposing in the green pastures, and beside

the still waters of God's love. Ah, how happy they must have been when they stood before the great God, saying, 'I have kept the truth!'"

They had now reached the home of poor sick Mrs. Brown, and Bob and Katie waited at the door until their mother came out again. When they were once more on the way home, Bob said, —

"Mother, *I* mean to buy the truth."

"I am very glad," she replied; "and are you willing to give up every thing to God?"

"People are not burned now, are they?"

"No, but still it is not an easy thing to keep the truth. There are so many little temptations every day and every hour, that you will need as much firmness and courage as to bear one great trial. You must struggle constantly."

"Well, I think I can do it," said Bob, with a great deal of self-confidence. "If I had been one of those children, I should never have given up, I know."

His mother looked a little sad, and said, "I would rather see my little son more humble. I remember when his fingers were accidentally pinched in the door, there was

a great outcry. If he could not bear pain more patiently than that, I'm afraid he would make rather a poor martyr."

Bob blushed, and said, more humbly, "I'm afraid I couldn't be a martyr, after all. If my thumb was pinched much harder, I'm afraid I should say any thing just to get it out."

"I hope my son will never be put to any such trial; but if he is, he must ask God to give him strength to speak the truth. There is nothing so mean and despicable as to tell a lie. It is so cowardly to sell the truth for a little transient ease and self-indulgence. Whatever may be the present relief, misery is sure to follow."

Bob looked uneasy, and said, half trying to change the subject, "You ought to hear Jim Price talk, mother. He tells stories all the time; and some of the other boys are so bad, you never know when to believe them."

"Then *my* son should be noble and brave enough to set them a better example; and he can always ask help of God, who is the great, the eternal Truth. Your friends may deceive you; they may seem to love you one day, and be very unkind to you the next;

but God is always the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever, without even the *shadow* of turning. Think of what it must be to have such a friend, to be always sure of finding him the *same* — the one *true* God."

Bob felt much softened as he reached home, in the quiet summer twilight; and taking Katie aside, he proposed that they should both go to God that night, and, giving themselves to him, should ask him for his truth.

"But what if I should sell it?" said timid Katie.

"Oh, we must ask God to help us, as mother said; and then, Katie, *I'll* keep an eye on you," said Bob, with that dangerous self-confidence creeping back into his heart.

"Well," said humble little Katie, "then I'll try."

God will help both of these little children, when they ask him; but I think Bob, particularly, will have great need to constantly "watch and pray."

IV.

THE BAD BARGAIN.

"ROBERT," said Mr. Lane to his son, one day, as they rose from the dinner table, "I wish you to take this basket immediately to old Mrs. Brown. The poor old woman has been much worse, and I fear she often lacks good and nourishing food. Your mother has packed some fruit and several dainties, which I think will please her, and at the bottom is a little money, which Katie has put in in some curious way. You must tell her little grand-daughter to buy whatever she needs most."

"Oh, Bob," cried Katie, with a radiant face, "you would never guess where the money is. It was all in silver, and mother let me put it in two little cookies; and I want you to tell Mrs. Brown that the cakes are a little *heavy*, but I'm sure they'll *agree* with her;" and Katie laughed contagiously. "Now be sure and tell us just what she says,

Bob, and come back soon. I'll wait for you under the old elm tree. Hurry, Bob, won't you?"

"Yes, Robin," said Bob, kissing his sweet-voiced sister, "I'll tell you all about it;" and waving his hat to father and mother, he sprang down the walk, cleared the low fence with a flying leap, and was out of sight before Katie's admiring "Oh!" had fairly escaped her lips.

At first he made rapid progress, but soon the heat of the mid-day sun caused him to slacken his pace. Presently the basket seemed to grow heavy. "Dear me," thought Bob, as he lifted it from one side to the other, "how very warm and tired I am! I don't believe Granny Brown will suffer if I rest a few minutes;" and down he sat upon the green bank.

Presently there was a sound of busy, tramping feet and merry voices, and around the corner of the lane came a dozen or more boys. "Oh, there's Bob Lane!" cried one. "The very boy we want. Come, Bob, you must go with us."

"Where?" said Bob.

"Oh, we are going on the water. We

have two boats, and we're going to have a naval battle," said Jim Price, the leader of the company. "Those boys there with red tape on their arms are the British, and we with the peacock feathers are Americans. We've all got our pop-guns, and one or two bows and arrows, and two whole bunches of fire crackers for cannon. Whenever a boy is hit three times, he's out of the play; and whichever boat loses the most men, that company will have to buy cakes and candy, at Mrs. Mills', to treat the whole party. Then we're all going to Picnic Island to have a celebration."

Bob's eyes shone with delight.

"Come, will you go?" said Jim.

The question recalled Bob to his senses. A shade of vexation crossed his face. "Oh dear, no, I can't. I must carry this basket to old Mrs. Brown."

"You can do that afterwards. When we come home will be time enough," said Jim.

"But what will I do with the basket?"

"Oh, we'll just set it in the end of the boat. It will be safe enough there."

"But you will be gone so long."

"No, we won't; and besides, if you are in

such a hurry, you can go after the battle, and not stay to the picnic."

Bob still hesitated. "But mother always wishes me to ask her permission when I go on the water."

"Oh, you girl baby," sneered Jim. "You will be gone such a little while, you need not tell your mother any thing about it."

This advice to deceive his mother ought to have shown Bob that these were not good boys, and he should have resolutely gone on his way. But although he knew very well that his mother would disapprove of his going anywhere with Jim Price, still the pleasure of the sail, and the delightful novelty of the mimic battle, proved too great temptations for poor, weak Bob, and, after a few moments of perplexity, he said, hastily, —

"I believe I *will* go for a little while."

Then the boys gave three cheers, and appointed him first mate on the American ship, "North Star." So the boys went on in high spirits, and, rowing out into the middle of the river, the battle was prosecuted with much vigor. Soon, however, they became more excited; and the little North Star pitched and rolled dangerously, and

once was so near capsizing that Bob thought he was gone, and clung desperately to the seat. The little boat righted itself again; but as Bob, with a pale face, entreated to be set on shore, he noticed, with great consternation, that his basket was gone. A search through the boat was of no avail. "It must have gone over in that last squall," laughed Jim; but it was no joke to Bob. All the extent of his disobedience and misfortune suddenly burst upon him, and he thought himself the most miserable boy in the world.

"Do look at the baby," cried Jim, directing the boys' attention to Bob's unhappy countenance. "I believe it's going to cry. Let's put it on shore, so it can run to its mamma;" and Jim began to row hastily in.

Bob was very indignant, but he knew he deserved it all, and his heart was too full to speak.

"Now don't go home with that face," said Jim, as he left him. "Just tell your mother that you took the things, and the old woman was very thankful, and all that, and I don't believe it will ever come out."

Bob walked slowly and sadly home. How

could he tell his mother and dear little Katie how wicked he had been! He had never told a lie before, but would it be so very bad just this once? He would tell the truth some time, perhaps in the morning; but he could'nt now. Poor Katie would be so disappointed, and his mother so sad. It would be so easy just to say what Jim Price told him. Why, the other boys wouldn't think any thing of telling just one story, and this *should* be the first and last time. While he was yet undecided, he came in sight of home, and laughing little Katie bounded to meet him.

"Oh, you have been gone so long! What *did* she say? Tell every thing. Was she very glad?"

Bob turned away his head, and, with burning cheeks, replied, "Oh, yes, she was very glad. She thanked us all a thousand times."

"Did she try the cakes?"

"Yes," said Bob, desperately, "and she said it was the best *fruit* cake she ever ate."

Again came Katie's ringing laugh. "Well, how is she, Bob?"

"Better, this afternoon."

"Ah, that's good. But how very warm

and tired you are. Are you sick?" said Katie, anxiously, kissing the rough, brown hand she held in her own.

"No," almost groaned Bob, snatching his hand away. "But I *am* tired. Leave me a little while to rest under the tree."

Katie ran to tell her mother all the pleasant news, and miserable Bob, with closed eyes, thought over the events of the afternoon.

"I have sold the truth," he groaned to himself. "I, who was going to watch over dear, good Katie, *I* have told a lie!" He shivered and opened his eyes. Every thing seemed changed. His old friends—the trees—seemed to be shaking their heads at him, as the wind sighed through the branches, and the beautiful crimson sunset, at which Katie had been gazing in admiration, only looked red and angry to him. He had read, in a little German fairy story, how the flowers knew bad children, and faded and shrank away when they tried to pick them; so now he stretched forth his hand very carefully to touch a little blue violet growing near. To his momentary relief, the flower remained just the same.

"The violets don't know," said Bob, with a long breath. But oh, how wretched he was! Perhaps poor Mrs. Brown would die, because she had no money to buy medicine. What should he do? Oh, if he were only a bird singing so happily up in the trees.

Presently the children were called in to tea, and as there were visitors present, Bob avoided farther questioning, and his unhappy looks and loss of appetite escaped the notice of his mother.

He went to bed early, hoping to sleep, but never was he more mistaken. There was no rest for that heavy heart. How angrily the wind blew. Oh, what if old Mrs. Brown *should* die, wouldn't he be hung for a murderer? Oh, what if God should send his angel that night to take his life! He remembered Ananias and Sapphira, and shuddered. Suddenly there came a blinding flash of light, and Bob almost shrieked with terror, as it was followed by a heavy peal of thunder.

"The lightning knows it," cried Bob, wildly, "the lightning knows it, and will look through and through me." Then came another flash; and, hastily jumping out of bed Bob ran to

hide himself in a dark closet. But no sooner was he crouched upon the floor, than a little verse came into his mind, as if somebody whispered it, "Thou, God, seest me."

"It is of no use," sobbed Bob, coming out again; "I can't hide."

"Bob," said a sweet voice, "are you frightened?" and a flash revealed the calm face of little Katie peeping in at the door.

"Yes," sobbed Bob, "I am."

"Why, you never used to be. Don't you remember mother says God always takes care of us? Shall I say some verses to you?"

Bob made no reply, and Katie began: "Though I walk through the valley of"—

"No, no, not that, Katie," almost shrieked Bob. "That is what the martyrs said; but Oh, Katie, Katie, *I* have sold the truth!"

"What for?" said Katie, in blank surprise.

"Oh, Katie, I've sold it, and instead of being any better off, I'm the most miserable boy in the world. I've sold all my pleasant and happy thoughts; and now I'm only wicked and frightened."

"That's a very bad bargain," said Katie, in her wise simplicity.

"I should think it was," groaned Bob; and

then he could contain himself no longer, but poured the whole story into Katie's sympathizing ears. "Now I suppose you perfectly despise me," said Bob, as he heard her low sobs. "You can never love me again." Katie could not speak, but, throwing her arms around his neck, kissed him hastily, and ran out of the room.

"Even Katie will not stay with me," thought Bob, despairingly, as he threw himself on the bed. "I wonder how it will ever end. Will I ever be happy again?"

"My son Robert," said a sad voice, and Bob knew that Katie had sent his mother; but he could not answer a word.

"Did my little Bob tell a lie?"

Bob could restrain himself no longer. "Oh, mother, will you hate me?" he cried. "Can you never forgive me, nor trust me again?"

Then he rapidly poured forth a full history of all his temptation and sin, and ended with again imploring his mother's forgiveness.

"Remember, Bob," said she, "that you have offended against a Higher Power."

"Oh, I know it," said Bob. "Can he ever forgive me? Did he ever forgive any one who sold the truth?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Lane. "Peter denied him thrice, and yet he was forgiven, and lived to be a noble servant of God. He must have repented deeply, for don't you remember that when Jesus looked on him with such pity and sadness, Peter went out and wept bitterly."

"Oh, mother, I think he has looked on *me*," wept poor, unhappy Bob. "I'm sure I repent, but I don't see how I can be forgiven, I have been so wicked."

"If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts," said Mrs. Lane, gently; and with many other sweet Bible words she comforted her truly repentant little son, until he became more composed, and was able to seek peace and forgiveness where only it can be found.

The next morning, although every one knew of his disgrace, Bob was much happier than the evening before. His father had intended to take him to the city that day, on a long-promised excursion; but he thought it only right to tell Bob he had forfeited that pleasure. Bob accepted the sentence without a murmur, although the tears stood in Katie's eyes. And after break-

fast, when Katie and mamma started with another basket for old Mrs. Brown, Bob felt it keenly that he was not asked to accompany them. He tried vainly to study while they were gone, and at the first flutter of Katie's blue ribbons he was at the gate.

"How is she?" he cried, breathlessly.

"Better," said smiling Katie.

Bob turned away to hide his tears, as he said to himself, "How good God is to me."

Bob worked in the garden a couple of hours every night after school, for several weeks, till he had earned all the money he had lost, and faithfully, at the end of every week, he carried the little sum to old Mrs. Brown, who, to his great joy, improved rapidly.

Bob is so truthful now, that all the family seem to have forgotten that he ever told a lie; but he himself will remember through life the night of misery, when he reaped the bitter fruit of his "bad bargain."

V.

THE CHEERFUL GIVER.

FATHER had been gone to the city, on business, for more than a week. Mother had just stepped into old Aunt Margery's, to ask after her rheumatism, and little Dick Merrill, carefully peeping in at the dining-room door, reported that "Cousin Joe," as usual, was "making a *library* of his head, and cramming in the biggest book he ever saw in all his life."

So Fred and Jenny, and Will and Katy Peyton, holding eager council before the roaring kitchen fire, with their little neighbor visitors, Dick and Lizzy Merrill, declared there could not be a more propitious time for the fascinating game of "Blind Man's Buff." The decision was hailed with great applause, and the cheery old fire blazed and crackled, and sent merry little lights and shadows dancing over the wall and the bright, yel-

low-painted floor, as much as to say, "I'm with you, little ones; let's all play together."

So at it they all went, and had the maddest, merriest time imaginable. Oh, such hair-breadth escapes, such shrieks, and peals of half-suffocating laughter! To be sure, Cousin Joe groaned audibly, and shut his book in despair, and once got up hastily, determined to put each little Bedlamite into a straight-jacket, woven out of a half dozen very sharp, cross words. But he could not help relenting as he looked upon the dancing eyes and red cheeks, and saw little Katy's crimson dress hastily vanishing under the kitchen table, its little owner in a perfect tremor of terror and delight at the imminent danger she had escaped. Why, Cousin Joe was a boy himself once, and not so very long ago, either; and he laughed as heartily as any of them, when little Dick Merrill, eluding his pursuer by a most surprising somersault, cried out to Fred Peyton, —

"Isn't it lucky my head isn't as full as 'Cousin Joe's?' I guess a few ideas would have been smashed in *that* turn-over."

"No trouble of that kind with *your* head," retorted Fred.

"No," said Dick, good-naturedly. "I only keep one or two ideas, and I've trained *them* so they're just like the figure 8; it don't make the least difference whether they're upside down or not."

A shout of laughter greeted the announcement of Dick's convenient mental arrangements, and Cousin Joe retreated to his own fire.

But presently the busy feet grew weary; the laughter was not so boisterous, and soon the little panting group dropped, one by one, in a cosy ring before the fire. There would now have been a few moments of silence, had not the winter wind taken advantage of the pause to raise a most dismal wail at the windows, and rattle the door-latch as if it had just arrived on very important business.

"It feels pretty bad, don't it?" said Dick Merrill, with a comical shrug. "But don't try to squeeze in here, old fellow," he continued; "your room is better than your company."

"You've hurt his feelings; he's *crying*," said Jenny Peyton, as a gust of rain and sleet beat upon the windows.

"Yes," rejoined Dick; "and if I try to go home to-night, I'm afraid he'll take me for a handkerchief."

The children laughed, and Will said,—

"What if there should really be some poor old man out in the storm, hungry and wet and tired? Would you let him in if he came to the door?"

"Why, of course, Will," said Jenny, in a reproving tone, but glancing apprehensively over her shoulder at the door.

"Yes, we ought always to be kind to the poor," said Fred, a little pompously. "Now suppose we all tell what we'll do if a poor man really should come to the door."

"You begin," cried the children.

"Well, I should invite him in very pleasantly, and give him a seat by the fire, and take off his wet hat and coat, and get him some old things of father's to put on while his were getting dry, and — Oh, well, I'd do a *great deal* more. I haven't time to tell everything. Go on, Jenny."

Jenny continued,—"*I* should ask him if he was hungry, and go down cellar, and get him a nice piece of bread and meat."

Fred laughed loudly. "That's a good joke, Jenny; when you're so afraid of your own shadow, you won't go into the next room alone, after dark."

Jenny was ready with an angry reply, but Dick hastily interposed, —

"Well, I don't exactly know what I'd do, but I might give the old fellow my *mittens;*" and he looked affectionately at a bright scarlet pair his mother had just finished. "On the whole," said he, with a merry laugh, "I believe I won't either. I can't spare 'em."

"How selfish," cried Fred, contemptuously, while Jenny gave a disdainful shrug.

Then Will and Lizzy went on to enumerate their gifts, and soon all were done but Katy.

"What will you give, Dot?" cried Dick.

Katy shook her head in great perplexity. She had nothing to give.

"There's *Peggy*," suggested Dick, mischievously, referring to an old wooden doll, which was Katy's chosen friend and confidant, and shared her bed at night. Katy opened her large eyes in such dire dismay at this proposal, that the old kitchen shook with a merry chorus of laughter. When they again recovered themselves, they began to talk of something else.

"Oh, boys," said Dick, "I've had such a streak of luck! What do you think? Uncle Simeon called me into his office last Wednes-

day, asked me how old I was, and when I told him I was *eleven* that very day, he took out his pocket-book, and actually gave me a dollar. Think of it, boys, a real, bright, golden dollar!"

"What are you going to do with it?" cried Will and Jenny, in great admiration of the shining coin he took from his pocket.

"Oh, you can do almost any thing with a dollar. Dolls and work-boxes for Lizzy, and balls, marbles, kites — Oh, any thing I want. I haven't quite decided, for—"

Here there came such a startling knock at the door, that six small hearts beat like so many trip-hammers. Jenny turned pale, and, hurrying across the floor, hastily slid the bolt. The wailing wind and driving rain filled up a short pause, then came another knock.

"Call Cousin Joe," said Fred, trying to appear very careless and indifferent. But Cousin Joe was not to be found.

"He must have gone out when we made such a noise," said Will.

Another loud knock.

"Who's there?" cried Dick Merrill.

"A poor old man," faltered a voice without.

"Don't believe him; it's a robber!" shrieked Jenny.

"Dear children," faltered the voice, "I'm very cold, and wet, and tired. Please let me in."

Dick looked around inquiringly.

"Let the poor old man come in," said little Lizzy and Katy, whose hearts seemed more full of faith and sweet pity than those of the older ones,—I do not know why, unless, as some old writer says, "little children are nearest God, as the little planets are nearest the sun."

So Dick bravely drew back the bolt, and a poor, ragged, old beggar tottered in. Fred entirely forgot the part he intended to perform, and stood sullenly with his hands in his pockets, grumbling audibly,—

"How provoking! This spoils all our fun."

So Dick had to help him to a seat, and hang up his dripping old hat before the fire.

"I'm very hungry," said the beggar.

"Jenny," cried Dick, "where's your bread and meat?"

Jenny shook her head in terror. "Oh, I wouldn't go down cellar for all the world! Something might catch my feet!"

"Why, Jenny Peyton," said Will, blushing, "I'm ashamed of you;" and he went clattering down the stairs, without waiting for a light. While the old beggar ate his bread and meat, the children stood curiously around, watching him. What a queer bundle of rags he was, to be sure!

"Will," whispered Dick, "just look in the closet and see if the rag-bag's all safe. I believe it's taken to itself legs and walked out."

The old beggar was taken with quite a spasm of coughing and shaking, and it was some time before he could recover himself sufficiently to finish his meal. Little Katy stood by with eyes full of pitying tears. She looked at his worn boots, full of such wretched holes, and communed with her innocent little heart. She had two more pairs of shoes, a little black pair, and some lovely red ones. She could spare those she had on just as well as not; and in a few moments they were off her little fat feet, and secretly offered to the poor old man. He returned a smothered "thank you," and then went on to tell a most miserable story. He had no home, no fire, no light, and he was often so hungry that he could almost eat the boards

off the fences. He was so old, no one would give him work. He had not enough clothes to keep him warm — he'd frozen his fingers already, and he expected he'd freeze entirely before morning, and be found dead on the road.

Out came Dick's red mittens, and changed owners at the mere mention of frozen fingers, and Will felt nervously of his new tippet.

"Dear me," muttered Fred, sullenly. "Hasn't he got enough? Shuffle the old fellow off."

The old man rose, in a broken-hearted sort of way; but Dick, fingering in his jacket pocket, cried, hastily, —

"Wait a minute."

"Not your gold dollar, Dick?" whispered Will. "Work-boxes, dolls, marbles, kites —"

"I can't help it," said Dick, nervously. "Here, poor old man, if this will do you any good, you're welcome."

"And please," said little Katy, advancing with a great effort, carrying a curious wooden monstrosity, — "please, would you like *Peggy?*"

To the child's great surprise and terror, she was caught up in the old beggar's arms, and tossed high in the air, while he kissed her

again and again. While the rest looked on in astonishment, the old gray wig and tattered cloak fell off, and "*Cousin Joe*" burst simultaneously from six pairs of lips.

Yes; it *was* Cousin Joe, who had heard the conversation, and wanted to see which of all the children was the most sincere, and had the warmest heart.

Fred and Jenny stood covered with confusion, while Cousin Joe thanked Will, returned the dollar and mittens, the dear shoes and invaluable old Peggy, and distributed among his favorites a liberal donation of nuts and candy.

I do not say it was quite right in Cousin Joe so to impose upon these little children, but it was a lesson that Fred and Jenny never forgot; and that night, it must have been very sweet to be either little Dick or Katy, because "God *loveth* the cheerful giver."

VI.

SAM SILVER'S THANKSGIVING.

It was the day before Thanksgiving, and the whole household at Sunny Hill was in a state of the happiest confusion imaginable. There was a roaring fire in the old-fashioned brick oven, and the kitchen table was a perfect chaos of sugar, raisins, eggs, flour and spices. But when mamma with her snowy apron flitted hither and thither, with busy white fingers, — and black Dinah, with her gay turban very much on one side, stretched out her arms like the ebony wands of some kindly disposed old fairy, — every thing flew together as if by magic, and in a little while the whole house was fragrant with steaming mince and pumpkin pies, and the odor of rich brown doughnuts and crullers.

Without, it was very cold and dismal. The trees were shivering and stretching out their arms, like so many poor old beggars,

whose clothes had gone to tatters and were falling off, and the heavy, gray clouds drooped low to tell them to be patient, for they were bringing them a suit of *ermine* which would make them look like princes.

A cold wind rushed around the corners of the house, trying to find some way to get in, but the little children at the window laughed at the vain attempts, and talked merrily in the pauses of the gale.

"I wonder if they'll all come," cried Susy Gray, gleefully. "What fun we'll have!"

"It's a great thing to have so many cousins and aunts and uncles," said Fred. "And what a capital dinner they'll have — roast turkey, chicken pie"—

"Ah," said the golden-haired Dolly, with a half regret dawning in her wide-open eyes, "do you know I think the old black hen misses her chickens, and has been calling all day for Speckle and Graybeard? How she would feel if she could see them now, without a single feather on their backs, and their poor, cold legs tied tight together."

"Oh pshaw! Dolly; don't be a goose; she'll never know the difference. Let's talk about to-morrow. There'll be Mary and Fanny

Tyler, and Charley and Carrie Burton, and, better than all, Sam Silver. He's just the funniest and best-natured of all the cousins, though I'm sure I don't see how he *can* be, either, when he lives with that terribly cross old grandfather, who scolds him every day within an inch of his life."

"That's coming pretty close," cried Charley with a shrug.

"Poor Sam," sighed Golden Hair, — "no father nor mother to love him."

"Well," cried Fred; "he shall have a good time to-morrow. He shall be king, and choose all the games, and he shall have the brownest doughnuts, and the biggest piece of chicken pie."

"And the turkey wishbone," added Dolly, who always considered its bestowal a mark of honorable distinction.

"He may possibly come to-day," said Charley; and, shading his eyes, he peered anxiously down the gray line of the road.

But *we* can see what Charley couldn't, and six miles away stands little Sam Silver, in great coat, tippet and mittens, talking eagerly with his grandfather.

"You see, sir, if I go now, I shall get there

just at dark, but if I wait till to-morrow morning, I'll be too late to go to church with all the cousins."

"Al. folly," said Grandfather Silver, as a twinge of rheumatism made him feel more impatient than ever. "You must finish your usual day's work before you go."

"I'll do twice as much when I come back," pleaded Sam.

"It must be done to-day," said the old man, firmly; and Sam, patiently pulling off his mittens, went into the back yard.

The short autumn afternoon had far advanced when he at last had permission to go.

"Six miles before dark," said Sam to himself; "I shall have to take the express train." And he looked down with cheerful confidence at the stout pair of feet clattering nimbly over the frozen ground.

"Perhaps I had better take a short cut through the woods, for I won't have time to go around by the road;" and in a few minutes his bright scarlet comforter might be seen bobbing in and out between the dark pine trees, and his cheery whistle pleasantly awoke the little echoes that had sobbed themselves

to sleep over the sad stories of the cold November wind.

But presently, as the early evening began to close in, and he still in the midst of the thick woods, his merry whistle ceased, and he said, half aloud, "It would be a poor joke if I should happen to lose my way. Grandfather might have let me start before. How cross he was to-day. Now to-morrow is Thanksgiving, and I really don't see that I've a great deal to be thankful about. If I were only Charley or Fred Gray, I'd feel a little more like it. What pleasant lives they do lead, to be sure. Mother and father ready to do any thing for them, dear little sisters to love them, and scarcely any thing to do but just study their lessons. Now, when *I* go home, grandfather will have something cross to say the minute I put my head in the door, and will call out, 'To work, to work, you lazy dog; you've had a long play spell;' and then, when I *have* worked hard all day, there's no kind mother to say, as Aunt Gray does to *her* boys, 'Come here, Sam, my dear son; you look cold and tired. Come sit by the fire and rest your head on my lap.' But grandfather will just call out,—'To bed, to

bed, if you're tired; and mind you're up with the larks.' No, no," said Sam, growing more and more discontented as his thoughts ran on, "I *don't* think I've much to be thankful for, and I believe I won't go to church tomorrow morning."

He walked a few minutes in silence, then, looking uneasily around, continued his soliloquy. "How gloomy it has grown. Shouldn't wonder if I *had* lost my way, after all. I can't see the least sign of the path. There, *that* looks a little more like an opening;" and Sam sprang anxiously forward. A few hasty steps through the thick undergrowth, and his footing suddenly gave way. The little gray mittens flew up in the air, and clutched desperately at an overhanging tree, but it was too late. In the uncertain light he had come suddenly upon the edge of a deep ravine, and now he rolled helplessly over and over, clutching vainly at every bush and twig, and only stopping when he lay bruised and breathless at the bottom. Tears sprang involuntarily to his eyes, but he brushed them off, and looked quickly around to see if there had been any spectators of his mishap. But no; there were only the tall old pine trees

looking over the edge of the ravine, and nodding their heads in a sort of solemn wonder, as much as to say, "Why, Sam Silver, how in the world came you down there?"

But Sam found that he could neither stand nor walk without the greatest difficulty. He had sprained one foot very badly, and after toiling on for some time, trying to find a good place to climb up again, he was forced to sit down and think what in the world he should do next. Gloom gathered fast in the deep ravine, and he soon perceived that he would have to spend the night where he was. Striving manfully against some queer thoughts that *would* set his heart beating unpleasantly fast, poor Sam gathered a large pile of withered leaves under an overhanging rock, and laid himself carefully down. It was not a very pleasant bed for such a bundle of bruises, and Sam could not help remembering the soft feathers and nice warm blankets at home, for, after all, Grandfather Silver *was* kind in his rough way, and wished Sam to have every comfort.

"That *was* a nice bed, sure enough," sighed he.

"Nothing in the world to be thankful

for," a voice seemed to whisper close in his ear.

Sam started and blushed crimson; then, not liking to pursue such a train of thought, he tucked his head under his comforter, and tried to go to sleep. But again and again he would start up, trembling, as the wind rustled the dry leaves, till they sounded like the stealthy tread of some wild animal. He would listen for a long time with a sick heart and staring eyes, till, gradually conquering his fears, he would sink into a troubled sleep. At last he thought he heard some one calling him. "Sam, Sam, Sam!" "All right," cried he, cheerily; "here I am." But, alas! it was only a couple of crows bidding each other good morning, for the day had begun to dawn.

Sam sat up, though the tears came in his eyes, as he tried to bend his stiff limbs. He made an effort to walk, but it was worse than the night before. He could not bear his weight on one foot without almost screaming with pain. He tried to crawl along, but the ground was so uneven, and his foot so stiff, that he began to feel very faint, and laid down in despair.

Just then a vision of nice hot cakes and

coffee came temptingly before him. "What nice breakfasts we used to have every morning," murmured Sam.

"Nothing in the world to be thankful for," said the voice, and Sam blushed again. He began to be afraid he had been very ungrateful. Grandfather really was very kind, though he did scold a little now and then. He gave him his nice warm clothes; he sent him to school, and was proud when he did well. And if he only knew that Sam was sick and sore down in that lonely ravine, how quickly he would send some one to get him out. But *now* who would ever find him? He might die before any body missed him.

"I have been *very* wicked," sighed Sam; and, with the gray mittens pressed over his eyes, he sat and thought remorsefully, while the hours rolled on, and the snow began to fall.

Suddenly he heard the sound of the sweet church bells, and knew it was time for the morning service. He thought of the happy, bright cousins, sitting in a row in the family pew, and the sweet voice of his favorite "Golden Hair," singing "We praise thee, O God!" And *he* might have been sitting by their side. Then again sounded in his ears,

"Nothing in the world to be thankful for;" and, with tears streaming down his cheeks, Sam again confessed, "I have been very wicked and ungrateful, but oh, forgive me, dear Father in heaven, and do not leave me to die in these lonely woods."

Then every thing became confused. He thought he was falling again down, *down*, *down*, and he knew no more till he opened his eyes and found himself lying in bed, in a pleasant warm room, with Aunt Gray bending tenderly over him.

"He's alive!" cried Golden Hair, eagerly, peeping around mamma's dress; and from the tender-hearted little cousins outside the door burst a smothered "Hurrah!"

"Let them in," pleaded Sam; and they stole in on tiptoe, kissed his pale lips, and stood lovingly around the bed, telling him, with eager, subdued voices, how they wondered he didn't come, — how they sent for him, and how John never would have found him if it hadn't been for Carlo; and a great deal more, which we haven't time to repeat.

"You have had rather a sad Thanksgiving, dear child," said Aunt Gray, bending over to kiss him.

"Oh, no," cried Sam, quickly; "I've a *great deal* to be thankful for."

"Come, children," called Uncle Gray at the door. "Old Sleep has been waiting an hour to carry you into Dreamland."

"Let's sing a Thanksgiving hymn before we go," urged Golden Hair.

And as the children joined in full chorus, loud and sweet above them all rose the clear voice of grateful Sam Silver,—

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow."

VII.

VICTORY.

Silken banners fluttered gayly, fluttered proudly through the air,
There were festive wreaths and arches freshly woven everywhere;
There were strains of martial music, and amid the joy-bell's ring,
Ever rose the cry triumphantly, "All hail! O brave young king."

And the king rode by so haughtily, in wonderful array,
Like the gold and crimson fringing on the skirts of dying day,
And the jewels in his priceless crown outshone like tongues of flame,
For, from battle with his enemies, a conqueror he came.

But, alas! the air was heavy with the sighing
of the slain,
And the sweet, green fields were fainting
'neath a fearful crimson rain;
Ah! the heaps of dead and dying, 'twas a
cruel sight to see!
'Twas a sight for bitter tears, but ah! *men*
called it "victory!"

Far away from strife and tumult, 'neath the
peaceful evening sky,
Faint and helpless lay a dying boy, with calm
and fearless eye;
Faint and helpless, — you would scarcely
think a conqueror lay there,
Though the sunset light made haste to crown
the floating, golden hair.

Ah! the struggle had been weary thus to
fight with sin and pride, —
With the foes who strove to charm him from
the loving Saviour's side;
Oh, the bitter taunts and mockings! but the
cruel strife was past,
And the brave young hero joyfully was coming home at last.

Oh, the shining crown immortal! Oh, sweet
flowers of Paradise!
Do ye gaze no more on things of earth, ye
lovely, fading eyes?
"This is *death*," the trembling mother sobs,
and weepeth bitterly,
But the sweet-voiced angels shout for joy,
and call it "*Victory!*"

VIII.

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.

It was only the Friday before Christmas, and as Ally Campbell rose from the breakfast table with a very pompous air, and never answered when Aunt Nancy and mother both asked him a question, sister Bertie, standing on tip-toe, knocked vigorously upon his curly head, and cried, "What's the matter up in the *garret?*"

The fact is, that the "*garret*," as teasing Bertie always called her brother's brain, was quite a reception-room this morning, and had as many pleasant *thought* guests as it could well hold. Indeed, they rather jostled against each other; and, as Allan walked briskly down to his employer's store, they all tried to speak at once, though in the most good-natured manner possible. And this is the way they ran on.

"How very kind in Mr. Maybrook to pay your quarter's salary before Christmas. To

be sure, twelve dollars and a half isn't so very much, but it will buy a great many things, after all. Now Bertie shall have that crimson scarf she has been wishing for so long; and Aunt Nancy shall find on her table the prettiest reticule in the city; and mother, dear mother, shall have the beautiful books she has spoken of so very often, and would not buy, because it took so much to pay the doctor's bill, after Bertie was sick so long in the fall."

"But," said another thought, "what are you going to do about your *coat*, with your wrists coming down half a foot beyond the sleeves, and such dreadful patches on the elbows?"

"You can get a splendid warm coat," cried another thought, "for seven or eight dollars, and then you'll have money enough left to buy your presents. Mr. Maybrook will pay you to-morrow night. Monday you will buy all you want, and Tuesday, Oh!"—But there he was at the store, and as he entered with his pleasant, glowing face, Mr. Maybrook kindly put his hand on his shoulder, and said, —

"Good morning, 'Young America;' did you slide down on a sunbeam?"

The day passed happily, as *busy* ones almost always do, and Ally's active feet scarcely knew a moment's rest. They sold so much that day. Beautiful sets of China, vases, and pitchers. Ally guessed, from the pleasant faces of the buyers, that they were intending to make some presents, too, and were thinking of the delightful surprises they should give their friends.

So the day wore on till tea-time, and it so happened that Mr. Maybrook and all the clerks were out at once, leaving Allan alone in the store. As he walked up and down, still busily engaged with his pleasant thoughts, he noticed that one of the very expensive vases had been left carelessly on the floor.

He drew near to look at it. How beautiful it was, with its delicate flower wreaths floating and dissolving in the almost transparent China. He heard Mr. Maybrook telling a gentleman the price of it that very day, and it was more than he earned in the whole year. What if it *should* be broken! It ought to be on the shelf; and Ally, taking it up carefully, almost reverently, began ascending a little ladder to put it in a place of safety. Alas! in some way the ladder was not firm — it tottered, slipped;

and Ally, in an involuntary effort to save himself, *dropped* the precious vase! There was a crash which made his heart stand still. Then, looking down in a bewildered way, he saw only a heap of worthless bits of China in place of the exquisite vase. He closed his eyes to shut out the sight. "It can not, *can not* be," he thought passionately to himself. A moment before the beautiful vase stood before him all perfect, and now it could not be possible that such a terrible misfortune had happened to him. He had been dreaming. He would open his eyes and see it there yet, all glowing with its violets and roses, looking as if they were twined around moonlight. But oh! he opened his eyes, and it was too true!

Now succeeded another conflict in his troubled mind. How should he ever dare tell Mr. Maybrook, who, kind as he generally was, had never been known to excuse what he called *carelessness*. Indeed, to teach his young clerks good habits, he often made some deduction from their wages, in proportion to the value of the article broken.

Ally knew, with a despairing heart, that this loss would be greatly felt by Mr. Maybrook,

and perhaps his whole quarter's salary would be withheld.

"It would be *too* hard, just at this time," said Ally, unconsciously speaking aloud. "I can not, *can not* give up all the presents I have thought of so long. What a very sad Christmas it would be! Oh, couldn't I say that Snap ran against it, after John left it on the floor?"

Snap heard his name, and coming up, rubbed himself affectionately against Ally. "No, no, Snap; I won't say any thing against you, poor dog," cried Ally, almost with a sob. "But John really did leave it on the floor, and he ought to bear half the blame. I suppose it would just break his heart to get in trouble with Mr. Maybrook, for he's weak and sickly yet after that hard fever. No, I *won't* tell of him; but oh, what shall I do? I believe," he continued, after a few moments of painful thought, "I believe I won't say any thing at all about it. Perhaps it will never be missed;" and, with nervous haste, Ally began to gather the pieces, and throw them into an old box under the counter. It was but just accomplished when Mr. Maybrook came in.

"You may go to your tea, Allan," said he, not noticing his flushed, anxious face; and Ally, snatching his cap, rushed from the store.

He had walked but a few steps, when he heard a voice behind him. "Al, Ally Campbell!" and turning, he saw Jasper Adams, a boy he greatly disliked. "I say, Al," cried the boy, "we want you to-night, after the store is shut up. We're going to have such a time changing people's signs, and carrying off door-mats, to say nothing of leaving a note for that dreadfully good old maid, Miss Gaston, telling her that a poor man has broken his leg, the other end of the city, and they want her to come right down. How her righteous old bones will creak over these slippery sidewalks. It'll be great fun!"

"No fun at all!" cried Ally, indignantly. "Do you think I'd do such a mean thing? I won't go, and you mustn't either."

"You'd better preach to me, Allan Campbell," cried Jasper, angrily. "I know something about *you*, and you're no better than other boys."

"What can he mean?" thought Ally, as he hastened on, his guilty conscience sending the blood rushing to his throbbing head. "I'm

sure I try to do right; and I never take pleasure in such shameful things as" —

"Think of the broken vase," cried conscience. "You are meaning to deceive Mr. Maybrook; and, if he asks any questions, you intend to tell a lie. The vase is just as much lost as if you had stolen it and taken it home. The least you can do is to confess your misfortune and make what reparation you can."

"Oh, I *can not* tell him," groaned Ally; and although the night was very cold, his breath came so quick and hard that he unbuttoned his overcoat and threw it back. At last he reached his home, but he had no appetite for tea; and Bertie's clear voice, singing a Christmas hymn, made him very wretched indeed. He hurried to bed, that he might not hear kind Aunt Nancy saying, "He gets too tired, poor child," but he could not sleep, and the next morning could eat no breakfast.

All day long he trembled for fear something would be said about the vase; and conscience kept continually saying, "You're just as bad as a thief; you're a *thief!*" "To-night I shall get my money," thought Ally; "and next week perhaps I'll tell him." Then conscience not only called him a thief, but a *coward* too. Oh,

what a miserable day it was; and at last the *crisis* came.

The gentleman who had looked at the vase before came in to say that he had decided to take it. In a few minutes, there were hasty inquiries for the missing article. Ally wished the ground would open and swallow him, but no; in a moment came the dreaded inquiry,—

"Do *you* know any thing of it, Allan?"

"No, sir," rose to Ally's lips, but the words seemed to choke him. Then, making a mighty effort, he said,—

"Mr. Maybrook, may I speak to you a moment in the back office?"

Mr. Maybrook followed him in, and the *truth* poured forth in one vehement flood.

Poor Ally! His employer was very angry. It was such a great loss. The most beautiful vase in his store!

"You have been *very* careless," said he, sharply. "That vase was worth more than your whole year's service. You need expect nothing this quarter, sir." And he left the boy with his head drooped upon the table in an agony of grief and disappointment.

The gentleman did not fancy any other vase, and Mr. Maybrook was in great ill-humor all the evening.

As Ally sat leaning his heavy head upon his hand, just before it was time to go home, Jasper Adams entered the store.

"Al," said he, "I've come to ask a favor. Lend me half a dollar."

"I can't," replied Ally; "I haven't a cent."

"Well, then," said he, lowering his voice, "just take it out of old Hunk's money drawer —he'll never know it."

"What!" cried Ally, almost with horror; "do you think I could do such a thing?—never, *never!*"

"Well, you *are* a jolly hypocrite! I suppose you didn't know I was looking in last night, when that *vase* took such a precious tumble, and you swept up all the pieces so carefully, and hid 'em away." Ally colored. "Now I'll tell you what it is, Mr. *Honesty*, if you don't give me that money, I'll tell Mr. Maybrook."

"You may spare yourself that trouble," said Allan, quietly. "I've told him myself."

A look of surprise and vexation swept over Jasper's face. "I hope he made you smart for it," said he, malignantly. "I bet you don't get one cent this quarter." Ally's looks of pain showed him he had guessed the truth.

"Well, you're a great fool, and the *queerest* boy I ever knew."

That night Ally could no longer hide his trouble, and told it unreservedly to mother, Aunt Nancy, and Bertie, from the beginning down to Jasper's last taunt.

"Do *you* think it was foolish, mother?" asked he, anxiously. "*You* would not say I was queer?"

Bertie threw her arms around his neck.

"Yes, you *were* queer, you foolish Ally, almost as queer as an *angel;* but I love you just the same;" and she laughed merrily.

"You won't have the crimson scarf, now, Bertie," said Ally, regretfully.

"Never mind that," cried Aunt Nancy, exchanging tearful smiles with mother. "With honest hearts and clear consciences, we shall have a very 'merry Christmas,' after all."

IX.

ALLAN'S SURPRISE.

It was Monday morning, only the day before Christmas, and, as Ally Campbell walked down to the store, there was already an unusual bustle in the street. A great crowd of children were hurrahing before the large toy emporium, over whose door stood a very beneficent-looking old Santa Claus, with long white hair, and very rosy cheeks, stretching out his arms full of horses, dogs, cats, steam-engines, jumping Jacks, and gaily-dressed dolls. Then, as Ally went on, he saw, still hanging in a window, the crimson scarf which would look so pretty with Bertie's dark hair. There, too, were plenty of reticules, with places for thimbles and bright shining scissors. How Aunt Nancy would have liked it. Then the bookstore, with those enchanting volumes bound in blue and green and purple. He could not trust himself to look at them. And as for the warm coat hanging up, with

"only $8" pinned to it, why, that was a trial too. For though Aunt Nancy and mother had sat up late Saturday night, lengthening out the sleeves of the old coat with deep velvet cuffs, and though he himself had carefully inked all the seams, still it could not be denied it was a very shabby affair, and he had about decided that he would not care to go to the Christmas tree.

As he reached the store in rather a sad frame of mind, he found John eagerly awaiting his arrival; and going to the little back office, he was immediately taken into consultation.

"You see," said John, "these plain, old glass flower jars are very old-fashioned, and have been in the store I don't know how many years, and Mr. Maybrook gave me three or four, this morning, to do whatever I pleased with them. Now I'm going to cut the flowers out of this paper, and paste them in; and I've bought a little pink paint, so that, after the flowers are all on, I can paint the inside; and, Al, you haven't the least idea how pretty they look, just as if they cost something. Now, what I want to say is, that my hands are so large and clumsy I can't paste the flowers

on very nicely; but if you'll help, with your fingers, which are just like a girl's, we'll make two pairs of vases, and you shall have one for your mother."

Ally's eyes sparkled with delight, and he eagerly entered into the partnership. By diligently employing every moment of leisure the vases were finished about the middle of the afternoon, and looked very pretty indeed. "There's a present for mother," said Ally, cheerfully. "Now if I could only get something for the rest."

"Can't you make a work-box yourself, for your aunt?" suggested John; and Allan caught at the idea. All the remaining leisure of the day and evening was spent in neatly covering a wooden box with handsome paper, and fitting in little partitions for thread, needles, and cord. It really didn't look so very badly when it was all done.

"Now, John," said Ally, with a sigh of mingled weariness and satisfaction, "I have only Bertie's present to think of, and I believe I shall sit up to-night and make her doll some furniture. It will be better than nothing, you know. Then they'll all have something; and as for this old coat," said he, buttoning it cheer-

fully around him, "why, I'm going to make the best of it."

"I declare, Al," said John, with affectionate sympathy, "it's a great deal too small for you."

"Never mind," returned Ally, "I'm ever so much happier than if I had told a lie and got a new one. Do you know, John, I don't think I could find a coat big enough to cover up a dishonest heart."

"I don't suppose you could," cried John, as he answered Mr. Maybrook's summons to another part of the store.

Now Mr. Maybrook had been intently observing Allan all the day. He noticed in the morning that his young face wore a heavy shade of care, and his cheeks were quite pale. He had seen his eager industry during the day, and, from what he had caught of his conversation with John, he had learned something of the bitter disappointments with which his brave heart was constantly struggling.

Calling John, he was soon in possession of the whole story. He learned, what in his first anger he would not understand, that Ally was only endeavoring to *preserve* the vase, when

the unfortunate accident occurred which put an end to all his bright visions.

"I have been too hasty," said Mr. Maybrook to himself. "I have treated as a crime what was only a misfortune;" and he looked with half regret upon the little, slight figure tightly buttoned up in the scant overcoat. Mr. Maybrook had also heard the conversation with Jasper, on the last Saturday evening, and had been pleased with the spirit Allan had shown. "He is a good boy," said he, half aloud, "and will be nobler and stronger, now that he has been tempted and has *conquered*. I must talk with him again. Good-night, Allan," he cried, raising his voice, as the boy passed out of the door. "I wish you a merry Christmas."

"Thank you, sir," cried Ally, with grateful surprise, and started out into the night.

On the way home he passed the church where the little children were practicing their Christmas anthem. Softly they chanted, —

"While angels watched their flocks by night,
All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down" —

and then, with a triumphant and unexpected

burst of melody, came in the last line, with the full strength of the young voices, —

"And *glory* shone around."

Allan started involuntarily to his feet, and to his great surprise found his eyes filled with tears. The music was so beautiful; and he could not help thinking over the wonderful story he had read so many times, — the quiet night when the shepherds watched their flocks. How they must have wondered when the strange, beautiful light first fell upon the fields, — not sun, nor moon, nor starlight, but *glory* from some half open door of heaven. And oh, the music! — the "multitude of the *heavenly* host," — should *he* ever hear them? Yes, if God would help him to keep the good resolutions he had formed within the last few days. He remembered, with a shudder, the wretched day he had spent parleying with temptation; and now, although he had bitter disappointments, how much happier he was in the consciousness of having done right.

The clear voices in the church were singing again, and the words floated down to his ears, "Peace, *peace* on earth." He repeated it softly to himself. *Peace*, — what a sweet

word! He knew what it meant to night. So he went quietly on, with peace in his heart, and good-will towards every living thing

Ally worked late that night over the doll's furniture. Bertie's happy voice, singing,—

"'Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse,"

had long been hushed in sleep; and it was past midnight before the tired boy ranged his completed presents in a row. They looked very well, but so *very* different from what he had meant to give. He could hardly trust himself to think of it yet; and as for that Christmas tree, he decided to take Bertie, but he wouldn't care to stay long himself.

It was Christmas morning, and Ally was awakened out of a sound sleep by Bertie's voice, pitched about an octave higher than usual.

"Merry Christmas, Ally! Oh, *such* a merry Christmas! Hurry and dress yourself, quick, quick!"

Ally was not two minutes dressing, and, hurrying down stairs, a large bundle met his eye.

"Mr. Maybrook's man left it for *you*," cried Bertie.

Ally hastily cut the string, and there, wonderful to relate, was the crimson scarf, the reticule for Aunt Nancy, the very books mother wanted, and the long-coveted overcoat, with a half-dollar in each pocket!

Bertie danced up and down, clapping her hands. "I believe the fairies did it," cried she, laughing at Ally's look of utter amazement.

Ally said not a word, but, seizing his cap, he darted from the house, and in an incredibly short time was knocking at Mr. Maybrook's door.

What passed between Ally and his kind employer I do not know, but he came out with a look of honest pride struggling through some tell-tale tears, like the sun through a mist.

Mother and Aunt Nancy were greatly pleased with their handsome presents; but during all the day their eyes rested with a deeper tenderness upon the little wooden box and the pink, painted vases.

Ally concluded to go to the church, after all; and that evening the blue and crimson

lights of the Christmas tree danced in no happier eyes than those following proudly the busy flitting of dark-haired "Bertie," with her gay floating scarf; and the Christmas greetings found an echo in no heart more honest and true than that beating under the new eight-dollar overcoat.

X.

TOM'S TRIAL.

It was a pleasant day in that particularly pleasant part of the summer-time which the boys call "vacation," when Tiger and Tom walked slowly down the street together. You may think it strange that I mention Tiger first, but I assure you *Tom* would not have been in the least offended by the preference. Indeed, he would have assured you that Tiger was a most wonderful dog, and knew as much as any two *boys*, though this might be called *rather* extravagant.

Nearly a year ago, on Tom's birthday, Tiger arrived as a present from Tom's uncle; and as he leaped with a dignified bound from the wagon in which he made his journey, Tom looked for a moment into his great, wise eyes, and impulsively threw his arms around his shaggy neck. Tiger, on his part, was pleased with Tom's bright face, and most affectionately licked his smooth cheeks. So

the league of friendship was complete from that hour.

Tom soon gave his school-fellows to understand that Tiger was a dog of superior talents, and told them that he meant to give him a liberal education. So, when Tom studied his lessons, Tiger too was furnished with a book, and, sitting by Tom's side, he would pore over the pages with an air of great profundity, occasionally gravely turning a leaf with his paw. Then Tiger was taught to go to the post-office, and bring home the daily paper. He could also carry a basket to the baker's for crackers and cake, and, putting his money on the counter with his mouth, he would wait patiently till the basket was filled, and then trot faithfully home. Added to all these graces of mind, Tiger had shown himself possessed of a large *heart*, for he had plunged into the lake one raw spring morning and saved a little child from drowning. So the next Saturday, Tom called a full meeting of his school-mates, and after numerous grand speeches, to the effect that Tiger was a *hero*, as well as a "gentleman and *scholar*," an enormous brass medal was fastened around his neck, and he was made to acknowledge the

honor by standing on his hind legs and barking vociferously. Old Major White had offered Tom ten dollars for Tiger, but Tom quickly informed him he "wouldn't take a *hundred*."

But I am telling you too much about Tiger, and must say a few words about his master, who is really the subject of my story. As I have already told you, Tom had a pleasant, round face, and you might live with him a week, and think him one of the noblest, most generous boys you ever knew. But some day you would probably discover that he had a most violent temper. You would be frightened to see his face crimson with rage, as he stamped his feet, shook his little sister, spoke improperly to his mother, and, above all, sorely displeased his great Father in heaven.

To be sure, Tom was soon over his passion, and was very repentant; but then he did not remember to be watchful, and struggle against this great enemy, and the next time he was attacked he was very easily overcome, and had many sorrowful hours in consequence. Now I am going to tell you of one great trial on this account, which Tom never forgot to the end of his life. As I was

saying a little while ago, Tiger and Tom were walking down the street together, when they met Dick Casey, a school-fellow of Tom's.

"Oh, Dick," cried Tom, "I'm going to father's grain store a little while. Let's go up in the loft and play."

Dick had just finished his work in his mother's garden, and was all ready for a little amusement. So the two went up together, and enjoyed themselves highly for a long time. But at last arose one of those trifling disputes in which little boys are so apt to indulge. Pretty soon there were angry words, *then* (oh, how sorry I am to say it!) Tom's wicked passions got the mastery of him, and he beat little Dick severely. Tiger, who must have been ashamed of his master, pulled hard at his coat, and whined piteously, but all in vain. At last Tom stopped, from mere exhaustion.

"There now!" he cried, "which is right, you or I?"

"*I* am," sobbed Dick, "and you tell a lie."

Tom's face flushed crimson, and darting upon Dick he gave him a sudden push. Alas! he was too near the open door. Dick screamed, threw up his arms, and in a mo-

ment was gone! Tom's heart stood still, and an icy chill crept over him from head to foot. At first he could not stir; then,—he never knew how he got there, but he found himself standing beside his little friend. Some men were raising him carefully from the hard side-walk.

"Is he dead?" almost screamed Tom.

"No," replied one, "we hope not. How did he fall out?"

"He didn't fall," groaned Tom, who never could be so mean as to tell a lie; "I pushed him out."

"*You* pushed him, you wicked boy!" cried a rough voice. "Do you know you ought to be sent to jail, and if he dies maybe you'll be hung."

Tom grew as white as Dick, whom he had followed into the store, and he heard all that passed as if in a dream.

"Is he badly hurt?" cried some one.

"Only his hands," was the answer. "The rope saved him. He caught hold of the rope, and slipped down; but his hands are dreadfully torn. He has fainted from pain."

Just then Tom's father came in, and soon understood the case. The look he gave his

unhappy son, so full of sorrow, not unmingled with pity, was too much for Tom, and he stole out, followed by the faithful Tiger. He wandered to the woods, and threw himself upon the ground. One hour ago he was a happy boy, and now what a terrible change! What had made the difference? Nothing, but the indulgence of this wicked, violent temper. His mother had often warned him of the fearful consequences. She had told him that little boys who would not learn to govern themselves, grew up to be very wicked men, and often became *murderers* in some moment of passion. And now, Tom shuddered to think, *he* was *almost* a murderer! Nothing but God's great mercy, in putting that rope in Dick's way, had saved him from carrying that load of sorrow and guilt all the rest of his life. But poor Dick, he might yet die, — how pale he looked — how strange! Tom fell upon his knees and prayed God to spare Dick's life; and from that time forth, with God's help, he promised that he would strive to conquer this wicked passion.

Then, as he could not bear his terrible suspense, he started for widow Casey's cottage. As he appeared at the humble door, Mrs.

Casey angrily ordered him away, saying, "You have made a poor woman trouble enough for one day." But Dick's feeble voice entreated, "Oh, mother, let him come in; I was just as bad as he."

Tom gave a cry of joy at hearing those welcome tones, and sprang hastily in. There sat poor Dick, with his hands bound up, looking very pale; but Tom thanked God that he was alive.

"I should like to know how I am to live now," sighed Mrs. Casey. "Who will weed the garden, and carry my vegetables to market? I am afraid we shall suffer for bread before the summer is over;" and she put her apron to her eyes.

"Mrs. Casey," cried Tom, eagerly, "I will do every thing that Dick did. I will sell the potatoes and beans, and will even drive Mr. Brown's cows to pasture."

Mrs. Casey shook her head incredulously; but Tom bravely kept his word. For the next few weeks Tom was at his post bright and early, and the garden was never kept in better order. And every morning Tiger and Tom stood faithfully in the market-place with their baskets, and never gave up, no matter

how warm the day, till the last vegetable was sold, and the money placed faithfully in Mrs. Casey's hand.

Tom's father often passed through the market, and gave his little son an encouraging smile, but he did not offer to help him out of his difficulty, for he knew if Tom struggled on alone it would be a lesson he would never forget. Already he was becoming so gentle and patient, that every one noticed the change; and his mother rejoiced over the sweet fruits of his repentance and self-sacrifice.

After a few weeks the bandages were removed from Dick's hands, but they had been unskillfully treated, and were drawn up in very strange shapes. Mrs. Casey could not conceal her grief. "He will never be the help he was before," she said to Tom; "he will never be like other boys. And he wrote such a fine hand; now he can no more make a letter than that little chicken in the garden."

"If he only had a great city doctor," said a neighbor, "he might have been all right. Even now his fingers might be helped if you took him to New York."

"Oh, I am too poor, *too poor*," said she, and Dick burst into tears.

Tom could not bear it, and again rushed into the woods to think what could be done, for he had already given them all his quarter's allowance. All at once a thought flashed into his head, and he started as if he had been shot. Then he cried in great distress.

"No, no; any thing but that, — I can't do *that!*"

Tiger gently licked his hands and watched him with great concern. Now came a great struggle. Tom rocked backwards and forwards, and although he was a proud boy he sobbed aloud. Tiger whined, licked his face, rushed off in dark corners, and barked savagely at some imaginary enemy, and then came back, and, putting his paws on Tom's knees, wagged his tail in anxious sympathy. At last Tom took his hands from his pale, tear-stained face, and looking into the dog's great honest eyes, he cried, with a queer shake in his voice, —

"Tiger, old fellow! dear old dog, could you ever forgive me if I sold you?"

Then came another burst of sorrow, and Tom rose hastily, as if afraid to trust himself,

and almost ran out of the woods. Over the fields he raced with Tiger close at his heels, nor rested a moment till he stood at Major White's door, nearly two miles away.

"Do you still want Tiger, sir?"

"Why, yes," said the old man, in great surprise; "but do *you* want to sell him?"

"Yes, please," gasped Tom, not daring to look at his old companion. The exchange was quickly made, and the ten dollars in Tom's hand. Tiger was beguiled into a barn, and the door hastily shut, and Tom was hurrying off, when he turned, and cried, in a choking voice, —

"You will be kind to him, Major White; won't you? Don't whip him; I never did, and he's the best dog" —

"No, no, child," said Major White, kindly; "I'll treat him like a prince, and if you ever want to buy him back, you shall have him."

Tom managed to falter "thank you," and almost flew out of hearing of Tiger's eager scratching on the barn door.

I am making my story too long, and can only tell you in a few words that Tom's sacrifice was accepted. A friend took little Dick to the city free of expense, and Tom's money

paid for the necessary operation. The poor crooked fingers were very much improved, and were soon almost as good as ever. And the whole village loved Tom for his brave, self-sacrificing spirit, and the noble atonement he had made for his moment of passion.

A few days after Dick's return came Tom's birthday, but he did not feel in his usual spirits. In spite of his great delight in Dick's recovery, he had so mourned over the matter, and had taken Tiger's loss so much to heart, that he had grown quite pale and thin. So, as he was permitted to spend the day as he pleased, he took his book, and went to his favorite haunt in the woods.

"How different from my last birthday," thought Tom. "Then Tiger had just come, and I was so happy; though I didn't like him half as well as I do now." Tom sighed heavily; then added, more cheerfully, — "Well, I hope some things are better than they were last year. I hope I have begun to conquer myself, and with God's help I shall never give up trying while I live. Now if I could only earn money enough to buy back dear old Tiger."

But while Tom was thinking, and gazing

up into the blue sky through the delicate green leaves, he heard a hasty, familiar trot, — there was a crashing among the bushes, and with a quick bark of joy Tiger himself, the brave old dog, sprang into Tom's arms.

"Tiger, old fellow," cried Tom, trying to look fierce, though he could scarcely keep down the tears, "how came you to run away, sir?"

Tiger responded by picking up a letter he had dropped in his first joy, and laying it in Tom's hand.

Tom opened it, and read, in Major White's trembling hand: —

"My Dear Child: Tiger is pining, and I must give him change of air. I wish him to have a good master, and knowing that the best ones are those who learn to govern *themselves*, I send him to you. Will you take care of him, and greatly oblige

Your old friend, Major White."

And then Tom read, through a mist of tears, —

"P. S. I know the whole story. Dear little friend, 'be not weary in well doing.'"

XI.

THE PRINCE'S FOLLOWER.

Little Ben Potter had been staring with sleepless eyes out of the curtainless window ever since daybreak, but he had not cared to move hand or foot. The fact is, he had gone to bed supperless the night before, and felt rather weak and faint; and as he had no very encouraging prospects for breakfast, he could not make up his mind to get up to another hungry day. So he lay very quietly, watching the heavy mist curtains gradually rolling away, till the sky became beautifully blue and clear, and the old elm trees waved their golden arms in the yellow autumn sunshine.

"Oh, how I wish it was real gold," sighed poor Ben, "and all those lovely leaves sailing off, now and then, were bright golden dollars! Oh, how I would run out and fill my cap full, and then down to the baker's, to buy some of that beautiful white bread and butter! Oh, we'd have butter, too, and a little tea, per-

haps, for dear sick mother;—but, oh dear me!" sighed Benny, despondingly, "they're nothing but yellow, withered leaves."

Then he shut his eyes, and thought of the time when his father was alive, and they lived in such a pleasant place, and had a garden full of roses, and a beautiful brown cow. How long ago it seemed; and how long it was, even, since his mother had been sick, and could earn no more money by sewing. Yesterday (and Benny's cheeks were crimson) was the first day that he had ever tried to beg. There might be kind people in the world, but he didn't much believe it. At any rate, how angry all the big, fat cooks looked when he knocked at the kitchen doors; and sometimes they would slam them so quickly that they nearly pinched his fingers. In one kitchen, he remembered, he saw a little kitten with such a great saucer of nice, sweet milk before her. How fat and comfortable she looked! But when he asked for something for his poor sick mother, they gave him such hard crusts, it made his teeth ache just to think of them, and his mother could eat none at all. "Oh dear!" cried Benny to himself, "I'll just die before I go begging

again." A long sigh from the other side of the room made him start up and exclaim, "Oh, mother, are you awake? Did you hear me? I didn't mean exactly *that*. It wasn't so *very* bad."

But Benny's mother did not answer, and he soon saw that she was only groaning in her restless sleep. He lay a few moments longer, busy with his sad thoughts; then, suddenly starting up, he exclaimed, —

"I declare, if I didn't forget the prince was coming to-day; and I meant to be up with the first streak of light;" and he began hastily to dress himself in his ragged clothes, talking busily to himself all the time.

"I wonder, now, why I wasn't born over the sea in a great palace, with plenty of servants to wait on me, instead of living up four pairs of stairs in this little narrow street. There, now, what a terrible hole in my knee; oh, if mother only *could* mend it; but I'll just have to pin it up as well as I can. Good-by, mother;" and he gently kissed her. "I'll be back before long."

"Where are you going, Benny?" said she, rousing from her troubled sleep.

"To get some breakfast for you," said the

boy, cheerily, "and to see the prince. I wish you could see him, too, mother."

"I think I shall see him very soon, Benny," said his mother, with a tender look in her sad, faded eyes; "perhaps this very day."

"Oh, no, mother," almost laughed Benny. "Do you think he will come through this narrow street? They wouldn't let him know there was such a mean place in the city. Now you don't think he'd come here!"

"I shall go to him," she murmured dreamily; "dear Prince of *peace!*" and her heavy eyes again closed.

Benny looked very grave. "How much she sleeps," he said to himself; "and she don't know what she says half the time." His wistful eyes filled with tears, and he turned anxiously away. As he walked down the busy street, he suddenly thought of a grand plan of making his fortune. He had heard that the prince was very kind and generous; and if he could only get near enough to just tell him quickly how sick and poor his mother was, perhaps he would give him something; or, perhaps, better than all, he would make him his little servant, and hire him to follow on and hold his horses, or do something of

the kind. The poor, simple child never thought how impossible it would be for such a ragged boy to be allowed to come near the great prince.

After he had the matter all arranged to his satisfaction, Benny's step grew very lively; and, as the prince was not coming till after noon, he tried to find some little job to do by which to earn breakfast for himself and mother. But no one cared to hire such a small, weak boy, and he was becoming almost discouraged, when a kind countryman gave him three large apples. One was eagerly devoured by the hungry boy, but the other two were carried home, and laid carefully by the dear, sick mother, who still slept so strangely and heavily. Then Benny spent a long time busily and painfully trying to darn the worst holes in the faded old clothes, that he might look fit to speak to the prince.

At last afternoon came, and he found himself in the greatest crowd he had ever seen. "I don't care for myself," said little Benny, as he was pushed and jostled about; "but what *shall* I do if my clothes get torn any more!" and he took off his cap, and for safety tucked it under his arm. But after poor

Benny had so many knocks and bruises that his courage began to fail, and he only wished to be once more safe at home, suddenly the band burst forth into a most magnificent strain of music. "Oh, what *are* they playing?" cried Benny, excitedly.

"Why that's 'God save the Queen,' you blockhead," cried a large boy standing near.

"God save the Queen," thought Benny. "Ah, how beautiful to *pray* in music. I'm sure God will hear that, and *will* save the great queen. Oh, if somebody would only pray for *my* mother like that;" and Benny, with streaming eyes, said softly, "O God, save the queen, and *my* dear mother, too;" and then he wondered if his little trembling prayer went up with the grand music.

"What are you going to do with that bunch of horrid flowers?" cried Jack White, behind him, suddenly.

Benny looked around. "Why, they're the very best I can find; and I'm going to give them to the prince, and ask him to let me be his little servant while he stays."

"Hi! hi!" screamed Jack, so loudly that half a dozen of his vagabond friends gathered around in a minute. "What do you think

this boy says?' and, amid shouts of jeering laughter, he disclosed Benny's plan. "Won't the prince have a gay follower? Won't he be proud, though?"

"That's a *good* joke, old Patchwork," cried another, poking him in the ribs.

"My friends," continued Jack, with much politeness, "I have the honor of introducing the Duke of Rag-tag and Bob-tail."

Benny, with crimson cheeks and a breaking heart, tried hard to get away, but they held him fast, while they showered all manner of jokes upon him, and pulled at his old worn clothes till he was perfectly aghast at the unseemly rents.

There; and now the prince was passing by, and Benny's last chance would soon be lost forever. He clasped his hands, and implored them to let him go.

"Oh, yes," screamed Jack; "I'm afraid we are keeping his excellency. He hears his friend, the prince, calling him. Room there for Lord Ragamuffin!"

Benny's broken-hearted sobs attracted the attention of a gentleman standing near, who exclaimed,—

"You young scamps, what are you doing with that poor boy?"

The little, teasing mob quickly scattered, and Benny was alone.

"Please, sir," faltered he, "has the prince passed by?"

"Oh, yes; he is quite a long way down the street."

A look of bitter disappointment swept over Benny's worn face.

"Did you want to see him so much?" said the gentleman, kindly.

Benny could not speak; and his new friend, taking him by the hand, led him out of the crowd into a quiet street, and, by degrees, drew from him all his sad story.

"Don't sob so, my little friend," said he, as Benny finished; "perhaps I can help you as well as the prince."

"Oh, are you very rich and great? Are you one of the prince's servants?"

"Yes," said he, smiling quietly, "I hope I *am* one of the Prince's servants, though not of the one who has just passed by."

"Who then?" asked Benny, eagerly.

"Oh, a far greater Prince; one of whose kingdom there is no end."

"And will he help *me?*" cried Benny. "Will he let *me* be one of his servants, too?"

"Yes; you have only to ask him, and he can do all things; for he is King of kings and Lord of lords."

"Ah," said Benny, with a look of great disappointment, "I know who you mean now. It is the Saviour Prince, and mother and I have prayed to him weeks and weeks, but he will not hear us;" and Benny burst into tears.

"But," said the gentleman, kindly, "I think he *has* heard you at last, and has sent me to help you and your poor sick mother. Show me where she lives."

I have not time to tell you of Benny's extravagant joy, nor what he said to the good *doctor* (for such the gentleman proved to be) on the way home. When they first entered the room, his mother was so still and white that he at first thought she had really gone to see the "Saviour Prince," as she had said in the morning. But no; she was still living, and, after great care, she is now nearly restored to health. Benny has become the doctor's little errand-boy, and hasn't been hungry for a fortnight.

But, best of all, Benny has asked the Prince

— the *great* Prince — to make him one of his servants; and he studies his Bible every day, that he may learn how to follow him very closely, for he knows he is safer the nearer he is to him.

Dear little Harry, or Charley, or Mary, or Susy, would not you, too, like to be a follower of the great Prince?

XII.

BOB MERRY'S LETTER TO HIS FRIEND TOM.

GRAMMAR HALL, 1861.

DEAR OLD TOM: I'd give my new ball, and a bag-full of marbles, to catch one glimpse of your precious old phiz looking in at the door. I want to see you so much, and ask you what you *would* do if—but I forget you don't know any thing that has happened, and I must begin and tell the whole story. You know I have been here just two weeks, and, to tell the truth, I haven't been happy at all. I'm the smallest boy in the school, and I've been pounded and beaten, and sent on errands, till at night I was almost too tired to crawl up to bed. But that isn't the worst of it. Oh, Tom! I hardly know how to tell you what trouble I'm in; but it is not *my* fault, and I know you will believe that I tell you all the truth.

When Uncle John left me here, and 'old

me that "*now* I must begin to be a *man*," I made up my mind to be just as good-natured and merry as possible, and perhaps the boys would like me after a while, when they saw there was nothing of a "cry-baby" about me. But I've had a hard time keeping *that* resolution. All the boys seem to try to worry and play tricks on me. I don't so much mind it when I find my boots full of little sharp stones, or my cap stuffed into the water pitcher, but when they tell me "I walk like a lame duck," that I'm "a terribly ignorant snip," and have the worst disposition they ever knew, it is rather hard to swallow, and it doesn't go down any easier because the most of it may be *true*.

The very first morning I came, I got up very early, and I thought I would have time before the other boys woke to read a chapter from the little Testament dear mother gave me when she died. But I had only just begun when I heard a giggle, and Sam Potter was shaking the boy next to him and telling him to look at "*Cucumber*" (they say I'm so *green*, that they call me after all kinds of vegetables) — "Look at Cucumber, doing up his early piety." I was a little angry, I can

tell you, and I felt the blood coming up in my face.

"What a disposition he has," says Fred Brown; "he blazes up at the first joke."

I'm afraid I *have* a bad disposition, and so I said "I hoped they'd excuse me, for I was trying to conquer it." Then they laughed louder than ever, and Sam said, "I think we're going to have some fun out of this bird," and Fred screamed out, "Cabbage, do you know you're a jolly goose?"

"I don't know very much," said I, "but I intend to study very hard, and some time I may know as much as you."

Then they laughed again; but I tried to look very good-natured, and when Fred said, —"Let's toss the infant Samuel in his bed-quilt," Sam — who I think is rather a kind boy at heart — said, "No; don't bother the child. I'm sure he has shown a better disposition than we have."

But oh, Tom, I can't begin to tell you all, for I must hurry on to my *great* trouble.

You see I tried to be so cheerful and good-natured, that the boys really began to like me, and yesterday, when we had a half holi-

day, and some of them were going on a long walk, they said, —

"Let's take 'Small Potatoes' (that's another of my names) with us. He's a handy, willing little fellow, and we can make him very useful."

I was very proud and happy to think they wanted to take me; but, to tell the truth, Tom, I didn't enjoy even the first of it as much as I expected. The day was very warm, and there was no end of hills to climb. Then a good many boys took off their coats, and gave them to me to carry. They could not have known how heavy they were, I'm sure. But before long I could hardly drag one foot after the other, and though Sam looked around very pleasantly, and said, — "Well done, little Elephant," I didn't enjoy any thing very much.

At last we came out of the woods by a nice farm-house, with a beautiful garden, and, as we were all very tired, we sat down by the fence. Pretty soon Fred Brown called out, — "Oh, see those splendid melons! I declare, boys, we must have some. I'm so thirsty I could eat a dozen."

"Did you bring any money with you?" said I.

"Good for the Cucumber," cried Fred; and while they were all laughing, a little boy explained to me that they were "just going to take a few, and nobody would be any the wiser, and it would really be a good thing for the vines." I don't know how I looked, but Fred cried out, "Why, you little coward, don't be so frightened. The old man has gone to the fair, and, from the looks of things, I should judge he had taken the whole family with him."

"And come here, little one," said Jim Baker; "you're such an eel, you're just the one to crawl through this hole in the fence and get 'em for us. And if any one should happen to see you in among the vines with your little brown coat, they'd take you for a large-sized toad."

"Boys," said I, "do you really mean it?"

"Yes. Come, be spry!" and Fred Brown took hold of me to shove me through.

"But I can't do it," said I.

"Why not?" cried Jim.

"Because the Bible says 'Thou shalt not *steal*,' and I'm afraid" —

"You little hypocrite!" said Fred, oh, *so* angry, "do you dare to say that we'd *steal?*

There isn't a boy in school that doesn't expect to take an apple or a melon now and then, and the farmers have got used to it, and don't think any thing of it. But go home, you miserable little sneak! You can't go any farther with *us*. We've been mistaken in you. You're a boy without the least grain of spirit."

"He *is* a queer chap," said Sam Potter, "and is always turning up with some Scripture verse just when you don't want to hear it. I don't more than half believe he *is* a boy. I shouldn't wonder if somebody had put a jacket on the old family Bible, by mistake, and sent it to school."

Then there was a great laugh, and Fred said,—

"Now go home, you precious old volume, and when you get there, if you dare open at *Revelations*, we'll hang you on your own bedpost."

Then I said I didn't know the way home; but Fred cried out, "All the better," and gave me a push back into the woods.

When the boys found I was really going, they gave me their luncheon baskets, and fish-poles, and all sorts of things, to carry home for them, so I was just as heavily loaded as

before. Well, Tom, I am making my story too long; but, as you might have known, I lost my way. I walked till I was almost tired to death, and fell over one of my fish-poles into the brook. I'm sure I don't know what would have become of me if a countryman had not come along, and, taking me a little way in his wagon, set me upon the right road. I ran then just as fast as I could; but oh, Tom, when I reached the school it was ten o'clock, and the roll had been called long before, and every boy was in bed.

Dr. Simmons met me in the hall, and he looked so cross over his spectacles, I thought I should have sunk through the floor.

"Not a word, sir," said he, when I tried to speak. "I've heard all about it. Here, Matthews, take this boy and lock him up in the blue-room for the night."

Now, Tom, it is a very great disgrace to be put in the blue-room, and as Matthews hurried me away, I asked him what I *had* done that was so very bad, and he said, —

"Farmer Nadgett has just been here complaining that his garden has been robbed by some of Dr. Simmons' boys; but they every one denied it, only Fred Brown said they

parted with you somewhere near the farm, and he didn't know what you might have done after he had left you."

Now, dear Tom, did you ever know any thing so cruel? I could not sleep at all till towards morning, and then the boys woke me very early, screaming such provoking things through the key-hole. The first one wanted to know if the "family Bible" was open yet, and what was the verse for to-day. Then some one else had something to say about a wise man foreseeing the evil and "hiding himself, while the *simple* went on and were punished." Then Fred Brown and Jim Parker came and whispered, —

"You wouldn't tell the old doctor that *we* took the melons; for we were only in joke, and came away from the farm almost as soon as you left us;" and, lastly, I heard Sam saying, in rather a kind way, —

"I'm sorry for you, Cucumber, but if you only hadn't been quite so *green* you might have stayed with us, and we'd have put you through all right. Now I'm afraid you'll have a tough time."

But now, Tom, comes the worst of it. A little while ago I was called down to see the

doctor, and when I told him I had a quarrel with the boys, and lost my way trying to get home alone, and hadn't touched one of the melons, he almost seemed to believe me, and told me I might go back to my studies. But oh, Tom, when I turned to leave the room, he called me back sharply, and saying, in such an angry way, "Are you trying to deceive me, sir?" he pulled ever so many melon-rinds out of my pocket! I don't know what I did, Tom; I remember trying to say something, but my tongue wouldn't move, and I only heard the doctor say, "I'm afraid you're a very bad boy. Here, Matthews, take him back to the blue-room, till I have time to look farther into the matter."

Now, Tom, how do you suppose those rinds came in my pocket? I'm afraid I'm showing a bad disposition, but I can't help thinking that the boys did st—— take the melons, after all, and some one thought it would be a good joke to put the skins in my pocket as I passed through the hall. But oh, who will ever believe me?

When I found myself all alone again, my bad disposition *would* come out, and I screamed, and knocked my head against the

wall If I had been punished for doing wrong, I shouldn't care half so much; but to be so miserable just because I tried to do right, it is too bad. When I found I had got to stay all alone by myself all day, I coaxed Matthews to bring me a pen and some paper, for I thought I should feel better if I told it all to you. Oh, Tom, my head aches as if it would split. What will my uncle say when he hears of it? Matthews says the old doctor is so strict, that I may be *expelled*, or perhaps that Farmer Nadgett will be determined to send me to jail. Oh, what shall I do, Tom? I can not, *can not* bear it!

P. M. Tom, I just want to tell you something I think was a little strange. I could not eat the bread and water Matthews brought me for dinner, because my head ached so, and so I tried to read my little Testament. And do you know the very first words I saw were in this verse, marked by dear mother's own hand:—

"For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your *faults*, ye shall take it patiently? but if when ye do *well*, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, *this* is acceptable with God."

Now, Tom, just think how wicked I've been, when I had such an opportunity to please God. I'm afraid I don't feel quite right yet, but I'm trying very hard. Good-by, dear old Tom; I'm *so* tired! Write and tell me you believe me, and love me just ——

P. S. Oh, Tom, dear old fellow, give us your hand! Would you believe it, — but where shall I begin? You see I didn't finish your letter because my head ached so, and it has lain ever since, and now Dr. Simmons says I may write just three lines and tell you the good news.

I've been quite sick, Tom, but I don't mind it in the least. I've only been down a week, and what do you think has happened? Sam Potter is *such* a kind boy! When he found out I was so sick (for you know, when I have these bad headaches, I talk *wild*, and seem a great deal worse than I really am), he went and told Dr. Simmons all about it, and the doctor came to see me, though I didn't know it, and Sam says I "didn't mind him at all, but went on talking in the queerest way, not only as if I were a family Bible, but a *catechism* and *hymn-book* besides." And he says

the doctor almost cried, and said, "I've been too hard with the little motherless boy." And do you know, Tom, he took me to his own room, and took such care of me I shall never think him cross again. And all the boys have been to see me, and little Joe Willis confessed that he put the melon rinds in my pocket just for fun.

Sam says the doctor was very angry when he first found out the whole story, and he does not yet know what he intends to do with the boys; but they are not to have another holiday this term.

Oh, Tom, I don't in the least deserve to have every thing turn out so pleasantly; and every one is so very kind that I'm afraid I shall not have another opportunity to "suffer for well-doing;" though Sam says I needn't worry about that, or he'll give me a chance himself.

Here comes the old doctor, and says that I am writing too long, but I haven't told you half.

Good-by, dear old Tom.

Your *very* happy friend,

BOB.

XIII.

LITTLE CARLIN.

The cold, gray light of a chilly spring morning crept slowly over a sleepy old city, far away in Rhineland. It stole over the battered walls of a crazy tenement in one of the narrow streets, and looking determinedly through the dingy attic window, it found little Carlin sitting up in his bed, weeping bitterly.

In the same room, sleeping sweetly, were five other fair-haired little children, with their small heads full of pleasant dreams. But these were not brothers and sisters of little Carlin, and this was partly the reason why he was in such bitter grief in the shadowy morning twilight.

Ten years before, in the sweet May time, when Heinrich Müller — the father of these sleeping children — opened his door to go to his daily work, he found a basket on the stoop, and in it a little helpless baby. He did not know, at first, what to do, for he was

very poor, and already had three or four small mouths to fill. But when he took the forsaken child to his wife, it opened its blue eyes, was half frightened, and then smiled a doubtful, pitiful smile, which went straight to her kind heart, and she said pleadingly, —

"We must keep it, Heinrich. Who knows but the good God has sent him to our doors, and we may entertain an angel unawares?"

Her husband still looked doubtfully, but when she whispered, "He will take the place of our own little May, now resting in the bosom of the Great Father," he replied, "Take your own way, good wife, for you seldom go astray."

Then she folded the helpless babe in her arms, and carried him in, to be as one of her own children. They called him Carlin; and as day after day revealed some new beauty or charm, they all grew to love him dearly, and the children thought him their own true little brother.

As he grew older, he showed a great fondness for music, and all around the house his small fingers had stretched little pieces of wire, picked up in his wanderings around the city, and sometimes in wild, windy nights,

Madame Müller would almost shudder when she heard the strange, sad music of these strings, swept by invisible fingers. But when she watched the rapt face and kindling eyes of little Carlin, she always said, "If they please thee, little son, thou shalt have as many wind harps as thou likest."

Then he would kiss his kind mamma, and tell her odd fancies that the quivering strings whispered to him, till she would shake her head, and say to her husband, "He is not like the others, Heinrich. Who knows where the angels found him, who brought him to our door?"

And when Madame Müller read the Bible to the children all gathered around her knee, little Carlin would beg to hear of the young David, who, with sweet music, charmed away the evil spirit from the heart of the mighty Saul, or he would have her read of the vision of the great throne, — of the "harpers harping with their harps," — of the wonderful "new song," — till the tears filled his eyes, and his young heart beat with a strange, sweet joy.

For many years, Heinrich Müller prospered, and kept his family in great comfort, but at

the time when my story commences there had been a sad change. Sickness and loss of employment had brought him to great distress, and one evening, after the hungry children had been sent supperless to bed, Heinrich and his wife sat sadly together, talking over their mournful prospects. Little Carlin tried in vain to sleep, but every word sounded so plainly through the thin board partition, he could not help hearing all they said.

At last he started up in bed, with a half smothered cry of dismay, as he heard Heinrich say, "Yes; we must part with little Carlin, for we can scarcely feed our own. Carlin must go, poor boy!"

"We will miss him sadly," wept kind Mamma Müller, "but, alas! what can we do? Poor Johannes is almost helpless with his lame foot; Riga and Lisette are growing pale and thin, working upon their lace pillows, and the others are all too small. But he, poor child, what can he do, with those little hands; he is more tender and delicate than our own."

"He will grow, good wife," replied Heinrich. "We must give him to some farmer, who will take him into the country, and make

a fine worker of him. I will see about it to-morrow."

"Ah! how I shall miss his sweet voice," wept Madame Müller. "I can not let him go."

"Wilt thou see him starve, then?" asked her husband, sadly. But Carlin could hear no more, and, hiding his face in the coverlid, he sobbed himself to sleep.

Now this is the reason why the light of that chilly spring morning, searching for the once merry little face of Carlin, found it, like the sun in a fog, half drowned in a mist of tears.

After some time Carlin suddenly ceased weeping, and seemed to have formed some great resolution.

"I will not stay," he said, half aloud, "to eat the bread which belongs to Mamma Müller's own little children, but I can not be sent away, for it would break my heart. I will go myself; and the great God, who takes care of little helpless birds and flowers, will be my Father, and take care of *me*."

He dressed himself softly in his little tattered garments, went carefully out of the house, and busied himself with taking down

all the wires he had stretched for the gentle wind-fingers. "Mamma Müller would weep if she heard them when I am gone," said the child, simply. Then going in again very softly, he kissed, with many tears, the rosy cheeks of Margot, Johannes, Riga, and the little ones. Then, kneeling for a moment by the door of Madame Müller, he prayed that God "would keep her, and bless her, and that she might live till he had earned money, and could bring it to her dear hands, and that she might again call him 'little son.'"

So the child went bravely forth in the chill morning, down into the heart of the great city. The gay stores were just being opened, and never had they looked so grand and imposing. Carlin went into several very timidly, and asked, "Do you want a boy?" but some answered harshly; and some young clerks only laughed, and, jeering at his worn garments, said, "The king of Tatterdom is looking out for recruits, and will probably make you captain of the ragged regiment."

Carlin shrank away with tearful eyes, but still went on determinedly, lifting from his heavy heart a constant prayer that the next attempt might be successful; but all in vain.

At last the weary day began to draw to a close, and the child, tired and hungry, sat down on a stone wall, and began to think anxiously what he should do next, and where he should spend the night, and again he breathed a prayer that God would remember the little fatherless child. Just then a strain of soft, sweet music stole upon his ear. Carlin started. He was close at the door of the great cathedral, which he had so longed to enter, and his kind Mamma Müller had promised some day to take him, when his clothes were better. But now no one knew him. Why could he not creep softly in, and hear the wonderful music? So Carlin stole in, and hid in a dark corner of the organ loft, unperceived by the choir. He looked with awe at the grand organ with its magnificent golden pipes, and all thought of weariness and pain was forgotten. The music was very low, and sometimes almost lost in the great arches. Then came a swell of sound like a long sigh, and Carlin said to himself, "The organ is asleep — is *dreaming;* it is talking in its sleep." And he crept gently out of his hiding-place, and reverently kissed the side of the huge instrument, and passed

his hand caressingly over its gilded mouldings.

But by and by it began to wake up. Grand bursts of harmony filled the cathedral — the choir arose and sang a noble, triumphant chant, that thrilled Carlin to the heart. Unconsciously he drew nearer and nearer till he stood by the great "Meister" who dared to touch those wonderful keys.

Suddenly upon the full harmony rose the clear treble of a sweet, young voice, and the Meister, turning, saw a little weary, tattered child, bending forward with clasped hands, and a look of heavenly peace in his clear blue eyes.

The service ended, but the child still stood transfixed, and the Meister said, kindly, —

"What wilt thou, little one?"

"Oh, great Meister," cried Carlin, breathlessly, "have you not heard the 'harpers harping with harps,' have you not been singing the 'new song?' Oh, please, *please* teach it to me."

The good Meister looked doubtfully at the child.

"He is not all right," he thought to himself; "the finger of God has touched him."

"Come, little one," added he, "thou must go to thy home."

Carlin stared about him as one roused from a dream. All the painful reality flashed upon him in a moment. He could not go back to trouble dear Mamma Müller, and God had not yet given him another home. A touching look of despair swept over his childish face, but it was dark, and the kind Meister did not see it, but only said again, —

"Come, child, run to thy home, and to-morrow thou mayest come again. Canst thou sing much?"

"I sing what the wind taught me," said Carlin, simply, and he sang a plaintive little melody which thrilled the old musician's heart.

"That is wonderful sweet," said he.

"Ah!" said little Carlin, "if I could only sing the new song!"

"And where do they sing that?" said the Meister, smiling.

"In the other country," said little Carlin, "and mamma says it is so wonderful that the angels listen, and no one sings it but the earth-children."

"Well, little one, good-night," said the

Meister. "Come again to-morrow, and we will talk more."

Carlin, looking wistfully in his face, tried to say, "I have no home to-night," but the words choked him, and he staggered wearily away. The tears blinded his eyes so that he could not see, and stumbling across the busy street, he was suddenly knocked down, and heavy wheels passed over his poor little limbs.

The Meister heard a cry of agony, and turning, he saw them lifting the fainting form of his little friend. A sharp pang shot through his heart. He had not done his duty by the helpless child. He hastened to the spot, and took him in his arms. "He is dead, I think," said one of the crowd. "Hast thou gone to learn the 'new song?'" whispered the Meister, tenderly.

"Not yet, good Meister," said little Carlin, with a faint smile, opening slightly his misty blue eyes.

"Not yet?" said the Meister, cheerily;—"then we will keep thee, and thou shalt make a famous singer *here;* for thy voice is sweet as the birds that sing in Paradise."

Carlin smiled, but soon a look of great trouble crossed his face.

"Do not carry me, great Meister," he said, bravely trying to hide the anguish he was suffering. "You must not carry me — a little, ragged boy. Please lay me down softly in the shadow of the wall, and I will be better in the morning."

"Thou poor child," said the Meister, "dost thou not know that thou wouldst die with thy broken bones?" But the poor child had again fainted from weakness and pain, and the Meister carried him home. He had no children of his own, and his heart warmed to the little pale orphan.

I should make my story too long if I should tell you how tenderly Carlin was nursed, and how the Meister grew to love him like his own son.

When he was well once more, he was taken to the grand cathedral, and, to his exquisite delight, the good Meister taught him to sing, and gave him a place in the choir beside that wonderful organ.

A small salary was paid him weekly, and with the first little sum he hastened to his loved Mamma Müller. The good woman wept for joy, and said he should never leave her again. But when he told her of his happy

life with the good Meister, she bade him go, for she was still in great poverty. It was a great happiness to Carlin to carry this money to his dear old friends — and without this help at one time they would have perished from want.

Carlin is still singing his sweet songs and trusting in God; and although, as he is a little lame, he will never be able to play the organ with the grand pedals like his beloved "Meister," still he feels that it is all right, for he talks much of the better country where is no more sorrow and pain, and slipping his hand in the good Meister's, he says, with sweetest confidence, —

"As well the *singers* as the players on instruments shall be *there*."

XIV.

JOE BENTON'S COAL-YARD.

JUST imagine the loveliest May morning that ever was made; the sun so lately risen that his long golden hair still trailed on the hill-tops, and the robins singing such extravagant songs that the violets opened their blue eyes as wide as possible, and asked a neighboring lilac-bush if he ever heard of any one getting *drunk* on sunshine. There must have been something very curious in the air that morning, for when little Joe Benton sprang out of the back door with hair as golden as the sun's, and eyes as blue as the violet's, and voice almost as sweet as the robin's, he took one long breath, shouted a vigorous hurrah! but, seeming just as crazy as the birds, he didn't feel at all relieved till he had climbed a tree, turned three somersaults, and jumped over the garden fence.

"Saturday, too," he said to himself, as he rested upon the other side. "Was there ever

any thing so lucky? Now I'll have just time to run down to the brook before breakfast, and see if our boat is all right. Then I'll hurry home, and learn my lessons for Monday; for we boys are to meet and launch her at nine o'clock, and the *captain* ought to be up to time."

So Joe's small feet clattered vigorously down to the little cave where the precious boat was hidden. But as he neared the place, an exclamation of surprise escaped him, for there were signs of some intruder, and the big stone before the cave had been rolled away. Hastily drawing forth his treasure, he burst into loud cries of dismay, for there was the beautiful little boat, which Cousin Herbert had given him, with its gay sails split in a hundred shreds, and a large hole bored in the bottom.

Joe stood for a moment motionless with grief and surprise; then, with a face as red as a peony, he burst forth, — "I know who did it, — the mean scamp! It was Fritz Brown; and he was mad because I didn't ask him to come to the launch. But I'll pay him for *this* caper," said little Joe through his set teeth; and hastily pushing back the ruined

boat, he hurried a little farther down the road, and fastening a piece of string across the footpath, a few inches from the ground, he carefully hid himself in the bushes.

Now the good honest sun was afraid something was going wrong, and he held a little cloud handkerchief over his eyes, but Joe did not notice it. He only knew that he was very angry and miserable, and he wondered that he had ever thought it was a pleasant morning.

Presently a step was heard, and Joe eagerly peeped out. How provoking! instead of Fritz, it was Cousin Herbert, the very last person he cared to see, and hastily unfastening his string, Joe tried to lie very quiet. But it was all in vain, for Cousin Herbert's sharp eyes caught a curious moving in the bushes, and, brushing them right and left, he soon came upon little Joe. "How's this?" cried he, looking straight into the boy's blazing face; but Joe answered not a word. "You're not *ashamed* to tell me what you were doing?"

"No, I'm *not*," said little Joe, sturdily, after a short pause; "I'll just tell you the whole story;" and out it came, down to the clos-

ing threat, "and I mean to make Fritz smart for it!"

"What do you mean to do?"

"Why, you see, Fritz carries a basket of eggs to market every morning, and I mean to trip him over this string, and smash 'em all."

Now Joe knew well enough that he was not showing the right spirit; and he muttered to himself, "Now for a good scolding;" but, to his great surprise, Cousin Herbert said, quietly, —

"Well, I think Fritz does need some punishment; but this string is an old trick. I can tell you something better than that."

"What?" cried Joe, eagerly.

"How would you like to put a few coals of fire on his head?"

"What, and *burn* him?" said Joe, doubtfully. Cousin Herbert nodded with a queer smile. Joe clapped his hands. "Now that's just the thing, Cousin Herbert. You see his hair is so thick he wouldn't get burned much before he'd have time to shake 'em off; but I'd just like to see him jump once. Now tell me how to do it, quick!"

"If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water

to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee," said Cousin Herbert, gravely; "and I think that's the best kind of punishment little Fritz could have."

Joe's face lengthened terribly. "Now I do say, Cousin Herbert, that's a real take-in. That's just no punishment at all."

"Try it once," said Cousin Herbert. "Treat Fritz kindly, and I'm certain he will feel so ashamed and unhappy that he would far rather have you kick or beat him."

Joe was not really such a bad boy at heart, but he was now in a very ill temper, and he said sullenly, — "But you've told me a story, Cousin Herbert. You said this kind of coals would *burn*, and they don't at all."

"You're mistaken about that," said his cousin, cheerily. "I've known such coals to burn up a great amount of rubbish, — malice, envy, ill-feeling, revenge, and I don't know how much more, — and then leave some very cold hearts feeling as warm and pleasant as possible."

Joe drew a long sigh. "Well, tell me a good coal to put on Fritz's head, and I'll see about it."

"You know," said Cousin Herbert, smiling, "that Fritz is very poor, and can seldom buy himself a book, although he is extravagantly fond of reading, but *you* have quite a library. Now suppose, — ah! well, I won't suppose any thing about it. I'll just leave you to think over the matter, and find your *own* coal; and be sure and kindle it with *love*, for no other fire burns so brightly and so long;" and with a cheery whistle Cousin Herbert sprang over the fence and was gone.

Before Joe had time to collect his thoughts, he saw Fritz coming down the lane, carrying a basket of eggs in one hand and a pail of milk in the other.

For one minute the thought crossed Joe's mind, "What a *grand* smash it would have been if Fritz *had* fallen over the string," and then again he blushed to his eyes, and was glad enough that the string was safe in his pocket.

Fritz started and looked very uncomfortable when he first caught sight of Joe, but the boy began abruptly, "Fritz, do you have much time to read now?"

"Sometimes," said Fritz, "when I've driven the cows home, and done all my chores, I

have a little piece of daylight left; but the trouble is, I've read every thing I could get hold of."

"How would you like to take my new book of travels?"

Fritz's eyes danced. "Oh, may I, *may* I? I'd be *so* careful of it."

"Yes," answered Joe, "and perhaps I've some others you'd like to read. And, Fritz," he added, a little slyly, "I would ask you to come and help sail my boat to-day, but some one has torn up the sails, and made a great hole in the bottom. Who *do* you suppose did it?"

Fritz's head dropped upon his breast; but after a moment he looked up with a great effort and said,—

"*I* did it, Joe; but I can't begin to tell you how sorry I am. You didn't know I was so mean, when you promised me the books?"

"Well, I rather thought you did it," said Joe, slowly.

"And yet you didn't"—Fritz couldn't get any farther, for his cheeks were in a perfect blaze, and he rushed off without another word.

"Cousin Herbert was right," said Joe to

himself; "that coal *does* burn; and I know Fritz would rather I had smashed every egg in his basket than offered to lend him that book. But *I* feel fine;" and little Joe took three more somersaults, and went home with a light heart, and a grand appetite for breakfast.

When the captain and crew of the little vessel met at the appointed hour, they found Fritz there before them, eagerly trying to repair the injuries, and as soon as he saw Joe he hurried to present him with a beautiful little flag which he had bought for the boat with part of his egg-money that very morning. The boat was repaired, and made a grand trip, and every thing turned out as Cousin Herbert had said; for Joe's heart was so warm and full of kind thoughts that he never was more happy in all his life. And Joe found out afterwards that the more he used of this curious kind of coal, the larger supply he had on hand,—kind thoughts, kind words, and kind actions. "I declare, Cousin Herbert," said he, with a queer twinkle in his eye, "I think I shall have to set up a coal-yard."

The little school-boys, who saw that Joe was always happy, studied the secret too;

and at last, if any trouble or dispute arose, some one would say, "Let's try a few of Joe Benton's coals," and it was astonishing to see how soon all the evil passions were burned to ashes, and how quickly the young hearts grew warm towards each other. Come, little Tom, Dick, and Harry, who have ever so much rubbish to be burned, and whose hearts are all in a shiver with the cold, unloving looks you gave each other this morning, won't you try, just for *once*, to find out the happy secret that lies in little Joe Benton's queer coal-yard?

XV.

WILLY'S ANGEL.

Beneath the trees a little child, with sleeping eyes of blue,
Beholds in dreams the busy day its changing scenes renew;
Ah, why, beneath the trembling lids, are tear-drops crowding through?

The May-blooms flutter through the air, in drifts of rosy snow,—
The robins on the sunset wind, with music sweet and low,
Enchanted in the crimson light, float dreaming to and fro.

The little human flower, whose breath to heaven should float in prayer,
The bird immortal, whose sweet song should thrill the listening air,—
Why is he, 'mid the birds and flowers, the only mourner there?

Alas! before his dreaming eyes are set in clear array
So many sad, unhappy deeds that shamed the sweet spring day;
He'd laughed, and mocked a beggar man who tottered down the way.

He'd snatched from hungry pussy all her meal of cheese and curds;
He'd climbed the biggest apple-trees to steal the poor, young birds;
He'd spoken to his little friend in bitter, angry words.

He knew, through all that troubled day, in pleading accents low,
A voice was whispering to his heart, — "Dear Willy, don't do so;"
But Willy would not listen in his young life's eager flow.

But, ah! it was his angel who beheld the Father's face,
And, dreaming, Willy saw him grieving o'er the day's disgrace;
But when he sought to clasp him, then he fled from his embrace.

Then, sorely weeping, woke the child, and started to his feet,
And crying, "Oh, sweet angel, do not leave me, I entreat,"
His steps flew down the gravel walk, and passed into the street.

He sought the poor old beggar man beyond the garden wall, —
"Forgive my cruel words," he cried; "see, I have brought you all
The pennies saved so very long to buy myself a ball."

He dashed away a tear, and ran to seek his playmate's door, —
"Forgive, forgive!" he sobbing cried, and then could say no more;
"Dear Willie," said his friend, "I love you better than before."

Then homeward in the fading light with eager steps he sped,
And soon the stolen nest again was swinging overhead;
And pussy purred in glad surprise, so amply was she fed.

But one thing more must Willy do, more needful still than these;
And, hastening to his little room, he fell upon his knees:
"O Father," sobbed the weary child, "restore to me thy peace;

Forgive me, oh, forgive me all the evil of this day;
For Jesus' sake I ask it: Father, hear me while I pray,
And send my angel back again to guide my erring way."

He slept; and now beside his bed, behold! an angel bright,
So freshly from the shining throne, his glowing wings dripped light;
And Willy's heart was comforted with dreams of heaven that night.

XVI.

"SOUNDING BRASS."

It was a bright winter morning not far from the holidays, and little Dick Melville was busily collecting his dinner-basket and books preparatory to setting out for school, when his older sister asked, "Did you learn any verse this morning, Dick?"

"Of course I did, and said it to mother, too. It was — Oh, where *is* my geography! I do believe baby has hid it somewhere. Well, it began — Oh, Bridget! please put in *one* more slice of bread and butter."

"That's the queerest verse I ever heard," said Sam, who rather liked to tease his little brother.

"Now, really, Sam, I was just going to say it. It was, 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal;' and mother said *charity* meant *love*, and feeling kindly towards everybody; but

if we're cross and hateful, then we're like 'sounding brass,' which is"—

"Hear me," interrupted curly-headed little Madge. "I learned one, too,—'Charity suffereth long, and is *kind*.'"

That's a nice verse for kind little Madge," said Sam, lifting her on his knee.

"Dear me," again broke in Dick, "where can my skates be? Fred Allen said the pond was frozen over, and we'd have a great time up there after school."

"Why, Dick, Frank Burton came here last night, and told me you said he might take them."

"Now, Nelly, that's too bad! He told you a downright falsehood. He has lost his own skates, and he told me yesterday he was afraid he shouldn't get another pair till Christmas; but he never said a word about mine, for he knew I wanted to use them myself."

"That's very strange," said Nelly.

"Strange! it's downright mean," cried Dick, vehemently; "and I *will* say that Frank Burton is the slyest, most selfish boy in school; and I don't believe he'd mind telling a lie any more than"—

"Hush a minute," cried Sam, with a merry

twinkle in his eye. "I shouldn't think the band would be out so early in the morning, but I'm sure I hear plenty of '*sounding brass*,' somewhere."

Little Madge eagerly listened, with her curly head on one side; but Dick, coloring angrily, retorted, —

"I know what you mean, Sam; but if you'd just look at home, I think you'd find enough 'tinkling cymbals' to match my brass."

"Dear little Dick," began gentle sister Nelly.

"Yes, I know it, Nelly; I know I was wrong; but if you were only a boy, and loved to skate as I do, and then had every thing go wrong, you'd just forget all about charity, and wouldn't care a bit if you just *turned* into sounding brass."

"Well, I didn't know you were in such a sad state of mind," said Sam, laughing. "You may take *my* skates if you'd like them."

"Oh dear, no; thank you just the same, but they're a great deal too large;" and little Dick, with a heavy step, started for school.

To his great disappointment, Frank Burton was not in his usual place, nor did he make his appearance all day, and poor Dick could

hear nothing of his skates. But when school-hours were at last over, he joined the merry party for the pond, and as he reached the ice, sure enough, there was Frank Burton with his own nice skates just buckled on!

"Those are mine," shouted little Dick, "and I want to use them myself."

"You can have them if you'll catch me," mockingly retorted Frank, gliding by him like an arrow.

Dick bit his lips, and, thrusting his hands in his pockets, waited till he came around again.

"Frank, you may go round the pond three times with my skates, if you'll give them to me then."

Frank laughed loudly. "Very generous when you can't help yourself; I'll go round as many times as I please. It's great fun;" and off he shot again.

Several of the smaller boys who stood near were very sorry for Dick, but Frank was so large and strong they did not dare attack him. Poor Dick stood for nearly an hour gazing on the animated scene, growing very cold, and struggling against the bitter thoughts that filled his heart. The boys were so full of fun,

and he did so love to skate! At last, when Frank came around once more, flushed with exercise, and screamed, —

"Grandfather, would you like to take a turn on my skates?"

Poor Dick said to himself, "Well, I'm sure I've *suffered* long enough, — but I must say I don't feel very *kind*. That verse may do very well for girls, but boys" —

Just then came a crash and a shout, —

"The ice has broken! Frank Burton has gone in! Will he drown? Oh, the water is too shallow. No; it's deep right in the middle. There, he's holding on. Can't any one help him! How the ice breaks! We can't get near him."

"Let *me* try," said Dick.

"No; he won't drown; and he's so ugly, let him have a good fright. He'll pull you in, too, Dicky," urged the smaller boys.

"Help, boys," cried Frank; "I'm so cold I can't hold on much longer, and if I stir, the ice cracks."

"Run for Farmer Jones," said one; and a dozen boys started.

"Oh, I'll die before they get back," groaned Frank.

Just then Dick remembered something he had read, and, running across the pond, he tore, with all his strength, a long board from the nearest fence, and hastening back, laid it carefully across the hole so that Frank could reach it. Then, lying down flat on the ice, he slowly crawled up near enough to help the numb, frightened boy upon the board, and with great care he drew him farther and farther, till he was once more upon strong, safe ice.

"Three cheers for Dick Melville," shouted the little boys, as the others returned with Dick's father, whom they had met on the road.

As the story was eagerly told, it was hard to tell which blushed the most,— poor chattering Frank Burton, or happy, brave little Dick. But Frank, as soon as he could speak, made an apology to Dick, before all the boys, and then, in a lower tone, said, —

"I never shall forget this, Dick, and I hope I shall be a better boy."

You may imagine the happiness of Dick when his father related the occurrence at home; and Sam, walking up to him in a grand way, said, —

"I am proud to shake hands with you, brother Dick; and I think I must have been mistaken about that 'sounding brass' this morning."

But the best of it was when his mother whispered, —

"You have made me very happy, my little son; but, above all, I think you have pleased God."

XVII.

THE SLAVES OF KING "FIRE-WATER."

I SUPPOSE that some little reader will wonderingly say, "Who is King Fire-Water? and where does he live? Does he keep a great many slaves, and is he kind to them, or does he treat them very badly?"

And perhaps some little blue-eyed girl who has just learned her geography lesson, and *somewhere* on the map has traced with her rosy fingers those odd words "Terra del Fuego," or "the land of fire," will venture a shrewd guess that this king with a very strange name lives somewhere in those regions, or perhaps where — as she has read in some pleasant story-book — the sun drops like a great red ball into fair tropical seas, making them all one mass of rosy fire. But you are not quite right, dear Blue-eyes, for this king, of whom I am going to tell you, has a very great kingdom, and you may find his slaves in almost every land under the sun. There are some,

I know, in the pleasant city where you live, and some on the sea-shore where you went last summer with your cousins. There are some on the wild Western prairies, and some under the burning Southern skies, and some sailing on the blue sea. You are sure to know them the minute you see them. The king does not dress them well. Their clothes are almost always tattered and worn, and their hats knocked in, and your little brother Bob, who has only walked a fortnight without a chair, would feel much mortified to stagger about as they do. King Fire-Water never gives his slaves any thing to eat, but he has always ready for them a terrible *drink*, — all poison and fire, — and the worst of it is, he has taught them to love it; so, although they sometimes see that they are growing thin and old, and wretchedly poor, and must very soon *die*, still they can never refuse it, when it is offered, and, indeed, they are so crazy for it that they are willing to part with every thing else they have in the world, rather than go without it.

Now, when I farther tell you that this wicked king makes his slaves sleep in barns and station-houses, and, oftener yet, with the

miserable pigs in the gutter, you will wonder how he ever finds any one willing to come into his service. But this is the way he manages. When he sees a nicely-dressed man whom he wishes to make his slave, he offers him a cup of his best poison. It looks so beautiful, "when it moveth itself aright," like water with a small piece of sunset dissolved in it, that the poor man thinks it *must* be very good. He drinks it, and feels *so* happy. He thinks he is the richest and greatest man in the world, and Fire-Water is a good old king, who has been very much slandered. So he drinks again and again; but all the while the cruel fire is steadily burning, and by and by he suddenly wakes up and finds that he has burned all his patience and love and strength, his pleasant home, and all his comforts, and he himself is one of the wretched slaves of King Fire-Water. Sometimes he struggles very hard to escape from his tyrant master; but, alas! he generally finds himself bound by the strongest kind of a chain. There is a name I have given to this chain. Some people call it "*Habit*," and *bad* habits are the very worst chains to break that I ever knew. Dear Black-eyes, — who have stolen back to the

dinner-table to see if there were any of that pretty red fluid left in the wine-glass, and who mean to buy a cigar with your very next pocket-money, — be careful! Don't let such a chain get wound around you.

Now I am going to tell you a true story about one of King Fire-Water's slaves. He was a grown-up man, and had a wife and four little children, — the eldest not more than seven years of age. He had drank so much of the king's poison, that all his money had been burned, and almost all his wife's and children's clothes, and, what is more, the last loaf of bread in the house. Now, at the time my story begins, it was winter, almost night, and wretchedly cold. Sue and Jack and Sally had been crying and fretting in chorus for more than an hour, and poor, patient baby had nearly sucked off both his thumbs, when, oh, joy! mother came back with some bread and meat, and a little pan of coals. The little starved children had a famous supper, and there was enough left for breakfast. "If father only don't find it," cried Jack and Sue; and they hid it carefully away. Then, locking the door very securely, the children, with the poor mother, who was sick and lame, all

went to bed to *keep warm*. They were very much afraid their father would come home, and once Sally cried out in a frightened voice, "Hark! isn't somebody coming?" But Jack answered drowsily, "It's only a window-shutter, or the other family up stairs;" and soon they were all sound asleep.

About twelve o'clock that night, the poor slave was trying to get home. The king, who loves to torture his victims, had refused to give him drink without money, and so he was coming home as crazy and fierce as some wild animal. But the king had some work for him to do, and he said to his slave, "Your wife was busy drawing brushes to-day, and this is her night to be paid for them. You had better go home, and see if there isn't something to eat in the house, or maybe you can steal her money. Never mind if she *is* sick and lame, and your little children starving." So the slave reached home, and, finding the door locked, gave it a great kick. The poor frightened wife heard him, but dared not let him in. But he was very strong and angry, and in a few minutes he burst open the door and was in the room. Before the poor

woman could speak, he dragged her out of bed, and said, —

"So you dare to keep me out of my own room. I've a good mind to kill you;" and he looked at her with two eyes very much like those you've seen in pictures of great hungry tigers. Then he cried again, clutching her shoulders till they were black and blue, —

"Give me your money and I'll let you go."

But she only sobbed, and begged him to have mercy. Then he pounded and beat her, for you know the goodness was burnt out of his heart; and at last, when she almost fainted, he threw her out into a great snow-heap, and then fastened up the door with nails, so she couldn't get back.

He looked for the money in vain, and at last shook up Jack to make him tell where it was.

"I don't know, indeed, father," cried Jack.

Then King Fire-Water whispered, "Their mother has taught 'em. They'll tell a lie for *her* any time. They love her a great deal the best."

The slave was mad with rage, and, seizing the little warm sleepers, one after the other,

he set them up, in their scant night-dresses and bare feet, in a row against the wall. A very sorry little regiment they were, shivering with cold and fright. Poor baby tumbled over again and again, and vainly tried to comfort himself with his thumbs.

Then came the angry question, — "Which do you like best, — your mother or me?"

Poor little children! In their innocence and simplicity, the answer came in prompt chorus — "*Mother;*" and little Sally sobbed, "I don't love pappy at all!"

The furious man seized an old stick in the corner and began most unmercifully to whip his little shrinking children, one after the other, down to poor baby, who only cried gaspingly, through his blue lips and chattering teeth, — "Mammy, mammy, mammy!"

The poor mother, almost wild at hearing her children's cries, tried in vain to open the door; then, flying around to the window, she arrived just in time to see the heavy blows fall on poor innocent baby's shuddering limbs, and she sent up a cry so shrill and piercing, that the neighbors' windows flew up on every side, and soon two or three strong men came to the rescue. They forced open the door,

and the wicked man was caught and tied down with strong cords.

King Fire-Water never helps his slaves when they are in trouble—he only mocks and sneers. So, when Judge Cooper said that the man must go to jail and stay there three months, there was no one to help him or say a word to comfort him. Every body was glad to see him go, and his own little children jumped for joy.

Now, perhaps, you will think that when this slave comes out of prison, he will be so angry with his old master, who has made him all this trouble, that he will try to break his chain, and will clear the ashes out of his heart, and ask God to put some new kindness and love in it, and will try to make a pleasant home for his wife and children who have been unhappy so long. But I can not tell. King Fire-Water is very careful that his slaves shall not escape, and his chains are very strong.

Dear Black-eyes and Blue-eyes! I know you will not have any thing to do with this wicked king. You will always be afraid of the dreadful fire that may lie hidden in the bright crimson cup. You would rather drink

pure water, bright and flashing like diamonds, — the sweet cool water that comes up in the "old oaken bucket," or that you find bubbling up in the dim, old woods, and where, falling upon your knees, you scoop it up with your rosy palms, — the nicest drinking-cup in the world.

But you can do more yet. You must always be on the watch for the beginning of *little* chains. Give them a good pull whenever you get a chance, for they are always very weak and easily broken *at first*. Then you can sign the pledge, and ask all your little friends to sign too, and after a while you will grow such a formidable army, and wage such war with the old tyrant, that he will skulk away in the darkest alleys he can find, and at last, when we go in the street, we shall as soon expect to stumble against a grizzly old bear on a visit from the North Pole, as to meet one of "King Fire-Water's slaves."

XVIII.

DISOBEDIENT HARRY.

WHENEVER any one says "Harry," in my presence, I always smile, for I think right away of a pair of the brightest eyes in the world, and I have a very pleasant vision of a little restless head, crowned with waves of golden-brown hair. But once I had a very sad word to join to that dear name; and when I had to say "Disobedient Harry," I was ready to cry with the heavy pain at my heart.

Harry lived in a handsome house in a large city, with the kindest father and mother, and the sweetest little blue-eyed sister you can imagine. He had a great deal to make him happy, and if ever a wish came dancing into his merry head, it had only to steal down and look pleadingly out of Harry's great eyes, or venture a little farther and fall in words from his tongue, and it was sure to receive attention. You might suppose that Harry

was perfectly happy, and indeed, at times, it would have been hard to find a more contented little boy in the world. But once in a while he would wish to do something wrong, and if his kind mother forbade him, I am sorry to say that he acted very improperly. Instead of amusing himself in some other way, — taking a ride on his rocking-horse, or playing "Come to see" with his baby sister, — he would listen to a wicked spirit who goes around ready to whisper in little boys' ears; and this bad spirit would say, "Lie down on the floor, Harry, and kick and scream;" and I am sorry to say that he sometimes did it.

But there was another voice that used to speak very gently to Harry, and tell him what was right to do, and this small voice he had been taught to call Conscience. Now I will tell you of the very sad results of listening to the wicked spirit, instead of the good, friendly Conscience.

Little Harry had been playing out all one cloudy afternoon in November, and it was growing dark very early, when suddenly the idea came in his head to run down the street and see the pictures in one of the shop windows, where he had often been before.

"Don't go, Harry," said Conscience; "your mother told you to come in at dark."

"Don't be a baby," whispered the wicked spirit; "you're a boy, and growing bigger every day. I'd have my own way, for once."

"Ah, Harry," said Conscience, "how anxious your mother will be."

"Oh, you'll be back before she misses you," said the other; "and only think how nice it will be, coming home by the light of the bright street lamps, just like your father."

"Oh, don't, don't go," sighed Conscience. "You'll be sorry."

"Yes, I *will*," shouted Harry; and he started off so fast that he thought he had left Conscience behind him, for he did not hear another word.

He soon reached the brilliant window, and stood transfixed before it. The gas was already lighted, and there were two new pictures, one of a dancing bear, and the other of a wise old dog, teaching school to a long row of such queer little pugs, all engaged in a hard spelling-lesson. Harry laughed with delight, and thrusting his fat hands into his pockets, to keep them out of the way of the cold November wind, he feasted his great eyes upon

the bright scene. He was so busy thinking whether that clumsy bear would not step on his own feet, the next move he made, and whether that little dog in the corner would not get a rap on the nose for not learning how to spell "cat," that I think he would have stayed an hour longer.

But suddenly he felt such a sharp pinch on his red cheek, that it brought tears into his eyes, and turning around, he saw a ragged boy, a good deal bigger than he was.

"Hallo, little 'un," said the big boy; "does your mother know you're out?"

"Yes, she does," replied Harry, indignantly.

"Where are you bound?" continued the new boy.

"That's none of your business, rag-boy," cried Harry.

"'Rag-boy!' eh?" screamed the boy. "I'll teach you better manners, I think;" and he boxed poor Harry's ears till they rung, and he felt so confused that he hardly knew whether it was his own curly head on his shoulders, or the old school-house bell.

Now Harry was too proud to cry, but it did occur to him that the best thing to do

was to run home. This he tried, but was prevented.

"No," said the big boy; "now you must go with me;" and seizing Harry's hand, he started off at such a pace, that the short, fat legs could hardly keep up with him.

Poor Harry's small remains of pride rapidly oozed out, as he found himself led through the dark, crooked streets, farther and farther from his own dear home.

"Where are we going?" said he, all out of breath.

"None of *your* business this time," sneered the big boy, with a loud laugh; and Harry began to sob and cry aloud.

Presently, they came to an old, tumble-down house, and poor Harry was dragged in, up two or three pairs of rickety stairs, into a great, cold room, which I haven't time to describe to you. But there were half-a-dozen more boys there, just as ragged as the first; and when the door opened, they set up such a shout of—

"Hi! hi! where did you pick up such a fine bird?" that Harry cried louder than ever.

"Gentlemen," said the first boy (whose

name was Jack), "this little Miss Nancy is rather displeased with her clothes, and being greatly pleased with the fit of mine, would like to exchange for some of the same sort."

This attempt at wit met with great applause, and one boy said, —

"I think those little boots would fit a brother of mine;" and throwing Harry on the floor, he drew them off in a twinkling.

"This velvet cap is very becoming to my style," said another, and fitted it on his dirty head.

"This plaid sack suits me nicely, with a *little* stretching," cried a third; and so they went on, till each one had taken some article of Harry's dress. As for our poor little boy, he was too bewildered to cry any more, and only stared from one to another with his great, astonished eyes.

"Miss Nancy," said Jack, with a profound bow, "let me fit you to a very neat pair of shoes;" and he thrust Harry's feet into some worn-out slippers, all out at the toes.

"Here is a pair of silk pants," cried another. "We only wear silk here. Just let me hang this velvet cloak on your shoulders; and let us see how this embroidered cap fits you;"

and they wrapped him in a thin, faded old shawl, and placed a tattered hat on his head.

Then they raised a great shout, and danced around poor, *ragged* Harry, pinching his cheeks, and pulling his little red ears, and laughing as if it were the greatest fun in the world.

At last Jack said, all out of breath, "Well, boys, we've had game enough for to-night; I guess I'll set him out;" and, turning to Harry with a malicious smile, he said, "Come, *rag-boy*."

Alas for poor, proud little Harry. Not a word came out of that little, trembling mouth, but the biggest tears that ever rolled from his eyes went coursing down his pale cheeks.

Out he went with Jack; and now came another run over the stones. Oh! how they hurt his little tender feet, shuffling along in the worn-out shoes.

But at last Jack suddenly let go of his hand, and before Harry had time to beg him to stay, he was lost in the darkness, and the little boy was left all alone.

He was in reality very near home, but he was too tired and bewildered to know it, so he laid down upon a cellar-door near by, and

tried to think what he should do. As he sobbed and shivered in the cold, he could not help thinking of the bright fire at home, his baby sister stretching her soft pink hands to catch the pretty shade over the gas, and his dear mother looking up with her sweet smile, saying, —

"It is most time for my little birds to creep into their soft, warm nests." But now — here he was, a poor, ragged boy; he never could find his way home again; and even if he did, his mother would never know it was her little Harry.

"What shall I do? What shall I do?" he cried, in agony; but the wicked spirit who gets people into trouble never helps them out, and so he only heard Conscience saying, softly, —

"I told you so; I told you so."

This made Harry a little angry at first; and the wicked spirit found time to whisper, —

"How hateful! It's mean to hit a fellow when he's down!"

But Harry knew better than to listen this time, and so he said, "Dear Conscience, what *shall* I do?"

And Conscience said, "Try saying your prayers, Harry."

So he asked God to forgive him, and bring him home again, and he finished just as he would at his dear mother's knee, — "Now I lay me down to sleep;" but when he repeated, "If I should die before I wake," he began sobbing afresh. "For I'm pretty sure I *shall* die," cried Harry, "and I wonder if the Lord *will* take such a naughty soul."

Conscience whispered a very sweet verse, and poor little Harry sobbed it out, — "Oh Saviour — suffer the little children — to — come" — But he fell asleep from weariness before he could finish, — so sound asleep that he did not hear the bells ring, and the men crying, "A boy lost," — so sound that he did not know his own father was passing by, till good old Pompey gave a quick bark of joy, and jumped on the queer little bundle of rags.

Harry never forgot how his father held him tight, with the big tears rolling down his cheeks; but what nearly broke his heart, was when he was carried home, and saw his poor, pale mother stretch out her hands, and fall fainting on the floor. It was, indeed, a very

sad lesson for Harry; but I know you will be glad to hear that from that time he has been a different boy. And so eager now are his little feet and hands to obey his parents' slightest wish, that I hope I shall never again be forced to say "Disobedient Harry."

XIX.

WAITING FOR JESUS.

From heavy sleep little Paul Clifford suddenly awoke, and, staring with great wondering eyes upon unfamiliar walls, started impetuously up in bed, but sank back with a quick, sharp cry of pain. A gentle face bent over him.

"What is it, dear?"

"Where am I?" said Paul, faintly, "and what is the matter?"

"Ah! you can't remember, poor little child! You have had a terrible fall, and hurt you very much, but we hope to make you all well in a little while. Don't think any more about it now, but try to go to sleep again."

Paul shuddered. "Oh, I remember *now*—those cruel, *cruel* doctors—how they screwed my leg, and put fire on my back. *Father* wouldn't have let them do it if he had been here;" and the child's breast heaved painfully.

"They *tried* to be kind," said the nurse,

with a tear in her eye, "but I know it was very hard to bear. But now see, darling, the worst is over; they have set your leg, and tried to do something for your poor little back, and now you have only to lie very still, and get well as fast as you can. Come," said she, as his face grew calmer, "we will have a very nice time together. Shall I read till you go to sleep?"

"I can't sleep any more now, please," said little Paul, wearily."

"Then I will shake up your pillows so you can look around and see all the pleasant little children."

Very tenderly she raised his head, but not so carefully but he felt that strange sensation of fire on his back, and groaned, although he bit his proud, young lips, and tried to smile his thanks to the sweet-faced lady. Very languidly at first did he raise his heavy lids; but soon he became more interested, for this is what he saw: A long, cheerful room, lined on two sides with little cots with snowy coverlids and soft white pillows, and in a pretty sack of pink or blue, like a bird in each fair little nest, was sitting or lying a patient little child. They were all so very young. One was

not more than two years old, and the greatest veteran in the company had not counted more than eight or nine birthdays. But every one already knew what it was to suffer pain; and around some of the small mouths there were sweet, patient lines, very touching to see in such baby faces.

Paul looked earnestly from one to the other. He noticed the little girl opposite, singing softly and contentedly to her wooden doll, pressed close to her white, thin cheek, — he saw the clear-eyed little boy next to her, peering eagerly into the mechanism of a toy steam-engine, entirely unmindful of the helpless arm tied up in a sling, — and another child, a little farther on, turning over a picture-book, and almost forgetting his poor paralyzed feet, upon which he would never walk again.

"Yes," sighed Paul to himself; "*they* seem happy enough, but they must have been here a great while, and forgotten how splendid every thing is out in the sunshine; but *I*, — only yesterday I could run faster than any boy on the street, and *now*" — the tears gathered in his eyes.

"I am very sorry for you, little boy," said a

sweet voice; and, turning, he found it came from his next neighbor, whose cot was only a few feet from his own.

The speaker was a little girl, with very fair hair, and a skin so transparent that he could trace the delicate blue veins on her temples, and as he looked at her innocent face he wondered to find himself thinking of the fair white lilies he had once seen when he peered through the fence of some rare city garden.

Paul felt himself greatly comforted, he scarcely knew why, by the look and words of sympathy, and a quick, impulsive friendship sprang up between the little fellow-sufferers. It was not long before Paul was telling her all his story — how "Mother died, and father and he went to live with Aunt Margaret, who was poor, and had ever so many children, and was sometimes very cross. Then father, *dear* father, went off to the wars, and told him that as soon as he was old enough he should be a soldier too. Ever since father sailed he had been longing for him, and whenever any of the soldiers went away he always wanted to see them, because they were going where father was; and so, one day, when he climbed a tree in Broadway, to see a procession go

past, poor Ben Butler, who was half foolish, *would* creep on to the same limb. It began to crack, and he thought Benny wouldn't know enough to save himself, so *he* tried to jump to another branch, but missed, and fell down, — down, on the hard pavement, and didn't know any more till the doctors" — his voice quivered.

"Never mind," said Susy, "don't tell any more," and they mingled their tears.

Then Susy, in her turn, told him "she had already been there two years, and never expected to be well, but knew that she should live in that little cot till she died."

"But you don't seem to care at all," said Paul, looking wonderingly at her smiling face.

"No," said Susy; "I am very happy. Very few sick children have such nice clean beds, and such pleasant nurses to take care of them. Do you know this is S—— Hospital, and the nurses are ladies, — some of them very rich, — who come here just because they love God, and want to do something to please him."

"And do they stay here all their lives to take care of sick children?"

"That's just as they please," said Susy.

"Some of them stay a few months, and some of them a good many years; and besides taking care of us they have a great many sick men and women in the other rooms."

"I should think God would love them very much," said Paul, looking affectionately after the nurse flitting noiselessly, in her soft, dark dress, from one little cot to another. "But, Susy," he began, after a long pause, "I suppose girls can keep *still* easier than boys; but I'm sure I could never smile again if I thought I must stay here all my life. Oh, Susy, have you forgotten how splendid it is to run and jump? It would just break my heart if I didn't think I should get well very soon, and go to be a *soldier* with father. How *can* you smile so, Susy?"

"I'm waiting for Jesus," said Susy, softly.

"What *can* you mean?"

"Why," said Susy, "the nurse reads to us every day, from the Bible, and once she told us about Jesus passing amidst all the sick people, and making them well, and I said, 'Oh, nurse, if he only *would* pass by here, and touch every little cot;' and then she told me that Jesus *would* come to every little child that asked for him, and if it was best he would

make us well, and leave us on earth, or perhaps, if he loved us very much, he would take us with him to heaven. So," said Susy, with a strange, sweet smile, "I'm waiting for him every day."

"And you really think he'll come?"

"I know it," said Susy, simply.

Paul looked doubtful, and sinking back upon his pillow, wearily closed his great sad eyes.

The days passed on, and little Paul grew no better, although he had learned from Susy to be very *patient* for Christ's sake. One bright May morning he woke hearing the doctors talking around his bed. They had decided that perhaps one more operation might save his life. "Will you bear it like a hero, my dear little fellow?" said one, kindly.

"I'll try, sir," said Paul, steadily, "for you know I'm to be a *soldier* one of these days."

"To be sure," said the doctor, kindly. "To-morrow, then;" and they passed on.

Susy, with her violet eyes full of tears, said again and again, "Dear Paul, *poor dear Paul!*" but he wanted to be brave, and was afraid he should cry if he looked at her. So he lay very still, with closed eyes, while the

sweet Sabbath music stole in from the chapel, where some of the poor sick men and women were worshiping God. With all his bravery he could not help shuddering to think of the cruel suffering on the morrow, and thinking how sweet it would be for Jesus to come, as Susy had said. With a piteous little prayer trembling on his lips, he fell into a half slumber, and dreamed that he did indeed see the beautiful Saviour coming down between the long lines of little cots, straight towards his own bed. Paul hid his face from the brightness, but he knew when Jesus touched him, for the pain slipped away softly, and with a glad cry he opened his eyes. Alas! the old pain came leaping back — ran over his poor back, and shivered down his tired little limbs. With a heavy sigh he looked around the room. It was flooded with glad sunshine, and one bright beam rested on the sweet picture of Jesus blessing little children, and saying "Suffer them to come unto me." Paul grew calmer while he looked at it. He wanted to tell Susy that he was almost sure Jesus would come some time, but he was so very tired, his eyes again closed wearily, nor did

they open till in the twilight he heard the children singing, —

"I know I'm weak and sinful,
But Jesus can forgive."

"Oh, yes," said Paul, starting anxiously, as he caught the name. "I almost forgot *Jesus* is coming;" and he tried to bolster up his little thin hand so it would stay up in the air.

"What *are* you doing?" said Susy.

"You see," said Paul, in a drowsy, wandering voice, "I'm afraid Jesus might pass by in the night, when I was asleep, and I want to keep my hand up so he can find me, and know I'm the boy who has been waiting" —— his voice died away.

"Dear Paul; he is gone to sleep," said Susy.

Paul slept late the next morning. "I can not bear to wake him," said one kind nurse to another. "Poor little fellow! he must suffer so much to-day! and it will break his heart when he finds he can never be a soldier, for they say he will always be lame." But Susy, looking eagerly to the bed, and seeing the little hand lying quietly by his side, said, with a glad, hopeful smile, —

"I shouldn't wonder if Jesus put it there."

And Susy was right, for Jesus had indeed passed by, and finding little Paul waiting for him, and loving him *very much*, had lifted the tired lamb to his bosom.

XX.

THE WILLFUL BOY.

PHIL sat in the cottage window with his lips in a terrible pout. What could be the matter? Why, his mother had gone down the street to see a neighbor, and had left him to take care of his baby sister. Now Phil meant to have sailed his little boat on the pond, and he was very angry to think his sport was spoiled. He was not willing to give up any thing for the dear mother who had done so much for him. So three little wrinkles came and puckered up his forehead, and that ugly pout found room to sit on his lips.

"I won't take care of her, any way," muttered Phil to himself. "If I can't sail my boat, I'll read my new fairy book." So the naughty boy took his book, and soon forgot all about his sister.

She came once and climbed up by his knee, but he pushed her off so rudely, that she stared with grieved, wondering eyes, and complain-

ing in her sweet, baby way, she went to play with Ponto, who was a much more agreeable companion.

Presently, with short, uncertain steps, she tottered to the door. Poor baby! she could just walk alone. Slowly she crept out, and down the steps into the garden. Phil was too much engaged with his book to pay her any attention, but faithful old Ponto trotted out with a very wise look, and gravely followed little Carrie wherever she went. Presently they came to a tub which was standing half full of water. Carrie looked in, and saw a pleasant, round face, encircled with little rings of light hair.

"Pretty baby," said little innocent Carrie, smiling. The baby smiled too. Carrie stretched out her hands — little, fat, white arms reached towards her out of the water. Carrie leaned forward to reach the hands of the pleasant baby. Alas! alas! there was a quick splash! Ponto barked loudly, and Phil, looking up, saw only the little red shoes of baby sister over the edge of the tub! Then, indeed, he was alarmed, and springing up quickly, he knocked the water pitcher off the table, and broke it in a hundred pieces. But

he could not stop for that, and rushing into the garden, arrived just in time to see good Ponto, with Carrie's dress in his mouth, pull her gently out of the water. Poor Carrie, she strangled and cried, and could not at all understand why that pleasant baby had thrown water in her face.

But Phil, when the first fright was over, began to think what he should tell his mother about the broken pitcher and Carrie's wet dress. Before he had quite decided whether to tell a lie, or bravely speak the truth and ask her forgiveness, he heard the garden gate open.

"Phil," said his mother's cheerful voice, "I have such a pleasant surprise for you. Mrs. Brown has sent you a Canary just like the one you admired so much, and — but what is the matter with Carrie?"

"Oh, mother," said Phil, hurriedly, "Ponto has been so wild, he would not mind me at all. He jumped on the table and knocked off the pitcher all over Carrie."

"The bad dog," said mamma; and, taking a stick, she led Ponto to the broken pitcher, and then whipped him quite hard, saying, "Ponto shall have no supper."

Poor Ponto could not understand it at all, and, whining piteously, he ran under the table with drooping ears. But Phil was very unhappy, for he knew God had seen it all.

When supper-time came, Ponto looked on with great wishful eyes, and at last came and stood on his hind legs before Phil, and patiently moved his forepaws up and down, which was his most humble way of begging.

Poor, innocent Ponto, who saved little sister's life! Phil's supper choked him, and he felt perfectly wretched.

Just then Jack, the neighbor's boy, came in. "Why can't Ponto have his supper?"

Phil's mamma told him the story. Jack looked shocked, and said, "Oh, Phil, I was passing at the time, and saw your little sister fall in the tub." Then it all came out, and Phil, blushing crimson, burst into tears.

I can not tell you how dreadfully Phil's mamma felt, to think that her little boy had been so wicked, and had so sinned against his kind Father in heaven. As for Phil himself, he had never been so thoroughly wretched in all his life before, and he felt that truly "the way of transgressors is hard." Phil deeply repented, and asked God's forgiveness,

but the next day his mother thought it but right to send away the beautiful bird to be given to some better boy.

Dear little children, could any of you act like Phil?

XXI.

THE CHILDREN OF THE KINGDOM.

THE afternoon sunlight, streaming brightly through the windows of the little old-fashioned church, gilded the fair young heads in the choir, and down a broad golden path slid a quivering crown upon the good old minister's silver hair. Daisy and Bob Saybrook sat in the square pew under the pulpit, tightly wedged in between Aunt Skinner and mischievous Cousin John, and listened with more than their usual attention to the words of the sermon. The text was so very sweet, — "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

The tears came in Daisy's eyes. She looked at Uncle Skinner, but he had settled down with his eyes shut, probably so that his attention might not be distracted by any thing earthly. Aunt Skinner was taking a pinch of snuff, and John was scrawling in the hymn book, drawing pictures of dogs worrying cats,

and another one, which made Daisy shudder, of a man hanging on a gallows. But Bob — that was a comfort — gave her a bright look of sympathy; and pressing each other's hands, they listened with eager ears.

Now Bob and Daisy were orphans, and it was only a few weeks since their dear mother had died, and they had come to live with Uncle and Aunt Skinner. No one in all the world can take the place of a precious mother; and so, although Aunt Skinner tried to be very kind, they could not yet feel at all happy in their new home, and they had to struggle very hard against a feeling of positive dislike towards their cousin John. He was older and stronger than Bob, and was continually doing every thing in his power to make his young cousins uncomfortable. Even now, as they sat in church, he would now and then vary his occupation of drawing by giving Daisy a violent pinch, which would make her start off her seat. Then Aunt Skinner would give her such a sharp look that the child's heart would be nearly broken. So it is no wonder that these little children listened so eagerly to the comforting words of the good old minister. He told them such won-

derful things of the glorious King who made all the shining worlds, of his great white throne, and his angels, beautiful because they had stood so long in his light, the harpers, harping with harps, and the cherubim veiling their faces because the glory was so great. But this wonderful King so loved the little world that he sent his Son to die upon the cross, that all his sinful, wandering earth-children might come back to his love. And he, the great King, would be their Father, Jesus his glorious Son their elder brother, and they with him should be heirs of the *kingdom*. "Behold, what manner of love!" said the good minister, with tears in his eyes. "Through this dear Elder Brother we can even come nearer God's heart than the angels."

Daisy looked at Bob with a glad surprise; and when service was over, they walked slowly home, talking it over together. They had often talked before with their dear mother, and when she died, she hoped that she left them both "followers of God as dear children." But Daisy felt troubled.

"Bob," said she, anxiously, "do you really think we are children of the kingdom?"

"Why, I hope so; but I'll tell you what I did in church, Daisy. I gave my heart to God over again, and I promised to study his Book more, and find out all he wishes me to do, and then I'll do it with all my might."

"Then I will, too," said Daisy, lifting her clear eyes to heaven.

"But I'll tell you what, Daisy, we'll have a tough time trying to do *some* things. What do you think of—'Love your enemies?' Now there's John"—

"Well, to be sure, my arm is all black and blue; but then I feel now as if I forgave him; and, indeed, Bob," said she, slowly, "I'm not quite sure, but I think I could almost love him."

"Ah, indeed!" sneered a voice behind them, "don't put yourself out too much."

Daisy colored violently. "Have you heard all we said?"

"I've had the privilege," said John, in a nasal tone, "of listening to most of your edifying conversation. It was a great treat for such a poor sinner, I assure you. It's so *very* affecting to think that these dear lambs of the flock can love a poor goat with such very long horns;" and he pretended to wipe his eyes.

"Now, John," said Daisy, deprecatingly, "you know we did not mean to say any thing so bad. We want to love you very much, but you will not let us."

"And why not, pray, Miss Sanctity?"

"You need only look at her arm," cried Bob, indignantly, "and you'll have one answer. And I'll tell you what, John Skinner, you'll have to stop that fun."

"Ah?" said he, with provoking coolness. "Will the little lamb fight? I thought it could only bleat, and cry for its ma."

The tears sprang into Bob's eyes at that heartless allusion to his recent sorrow, and a voice whispered in his heart, —"It's no use —give up trying to be one of God's children, and pitch into John Skinner just once." But he struggled against the feeling, though his hands clenched involuntarily, all through his busy prayers for help. Daisy, too, would not trust herself to speak, and walked on silently, while John sang scraps of psalm-tunes through his nose, all the way home.

Arrived at the door, John turned to Daisy. "My dear Christian friend, I have such a pleasant surprise for you." Daisy followed him apprehensively through the garden to the

barn, when, opening the door, out walked her little pet kitten, Pearl, her pure, white fur dabbled with streaks of red and yellow paint, looking like a little clown kitten.

"You see," said John, while Daisy uttered an exclamation of dismay, "I knew your taste in *colors*, because you admired the sunset so much last night. I'm so glad I have pleased you;" and he grinned maliciously.

The kitten mewed piteously, as if in great pain.

"I declare," said John, "I believe she has been trying to lick it off. I hadn't the least idea that she had a *taste* for color, too;" and he laughed loudly.

"You're a cruel boy, John," cried Bob, coming up. "That poor kitten has swallowed too much paint, and will die before night."

John only laughed louder, while Daisy tenderly took her kitten, and with Bob's help washed it with soap and warm water. The poor kitten seemed grateful, but lay languidly in Daisy's lap till night, when, as Bob predicted, it died.

Daisy could not be comforted, and Bob indignantly told Aunt Skinner the whole story.

"Oh, John is always up to his tricks," said she, a little impatiently, "but I don't think that little bit of paint hurt the kitten at all. It always *was* sickly. Daisy played with it too much. But don't cry, child," she added, more kindly; "you shall have another some time."

"It will never be like Pearl," sobbed Daisy.

"Dear Sister Saybrook," drawled John, passing her little stool, "you must set your affections on things above."

"Daisy," whispered Bob, as they lighted their candles to go to bed, "could you love John now?"

"Don't ask me," cried poor Daisy, in a choking voice. "It's as much as I can do not to *hate* him to-night."

Nevertheless, Daisy prayed so earnestly that God would take all bitterness out of her heart, that in the morning she was able to look quite cheerful, and spoke so pleasantly to John that he was greatly disappointed.

"She didn't love her kitten so much, after all," said he to himself.

But now Bob was in trouble. One of his boots was nowhere to be found. His other pair had gone to be mended, and it was almost school-time. High and low pattered

the willing feet of little Daisy, but all in vain.

"You're a very careless boy," cried Aunt Skinner; "John never did such a thing in his life."

"I believe John has done it now, then," sighed Daisy to herself.

"Then I must stay at home from school," cried Bob, bitterly; "and I was so anxious not to lose my place."

There was no help for it, and Daisy left her brother with an aching heart.

"It's all John," cried Bob, fiercely, when he was left alone. "Now I've lost my place at the head. Oh, I just *hate*" —

"Stop a minute, Bob," said his good angel. "There are worse things than losing one's place at school. Remember your Father sees every thing, and if you do right, and conquer these wicked thoughts, John can't make you lose your place in the kingdom."

"To be sure!" said Bob, more cheerily; "how could I forget it for a moment?"

Just then a bright idea came into his head, and hurrying to the barn, he found an old cast-off boot of Uncle Skinner's. It was a world too large, but Bob drew it on, and clat-

tered bravely away to school. There was a great laugh when he made his appearance, but he kept his place at the head, and felt very happy. At night, John sullenly threw the missing boot into the room. "Where did you find it?" asked Aunt Skinner.

"Under a chair in his room."

"Oh, John!" cried Bob and Daisy together.

"It's true," said John; "but you're just a couple of bats, and can't see an inch beyond your noses." Bob and Daisy looked at each other, but knew it was useless to say any more. A day or two after John came to them, saying,—"I'll tell you what, if you'll give up trying to be such saints, I'll give up plaguing you."

Bob and Daisy could not agree to that. So day by day their trials increased. But still these little children of the kingdom struggled patiently on, and in the Book they studied to learn their Father's command, they also often found his beautiful promises, and this was one:—

"As one whom his *mother* comforteth, so will I comfort you."

"Ah, Bob!" said little orphan Daisy, "how sweet it is to be children of the kingdom!"

XXII.

THE KING'S ARMY.

In the chill December air, Bob and Daisy were again wending their way home from church. The sweet voices of the village choir came floating on the wind,—

"Am I a soldier of the cross,"

and in Bob and Daisy's hearts were still ringing the words of the text—"I have fought a good fight. I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," etc.

"Daisy," said Bob, suddenly, "I don't think I fight enough."

"What *can* you mean, Bob?"

"Oh! I think I take things too easy. When John provokes me (and Aunt Skinner always takes his part), I think it's enough if I don't say a word, or don't strike him, when I'm just longing to do it. Oh, Daisy, if you only knew how angry I feel all the time. Sometimes I have to run out to the woodshed, and

saw wood just as fast as I can, and sometimes I get the hammer and nails, and pound on the new chicken-yard just as if it was John's head, and I just let all sorts of wicked thoughts run on, and don't try to stop them. Now if I'm in the King's army, that the good old minister told about, I ought not to run away so like a coward. I ought to stand firm, and fight down all these wicked feelings — come out like a man into the front ranks, and stand the fire."

"Dear me!" sighed Daisy, "what do you think of me? I don't know how to fight. Oh, Bob, must all the children of the king dom be in the King's army?"

"I suppose they must," said Bob, half laughing; "but then you, dear Daisy, don't you remember what the minister said, that some had more fighting to do than others? Each one must do something, but there must always be some one to look after the baggage —'bear one another's burdens,' you know,— and then some one must carry the *banners*. Now I think you'd make a capital flag-bearer."

"How do you mean, Bob? Could any one see my flag?"

"Why, yes; you must be so gentle, and

forgiving, and patient, and loving, that when any one looks at you, they will read something as plain as print on a banner."

"Well," said Daisy, with sparkling eyes, "what banner shall I carry?"

"I'll tell you what *I* read," returned Bob, looking at her affectionately: "'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'"

Daisy colored painfully. "Oh Bob, don't make fun of me; I'm so bad, no one would ever think of *that*."

"I'm not so sure," cried Bob, kissing her round, dimpled cheeks.

They opened the garden gate, and walking up to the stoop, paused a moment to look over the broad fields of snow, rosy in the light of the setting sun. Bob's heart was full of gentle and brave resolutions.

"I'll tell you what, Daisy,—you shall carry the banners, and make the music, and I'll try to be a real faithful soldier, and"—

His remarks were cut short by a very unexpected shower of icy water from the windows above.

"This is a little too much," cried Bob, angrily, "over our Sunday clothes, and your best bonnet; Daisy, I'll"—

"Take care," whispered a voice in Bob's ear. "Is this the way you 'stand fire?'"

"Dear me!" cried John's voice above, in an affected tone of surprise and concern. "Who would have thought of your being down there? Dear pilgrims, with your new clothes just fresh from Vanity Fair! and that beautiful pink bonnet! How well it is that *Sister Saybrook* never took any pride in it!"

Daisy bit her lip, for she remembered looking in the glass that very morning, and feeling quite pleased with the pretty pink reflection on her cheeks. She also remembered feeling very uncomfortable at hearing John singing in the hall, in his disagreeable nasal tone, —

"Why should our garments, made to hide
Our sin and shame, provoke our pride?"

"I hope you'll be able to forgive me," whined John.

"Oh, certainly," replied Bob, who had quite recovered himself.

Now this was not at all what John wanted. He was greatly disappointed in not seeing Bob fly in a passion. So he called again, —

"Oh! you precious hypocrite, to tell the truth, I did it on purpose."

"Never mind," cried Daisy's cheery voice, as they hurried in to repair damages. "We forgive you just the same."

This was too much for John, and he did not show himself again till tea-time.

The next morning, as Bob came out of his room, he found chalked in huge letters on his door — "Saint's Rest," but he, smiling, wiped it off, and took no farther notice of the intended taunt.

So the winter passed on with daily conflicts, but also some grand victories. To be sure, the young soldiers would often be very weary, and greatly discouraged, but they were never entirely conquered, and, sure of receiving fresh strength from above, they were always ready to come bravely back to the battle. And Daisy carried some very beautiful banners.

Towards spring there was to be a grand examination in the village school, and some rich gentleman had offered two very handsome prizes — one for the best scholar in mathematics, and one for the best composition. Now John, who was very ambitious, and a boy of good talents, was determined to have them both. In mathematics, Bob, Fred

Gray, and he, had already distanced all other competitors, and it was hard to say which would be the victor. But one day John failed utterly in the demonstration of a difficult problem, which was successfully worked out by Bob. This was more than John's spirit could bear, and for several days he went around with such an air of sullen gloom, that no one dared to sympathize with him. At last he suddenly betook himself with such energy to his composition, in which there was good prospect of success, that Bob believed his mortification was forgotten.

Every thing went on smoothly till the day before examination, when Bob came hurrying in after school, saying, "Oh, I've so much to study. Don't call me to tea, please, Aunt Skinner; I couldn't eat a morsel;" and he sat himself down in a western window, to improve the last ray of light. Suddenly he uttered an exclamation of dismay.

"What's the matter?" cried Daisy.

"Why, some one has torn the leaves out of my Algebra, right in the hardest part."

"Why do you lay it to some one else?" said Aunt Skinner, sharply; "you've probably been careless yourself."

"I kept it just like a new book," said Bob, mournfully. "Oh, John, *won't* you let me take yours?"

"By and by," said John; but, though Bob begged and pleaded, he would not stir to find it till after tea. Then he came down stairs, saying, with a yawn,—

"Oh, I'm sorry, Bob, but I just remember I lent mine to one of the boys yesterday."

Bob looked intensely disappointed, and, seizing his cap, rushed to the door.

"Where are you going?" asked Uncle Skinner, coming in with his coat dripping, and using all his force to shut the door against the driving wind. "It's a terrible storm."

"I don't mind it," said Bob. "I *must* try and find an Algebra."

"Are you crazy, child?" cried Aunt Skinner. "You shan't stir a step. Do you think I can have you on my hands with fever and ague, all through the spring?"

Bob came back in the room very quietly, and leaning his head on his hand, spoke not a word for more than an hour. Neither did little Daisy, who knelt beside him with her head on his knee. At last he turned to her

with a very pale face, but a sweet, wan smile.

"It's all over now, Daisy. It has been a great fight, and I'm very tired, but I'm not angry with any one, now. I'm pretty sure I shall lose the prize, but perhaps I should have been too proud."

Daisy only sobbed softly to herself.

John broke in fretfully, "Mr. Brooks said my composition would stand a good chance, if it were only a little fuller upon this one head. He said I'd find a great deal to help me in a book he told me about, but I can't get it at *this* bookstore, and I suppose the roads will be perfectly impassable over to Snowdon to-morrow. What shall I do? I could alter this one sheet at the last minute, if I only had the book."

No one answered, and he, grumbling, again applied himself to his task.

Poor Bob was up the next morning with the first streak of light. He secured an Algebra, and never before did a brain travel at such express speed over the difficult problems and equations. But the class was called so soon, he was not more than half ready. Poor Bob! he passed a fine examination, and had

many compliments, but he missed *once* in that very hard place, and the beautiful prize went to Fred Gray.

As the boys walked silently home from school, Bob turned off at the little bridge over the creek. "I don't feel quite well, John," said he, "and I believe a walk would do me good. Please tell Aunt Skinner that I don't care for any dinner."

"Your pride's hurt, that's all," cried John; "you don't want to show yourself, after being so badly beaten. Well, it *must* go down rather hard after all your superior airs."

"I forgive you, John," cried Bob, throwing back a bright look, as he dashed into the wood.

"Forgive me? What for?" screamed John, stamping his foot. "Do you think *I* tore your book?" But Bob had sprung out of hearing. "Well, it would be a pity to let such lovely Christian charity die for want of exercise," muttered John, and he loosened one of the boards of the little bridge, so that when Bob came bounding back it would tilt up and give him a heavy fall.

But John's conscience troubled him all the afternoon, and he could not even think of the

composition which was to come off with such glory on the next day. As soon as the late school was dismissed, he almost flew down to the little bridge. Ah! his fears were too true! There, at full length, in the dim, gray light lay the motionless form of his cousin Bob. He had struck his head in falling, and was quite unconscious.

"I've done it at last," groaned John, in conscience-stricken despair. "I've killed him now."

He lifted him tenderly, for Bob's slight figure was a light burden, and carried him home.

"Bob has fallen and killed himself!" he almost screamed, as Aunt Skinner came to the door.

Then all was hurry and confusion. The doctor came, and old nurse Comfort, and poor little Daisy never ceased to sob and kiss Bob's pale hands. John, too, could not keep away, and as he hovered near, he saw a little medal on a long black cord fall from his bosom. He took it up. On one side was scratched, in Bob's plain hand, "Robert Saybrook, entered the King's army Dec. 10th, 18—," and on the other, "My Father's prom-

ise: 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.'"

John shuddered, and for the first time in his life he prayed earnestly, — "Not *yet*, O God! Keep it for him a little longer. Spare him *this* time."

But John's cup of remorse was not yet full for, carrying Bob's coat in the hall, a heavy book fell out. John picked it up. It was the very one he had been wishing for, and in it was written, — "John Skinner, with the love of his cousin Bob."

"*That* is where he went then," groaned John. "Poor, tired, disappointed Bob went way over to Snowdon for *me*. Oh, he'll die; I know he'll die! I've killed him!"

He went to his room, and threw himself on his bed in an agony. The long hours passed on, and at last some one knocked at his door. "Is it all over?" said John, in a low, fearful whisper. "Is he *dead?*"

"Oh, no," answered the pleasant voice of nurse Comfort. "Your cousin will live, and I thought you would like to know."

No words can describe the happiness that thrilled poor John Skinner's grateful heart. Neither can it be told with what tenderness

he waited on Bob through all his weary confinement. And at last, when the boy was able to bear it, he made a long confession of all his wicked and malicious deeds, and humbly asked forgiveness. "For you see," said John, in a faltering voice, "you have been such a good soldier, you have not only conquered yourself, but even *me*, your greatest enemy, and now I want you and Daisy to tell me how to join the King's army, for I, too, am determined to fight the good fight. Oh, Bob, if you could only know how I thank you!"

"Don't thank *me*," faltered Bob; but could say no more for the happy tears. But as Daisy looked at his radiant face, she whispered, "I know what banner you are carrying to-day."

"What?" asked Bob.

Daisy clasped her fair hands reverently: "Thanks be unto *God*, who giveth us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."