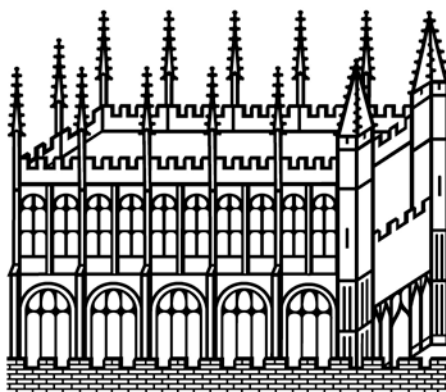




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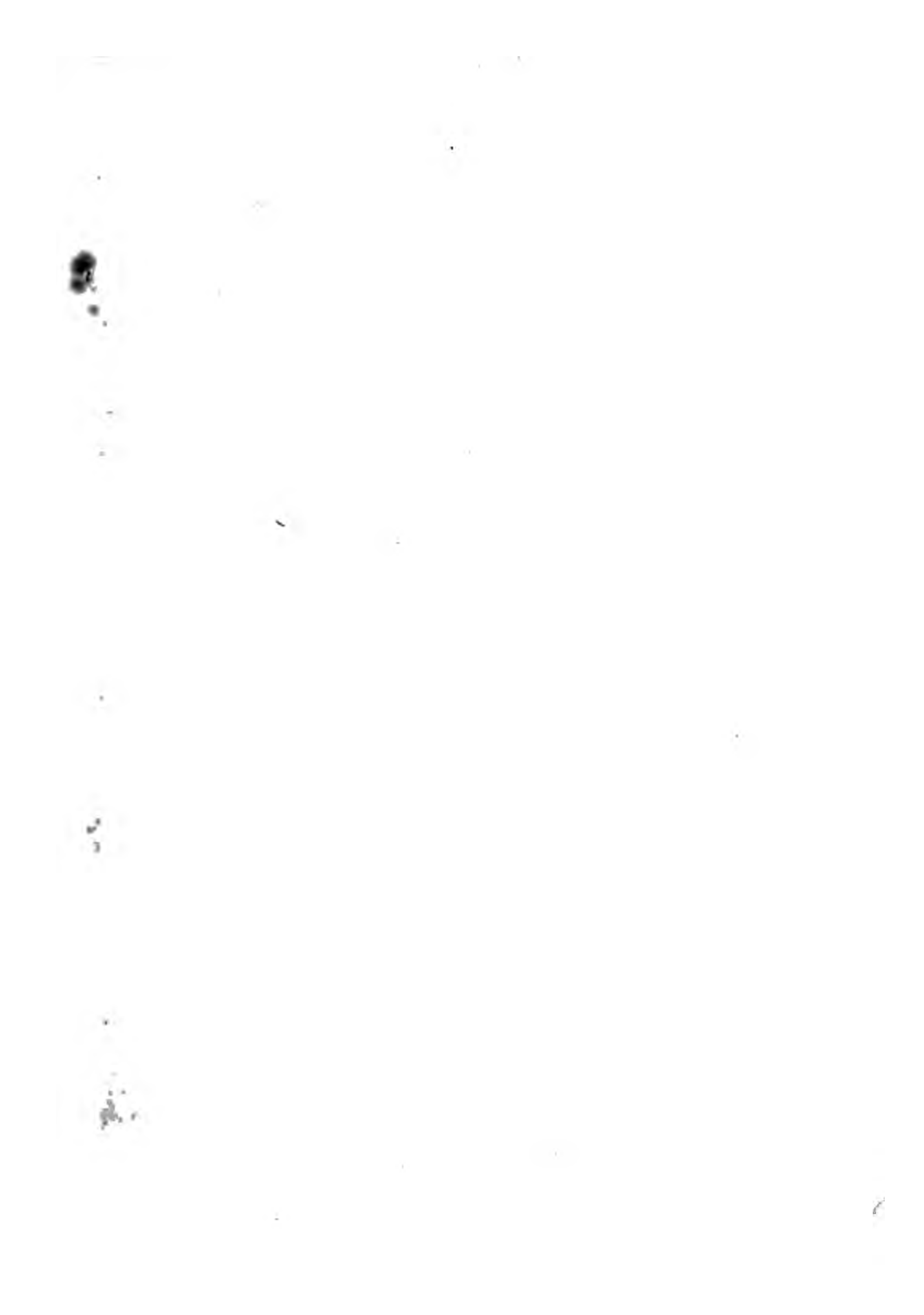
JACK AND SHAG





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REGY AND HIS PRIZE.



JACK AND SHAG,

And other Stories.



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY,
56, PATERNOSTER ROW ; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD ;
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JACK AND SHAG.

CHAPTER I.

JACK had curly brown hair, merry blue eyes, a sunburnt complexion, and coarse but well-mended clothes. Shag had a pair of bright, quick dark eyes, two little sharp ears, and a rough grey coat that needed no mending. Jack and Shag were friends. Jack was seldom seen without his little four-legged companion frisking and barking at his heels, and Shag's devotion to the boy was shown by every glance of his bright eyes, and every wag of his little brush of a tail.

They were also master and servant, but the service was one of love, and the little

master was not a tyrant like so many boys who keep live animals, and like to show their power by teasing and tormenting even the pets they profess to be fond of. Jack exacted no obedience from his small servant that could not be easily and willingly performed. Ever since Jack's father—a gardener—had brought home a little shaggy bundle and put it into his son's arms, saying, "There, my boy, you've no brothers and sisters to play with, so I've brought you a playmate," the two companions had been inseparable; and it certainly did make the boy's life far happier.

Jack's mother was very kind, but she was always busy and often ailing—for she was not strong; his father was away all day, and they lived two miles from a little country village, so that there were not many boys at hand for Jack to play with. Besides, he was not an idle boy; he went to the village school every day, and afterwards did errands both

for his mother and for the few shops in the village, where he was known as a steady, trustworthy little fellow.

And what did Shag do when Jack went to school? you ask. Why he went too. Jack pleaded, and the schoolmaster was a kind man, who encouraged his pupils to love animals, and he said if the dog behaved well, and did not take off the boys' attention from their work, he might stop.

It was just as if little Shag understood all about it, for he lay curled up like a ball in one corner of the schoolroom all the time, as good as possible, but he always knew when the time drew near for dismissing the school. You might have found it out by watching the dog quite as well as by looking at the clock: first his eyes opened and fixed themselves on his master, then his ears were pricked up, and lastly his tail began to thump upon the sanded floor. But he kept quite quiet till the master rang the bell, and

then up he jumped and rushed out with the boys, as glad as they were, and showing his delight in much the same way.

Not far from the small cottage where John Smith, Jack's father, lived, was a large handsome white house; it stood in a park through which the villagers were allowed to pass, and many a time had little Jack stood gazing with admiration at the beautiful flowers of every hue that filled the garden, the noble trees and shrubs, the smooth green lawns, and the hothouses, and greenhouses, and pineries which gleamed in the sunshine. His father worked there, and once Jack had gone with him, and walked through this wonderful garden, a treat he never forgot, especially as he had seen something that interested him even more than the flowers. That was a boy about his own age, sitting under a large spreading tree with a lady; she was beautifully dressed, and looked very kind, as she nodded to his

father and asked, "Is that your son, Smith ? I hope he is a good lad."

But Jack took more notice of the boy with her, who did not seem very strong ; he was pale and thin, and had large dark eyes, and fair hair hanging nearly to his shoulders, and was very pretty, Jack thought, only too much like a girl ; he was dressed in black velvet, and he had a book full of coloured pictures in his hand.

For days afterwards Jack could talk of nothing else but the delicate boy at the great house, and he asked his father many questions about him, and could not hear half as much as he wanted. His father was tired when he came home from his work, and was glad to rest after supper while his son chattered about all he had seen and heard during the day, and all the wonderful things Shag had done, and how clever he was ; and then came the usual question,—

"Did you see Master Regy to-day, father?"

"Yes, Jack, I saw him several times; he's mostly about the garden."

"And did he talk to you, father?"

"Oh, yes," said his father, rather shortly.

"What about?" asked Jack.

"Well, I can't rightly mind, lad. About different things."

"Can't you remember anything?" asked Jack presently.

"Well, let me see. He asked what I was doing, and if I'd put some strawberry plants in his garden. And why the flowers he planted always died."

"And why do they, father?"

"Well, I should say because he's always pulling them up to see if the roots are all right."

"Oh!" said Jack. "And what else?"

"He asked why his mustard and cress came up in the letters of his name."

"Why, he sowed it so, I suppose?"

"No, no, his ma did that, to surprise him."

"Did she? Go on, please, father; anything else?"

"He asked what snails were made for, and whether he could see the buds open if he watched long enough, and whether I'd got a little girl at home like his baby-sister, and heaps of questions."

Jack laughed.

"What a funny boy, father! and did he ask about me?"

"Why, yes, so he did. He asked what you did all day, and if you had a garden."

"And did you tell him about Shag?"

"Yes, I think so. But come, my boy, that'll do; you beat Master Regy with your questions, I do declare!"

But this was all some time ago, and since then Jack had often met Reginald Graham, the squire's only son, in the park, or the woods behind the house. They generally

stopped to have a talk, and of course Shag had been introduced and petted, and his various accomplishments of begging and speaking for a bit of bread displayed and duly admired. Reginald seemed even more lonely than Jack. His mother was a good deal occupied with the baby-sister whose charms were expatiated upon by her brother with much pride, and his father went out for long rides. "When I'm nine I shall go with him," the boy would say.

There were no end to the things Regy was to do when he was nine! He was to have a pony of his own, and a dog, and a tutor to live with him, and to leave off taking medicine and being coddled—so he informed Jack confidentially. There was no doubt but that poor little Master Regy was very delicate, and his parents were very anxious about him; however, the doctor said that if he had plenty of fresh air and rest, in a few months he might be quite well. And the

boy firmly believed that the wonderful ninth birthday was to bring health and strength, with all the other blessings he longed for.

This period was drawing near to both the boys, for they had discovered, to their delight, that they were nearly of the same age, their birthdays being in the same month; though Jack was so manly and well grown that he looked at least a year older than fragile little Reginald.

One fine sunny summer afternoon about this time you might have seen crossing the common which led from the park to the village Jack and Shag, the latter scampering with fierce barks after imaginary rabbits or rats, and the former trudging along with his hands in his pockets, and a thoughtful frown, not often to be seen on his merry face, wrinkling his forehead.

"Ten shillings! I could never earn it, not if I were to save up my halfpence for a whole year!" Jack was saying to himself; "and I

know father can't help me now. I must give it up. But how nice it would have been! I could have made mother a footstool, and a little table for her work, and a nice little kennel for Shag to sleep in, and lots of things. It's a great pity!"

Jack had always a longing for a box of tools, and when he was quite a little fellow he used to plan how by-and-by he would earn money and buy one for himself; and lately all his old longings had been revived by the sight of one his friend Regy had been showing him. Such a beauty! it had been displayed in the wood adjoining the garden, which was the boys' favourite meeting-place, and on the soft green moss the contents were one by one laid out, and handled by Jack with quite a loving touch. There was the little saw, and hammer, and chisel, and packets of shining brass-headed nails, and all the rest of the bright implements that go to make a tool-box perfect.

Jack's admiration and delight showed itself in his eyes, and made Regy say, "I can't give it to you, Jack, for it is papa's present to me, and he wants me to learn to use them; and I must try soon; but I could get you one just like it, for I know where papa bought this, only it's rather expensive—ten shillings."

Rather expensive, indeed! Poor Jack felt that it was a hopeless luxury, to be thought of no more by a boy who only earned a penny or twopence now and then.

"I couldn't give you the money either," observed Regy, watching his friend's down-cast face. "I wish I could, but I've spent all my allowance, and papa doesn't like me to ask for more. But you can use mine when you like, Jack."

"Thank you, Master Regy," said Jack. But he felt as he turned away that it wouldn't be at all the same thing as having one for his own—indeed, he doubted whether

he would have the chance that Master Regy so freely offered, for Jack had found out that the things the little squire meant to do did not by any means always come to pass, and though he was very sweet-tempered and pleasant, he was rather a capricious young gentleman.

So Jack wisely made up his mind to think no more of a pleasure so utterly beyond his means ; but I am sorry to say he broke his resolve not five minutes after he had made it.

Jack's mother always said, "When once that lad takes a thing into his head he'll never rest till he's got what he wants." So now all through his walk, and when he got home, and while he was doing his lessons, the thought kept coming into his mind, "How nice it would be to have a box of tools!"

Jack dreamed of them that night, and of the wonderful things he made with them; and he awoke next morning with a pang of fresh disappointment to think that not only

had he not got them, but that he had no chance of ever calling them his own.

That day, for the first time for many weeks, Mr. Manners, the schoolmaster, had to reprove his usually good pupil for inattention and thoughtlessness. When he came out of school the boys could not get him to look at their marbles with any interest, or to join them in their games ; and even Shag, as he followed him home, saw that something was the matter, and looked up with his little head on one side, and his bright eyes glancing, to ask what it was. Poor little Shag, he did not know how he was to be involved in his master's trouble !

After a rather silent tea, Jack restlessly started off for a walk in the cool summer evening, and as he strolled along in the direction of the wood still pondering the question, " How could I get ten shillings ? " he heard his name eagerly called, and saw the squire's son coming towards him.

“Jack, Jack!” he cried, “I’ve been looking for you for ever so long. What do you think? You know that I told you papa said I might have a dog of my own when I was nine. Well, I’m so nearly nine that he says I needn’t wait if I get a chance of one I like.”

“Yes?” said Jack, inquiringly, as Regy stopped, out of breath.

“Well, I told him I knew of one. You know, Jack, I never saw a dog I could like so well as your little Shag, and if you will give him to me, you shall have my beautiful new box of tools for your very own. Papa says I may do what I like with them.”

“Shag!” exclaimed Jack, while all the colour seemed to rush from his rosy cheeks. “No, I couldn’t part with Shag!”

“Oh, Jack, do!” pleaded Regy. “I will be so kind to him, and you can see him whenever you like; and you will have the tools, you know, and can make all sorts of

things with them. Oh, Jack, I do want him so ; you must let me have him."

And the boy, who was not used to being denied anything on which he had set his heart, looked up, very much inclined to cry.

Jack hesitated for one moment ; he was really fond of Master Regy, and could not bear to make him unhappy ; then he looked at Shag, who stood wagging his tail and watching the two boys, and he exclaimed,—

"I'd do anything else for you, Master Regy, but I can't give you Shag. Why, he'd be miserable away from me."

"He wouldn't, I tell you," cried Regy, more earnestly than ever. "How could he be miserable when I should treat him so well ? He'd have much better food than you could give him—beautiful bones and biscuits, and a nice stable full of hay to sleep in ; and you could come and see him. Please say yes, dear Jack,—and look here, I've brought the tools."

He thrust the box into Jack's hands. The sight of the treasure he had been coveting sent a thrill of pleasure into the boy's heart; after all, it wouldn't be like selling Shag to a stranger, and perhaps he really would be happier if he got more to eat, for he often had to go short now. (Oh, Jack, you little know a dog's nature if you think that!) Master Reginald saw that Jack was wavering, and he pressed his advantage.

"Say yes, Jack, say yes," he urged, taking Shag in his arms.

The word was said; and in a moment Regy had disappeared with his prize, and Jack found himself walking slowly home in the twilight with the longed-for box in his arms, and all alone.

How could he do it? I can fancy my little readers saying; and so I said when I heard of it. I can only account for it by the fact that none of us, old or young, value our blessings as we ought to do while we

have them; they "brighten as they take their flight," the poet says, and when they are quite gone we find out for the first time what we have lost. Which of you ever thought to thank God for giving you your eyesight? Yet what a wonderful gift it is! And if you were to become blind, and never see again, wouldn't you wonder you had thought of it so little, and so seldom felt grateful for it while this priceless blessing was yours?

And your mother's love—do you ever stop in your play, and your plans, to think how thankful you should be for this daily, hourly, unspeakable happiness? No, you enjoy it without for a moment thinking how terrible it would be if you should lose it for ever. The same with health, food, and clothing; and I do not say that in this way we are a bit better than you children; we take our mercies as matters of course, till we discover by sad experience what it is to have to live without them.

It was so with my little hero, Jack. I am quite sure that if he had realized what it would be to lose this affection and companionship of his faithful little friend, no treasures would ever have tempted him to throw it away. And I am glad to be able to tell you that even before he had reached his home he had begun to feel remorse for what he had done. He could not bear to go in and tell his father and mother, so he wandered about the garden till bed-time, and then ran quickly upstairs to his own room, so that they might not see that there were only two feet instead of six.



CHAPTER II.

HEN Jack shut the door and found himself alone, and saw the empty basket in the corner where little Shag used to jump in and curl himself round, with his bright eyes following his master, and his tail swishing against the side, Jack burst into tears. In vain he tried to console himself by taking out his tools and planning all he would do with them. His plans had somehow lost their charm. Why, one of the things he had most reckoned upon was a little kennel for Shag, and a wooden bowl for his food.

He hurried into bed, hoping to go to sleep and forget his miserable thoughts; but sleep, kind as she is to the sorrowful and weak, will not help us when we have done what our consciences do not approve of; and,

instead of forgetfulness, thoughts and memories came thick and fast into little Jack's mind, as he lay staring at the stars through his open window.

One special day he remembered, a very unhappy day; he had been naughty, so naughty that his kind father would not speak to him, and his mother did not take his part, but only looked very sad; he had disobeyed their orders, and would not say he was sorry. All day it had gone on, and the more wretched he felt the more he tried to keep up his obstinacy and say, "I don't care." In the evening he had wandered out alone, shutting the door even on Shag, and feeling cross and sulky and miserable. "No one cares for me, and I care for nobody," he kept saying to himself, as he hid up in a dark sort of loft behind the house; and there he stopped till it grew quite dark, and he began to feel frightened and to wish he were back in his own little bed, with his mother

kissing and forgiving him. Still he would not stir, and presently he heard a rustling, scraping sound, and then a little well-known whine, and Shag nestled into his arms and began to lick his face. He had found his master in his hiding-place, and now he took hold of his jacket as if to pull him out of it. True little friend !

Jack always declared that Shag came on purpose to take him home and make him confess his naughtiness. I am sure that dogs know when anything is wrong, and it makes them unhappy ; certainly Shag's caresses softened Jack's heart, and the two friends went back together to the house, where the boy was soon forgiven and happy, having confessed his fault.

And then another scene came before his wakeful eyes. It was a bitterly cold evening in the depth of winter, and a sudden snow-storm had come on while Jack and Shag were far from home. After struggling

against it for some time, Jack, a little fellow, and with a large parcel to carry, was quite exhausted, and sat down to rest, soon dropping off to sleep—a fatal sleep it was likely to be. The dog protested against it by every means in his power, dragging him by the coat and whining; and when he found that of no use, he curled himself up on his master's breast, and by his warmth kept life in him, until his howls attracted the attention of a passer-by, who conveyed them both home in his cart. Yes, Shag had saved his life; and in return he had sold him, and all for his own pleasure. Poor little doggie, how good he was, never cross or sulky, never refusing to play whenever Jack felt inclined, never bearing malice if Jack disappointed or teased him, never ill-tempered or impatient, like Jack himself sometimes, but always merry, obedient, and grateful, and full of love, warm, faithful, unchangeable love for his master.

“Would he have left me for anything in the whole world?” said Jack to himself. “And where is he now? Not asleep, I’m certain, but listening and waiting for me. He doesn’t know I’ve sold him, and he never shall! Oh, my own little Shag,” cried the boy, starting up in bed, “only wait till to-morrow morning, and I will come for you.”

Somewhat calmed by this resolve, Jack fell into a troubled sleep, from which he woke with a start, to find the sun shining into his room.

For one moment he looked as usual for his little pet, who used to be watching for his awaking, but in the next recollection came back, and jumping up he hurried on his clothes and ran downstairs carrying the box of tools with him. His father was already gone to his work, and his mother had got his breakfast ready for him; but he ran past her, calling out,

“Never mind my breakfast, mother:

I can't wait for it ;" and he was off, while Mrs. Smith stood staring after him, and muttering, "What's come to the lad ? There was something wrong all yesterday ; and I don't see the dog—and what's that big box ?" But it was no use speculating, for Jack was already out of sight.

He never stopped till he had reached the entrance of the wood which was in sight of the stables and back premises of the great house. Proceeding more cautiously along the path that led to them, he gazed anxiously at the closed door—and hark ! was not that a sound he knew ? Yes, surely that was Shag's yelp and whine. He was shut up in the stable where Master Regy had said he would be so comfortable. This then was his prison ; and while Jack, as determined as ever to release and reclaim the prisoner, stood considering how to do it, he saw Master Regy himself coming briskly from the garden into the stable yard, with a new

collar and chain and a little dog-whip in his hand. He walked straight to the stable-door and opened it, calling, "Shag, Shag."

The dog ran out and looked about eagerly, but seeing no friend near, only Master Regy authoritatively cracking his whip, down went his tail, and an appealing mournful look came into his dark eyes such as one only sees in those of dogs; it said as plainly as words could do, "What has happened? Where's my master? Why mayn't I go home?"

And Regy said, "Come, Shag, you are my little dog now—lie down, and let me put on your collar. No, no, you mustn't run away, you must obey me. I'm your master."

Jack could stand it no longer. He rushed into the yard, the delighted dog making one bound towards him and frantically licking his hands and face, and setting down the box he exclaimed incoherently,

"I can't do it, Master Regy. I'm very

sorry, but I can't!" and before the astonished little squire could speak, his unwelcome visitor was off again, with his recovered treasure barking and leaping about him and greatly impeding his progress by these signs of joy; no need to carry Shag this time. Jack scarcely heard Regy's angry remonstrances.

"Stop, Jack; you've no right to take him! He's mine! It's stealing!"

It might be; but anyhow the thief was far out of his reach. So he returned pouting to the nursery, leaving the box of tools upon the ground. "I'll tell papa," he muttered.

Meanwhile Jack reached his school, breakfastless, but intensely happy, forgetting Master Regy's grievance in the joy of repossessing his favourite, a joy shared by Shag without knowing all the reasons for it, and with no drawback. As Jack said, he didn't know he had been sold.

School was over, and Jack had nearly

reached his home before he began to feel a little uneasy. Had he done quite right? He could not be sorry that he had recovered Shag, but he was sorry that he had vexed and disappointed poor Master Regy. That was his own fault; he should have been firm at first. And what would his father say? Would Squire Graham be angry? and was it "stealing" to take back what he had unwillingly consented to part with?

With these questions in his mind, Jack entered the cottage with a grave face, but was relieved to find his father apparently in ignorance of the affair; and his mother, though she glanced at him inquiringly, asked no questions. The boy, however, had been accustomed to tell everything to these best friends, and that evening while his father smoked his pipe, and his mother sat knitting, and Shag lay at his feet, he told them all about it.

There was a pause after his story was

done, till at last John Smith took his pipe out of his mouth, and said, "I couldn't have believed it!"

"Never mind now, father," said Mrs. Smith, who saw the boy's eyes fill with tears; "he won't do it again."

"You see, my lad," said the father, stroking his son's head, "dogs are not like toys or bits of wood. If you'd asked me, I wouldn't have let you do it—that I wouldn't. Shag, poor fellow!"

"Shag's forgiven him, father," said the mother, who thought her son had suffered enough, though neither of them knew how much he had suffered.

"Yes, I'm sure he has," said Jack, kneeling down to pat the dog, who well knew he was being talked about. "And, father, do you think Master Regy is very angry?"

"Can't say; he hasn't said anything to me," his father replied.

"Shall I go up to the House and say I'm

sorry about it, father ? ” asked Jack presently, his heart sinking at the thought.

“ I’d wait a bit ; you’re sure to meet the little squire soon, and then you can make it up,” said his father, to his great relief.

But it was some days before Jack met Master Regy again. When he did so it was in the park, and as Jack saw him approaching he instinctively caught up Shag in his arms ; but Regy said,—

“ You needn’t be afraid, Jack. I’m not going to take him.”

“ I was so sorry, Master Regy, to vex you,” began Jack, looking down.

“ Never mind,” said Regy. “ I told my father all about it, and he said you were quite right not to part with your dog, and that I ought not to have asked you for him. He says dogs are often more faithful than men, and he read me such a beautiful story about a little dog—I think he must have been something like Shag—who would not

leave his master, who had been killed by falling down a steep mountain, and the dog was found dead by his side. And oh, Jack, papa is going to get me one as like Shag as he can; and he says I am to make it as fond of me as he is of you, and you are to tell me how. Isn't that nice?"

"Capital!" replied Jack, heartily, as both the boys sat down upon the grass, glad enough to be friends again. "And one thing I can tell you at once, Master Regy—you want no dog-whip."

"And how am I to make him obey?" asked Regy. "I don't want him to be afraid of me, but he ought to be obedient, you know."

"And isn't Shag obedient?" asked Jack, proudly. "Why, there isn't a thing he wouldn't do for me if he could; and yet since I first had him, a wee pup, I've never used a whip to him! It's because he loves me, and knows I love him, and wouldn't tell him to do anything too difficult."

“But you had to teach him?”

“Very little—he found out what I wished by watching me, and by my voice; if you want to do what a person likes, you easily can, you know. And if I once tell him a thing, he never forgets it. It was only once I had to be at all severe with him, and that was when he was too young to know better, and would run after our neighbour’s cat. Our own kitty he never touched.”

“Well, I hope my dog will be exactly like him,” said Regy, laughing; “he will come, I expect, by my birthday, and that’s in a week now. And perhaps, Jack, you’ll get something on your birthday! But I’m not to say a word about that—so we’ll talk about the dog. What shall I name him?”

This question opened such a fund of conversation, that before it was satisfactorily answered, both the boys started to find how late it was, and ran back to their respective homes. Jack’s simple advice was a lesson

on kindness to animals that Regy never forgot.

Reginald's birthday was the next important event, and it happened fortunately to be a half-holiday, so that Jack could spend a good part of it with his friend. He found him waiting for him in the wood, impatient to show him his new dog, which he had decided to call "Rob," a beautiful Skye terrier, "the handsomest in Scotland!" he informed Jack, who listened and looked admiringly; but privately Jack thought Shag a great deal prettier; and three weeks later a box of tools exactly like Regy's own was presented to Jack as a birthday present from his friend.

"I don't half deserve them," said Jack, that night, as he went to bed, and looked fondly at the little dog in his accustomed place. "But we two-legged folks get a good deal more than we deserve, don't we, Shag?"



WORKING FOR THE PRIZE ;

OR, THE FIRST DUTY FIRST.



IF you look at the map of England which hangs against the schoolroom wall, you will see almost in the middle of the map, on the eastern side, a little county, known as the smallest in the kingdom. Rutland is its name. Sometimes it is called the Red County, from the rich colour of the soil, which glows almost like crimson on a bright day in early spring, or in the sunset of an autumn evening. The county is full of pretty little villages ; so that, look which way you will, you are nearly sure to see a grey church tower or a tall spire pointing upwards to the sky ; while snug

farm-houses, or a modest cottage, with its thatched roof, peep out continually as you cross the far-stretching fields, or walk down one of the lanes in the cool of a summer's day.

In one of these quiet villages lived Sarah Sandford. A handy little maid she was at ten years old, and both a help and a comfort to her widowed mother. She was tall and strong for her age; and what she should have done without her Mrs. Sandford often said she could not tell; for since the time when her poor husband died of the fever, and she had been so ill herself, Sarah had been like her right hand. The widow gained a living by taking in washing; but illness and trouble had left her weak and ailing, and the day's work would have been often too heavy for her if Sarah had not been at hand to hang out and bring in the clothes, and attend to whatever was wanted about the house.

Sarah liked helping her mother, but it was

a great trouble to her that, being so constantly employed at home, she could never get to school except on a Sunday; for it really seemed to her that, with the best intentions, she nevertheless forgot almost as fast as she learned, a week being such a long while to remember anything when not a word was said to her between times. Besides this, and what in Sarah's opinion was much worse, she had no chance of being taught to sew and to knit, like the other girls in the village, and therefore could have no hope of gaining one of the prizes which were given every summer to those who could begin and complete a pair of stockings in a proper manner, or make a shirt from beginning to end neatly, and according to pattern.

These prizes were given by kind gentlefolks who lived in this part of the Red County, in order to encourage the village girls in habits of industry. All the village schools round about were allowed to send in specimens of

knitting and sewing, and the girl who gained the highest prize was called the queen, and had a gold sovereign given to her as her reward, which reward was to be laid out in suitable clothing, or put into the savings bank. Others had smaller sums, according to their merit; and great was the excitement every year when the time came for examining the work and distributing the prizes.

One warm August evening Sarah and her mother were busy at work, with a large basket full of clothes before them, which they were folding ready for the mangle. Presently the little garden gate was opened, and their next neighbour, Mrs. Rowe, came and stood in the doorway. "Have you heard the news?" she asked, after a few words about the weather. "Some of the school children have been up to the Great House, to know about the prizes, for the work was looked over yesterday, and they've brought word that my Ellen is the queen."

"Nay, sure!" cried Mrs. Sandford, looking much pleased. "I'm glad to hear it, for Ellen's a good girl; and now she can set herself up with a store of decent things just as she's going out to service."

"That's what I say," answered Mrs. Rowe; "a sovereign goes a long way now-a-days; but Ellen doesn't mean to lay out all the money on herself. No; I'm to have something, and the father is to have something, and little Polly is to have a new frock. But it isn't the sovereign that I care for, neighbour," she added, with a look of motherly pride; "it's the credit, you know, it's the credit. To think of my Ellen being queen!"

A little more was said upon the subject, and then Mrs. Rowe went away, perhaps to tell some one else her good news. Sarah had never spoken all the time; and when her mother, feeling some surprise at her silence, happened to look in her face, she saw the

tears rolling one after another down her cheeks.

"Why, Sally, what's the matter, my girl?" cried Mrs. Sandford. "Surely you're not fretting because Ellen Rowe is queen this year, and has got the sovereign?"

"Oh, mother," answered Sarah, hastily wiping away her tears, of which, to speak the truth, she felt a little ashamed, "what a nice thing it would be if I could get a prize! I don't mean the highest prize, because that isn't likely, and I'm glad that Ellen is queen with all my heart; but if I could work well enough to get ten shillings, or even six, like Mary Baylis did last year, what things you could buy! Dear mother, I wish I might go to school."

Mrs. Sandford did not reply without a few minutes' thought. She had often asked herself whether it was quite right to keep Sarah so constantly at home; and yet how to do without her she did not know. Suddenly

a bright notion flashed across her mind. Could not Sarah learn to sew at odd times when the day's work was over, and thus have an equal chance with the other village girls of gaining one of the prizes?

She pondered it over for a while without speaking, for there were difficulties in the way. The ladies at the Great House might not approve of a girl becoming a candidate who did not go to the day school; and even if they consented, who was to give Sarah the instruction she would require? Poor Mrs. Sandford had always been used to the hardest kinds of household work, but knew little of the use of her needle, as her own ill-mended gown and her daughter's rent frock too often showed; so she could not undertake to teach another person. But when at last she told Sarah what she was thinking of, this seemed to her no hindrance at all.

"I know how to hem," said she, "and there's plenty would show me the way to

gather, and stitch, and make button-holes. Then see what a long time I should have to learn in ! Do, mother, ask the ladies if I may try."

"Well, I'll think about it," replied her mother; "it does seem hard that you should not have a chance." Satisfied with this promise, Sarah went on cheerfully with her work, and when the folding was done, helped to carry the heavy basket to the mangle, where of course all the talk was about Ellen Rowe and the other girls to whom prizes had been given.

After this time Sarah was often to be seen with her thimble on her finger and her needle in her hand, hemming an apron or trying to fix on a patch without puckering. It was some weeks before an opportunity offered of speaking to Mrs. Maynard, the Squire's lady, at the Great House; but as Sarah's mother did some of the family washing, she was at last fortunate enough to meet her one evening

near the entrance to the park. The widow put down her basket of clothes, and dropping a respectful curtsy, said she had a favour to ask, if Mrs. Maynard would be so good as to hear her, and then went on to mention Sarah's wish to try for a prize the following year, at the same time explaining why she was kept away from the day school.

Mrs. Maynard listened very kindly, and knowing how useful Sarah was to her mother, lent a favourable ear to the request. "But I wish you could manage to spare her occasionally," she said, "if only for one day in the week, because it is of so much importance that a girl should learn the use of her needle—not for the sake of gaining a prize, which is quite an inferior consideration, but because without that knowledge she cannot possibly discharge one of the chief of those duties which fall to a woman's share. How often do we see sad proofs of this deficiency in the appearance of the husband and children of a

family! Garments spoiled in the making, or wearing out before their time for the want of proper repair. It grieves me to see such frequent instances of this; and yet what else can be expected if a girl is not instructed to do such work while she is young? Knitting or sewing will not come by instinct, any more than other things."

"No, indeed, ma'am," answered the widow, sorrowfully. "I know that well. Many a time have I wished that there had been such good schools in my day; but, ah me! poor people weren't thought of then as they are now."

"Since you lament the want of it yourself," said Mrs. Maynard, "let me beg you to give Sarah every opportunity in your power to become mistress of her needle. I know that you cannot send her regularly to school; but do let her go when you can; and I will speak to the governess that she may be received with that understanding."

So it was settled, greatly to Sarah's joy

when she heard of it, and for a short time she went to learn sewing and knitting at least one morning in every week. The governess gave a good account of her to Mrs. Maynard, as regarded her industry and attention, but said she was sadly backward in everything. This, however, might have been remedied in time, had not poor Mrs. Sandford, early in the winter, caught a violent cold, which left her so weak that she needed Sarah's help more than ever; so that it was very seldom she could be spared for a few hours at school.

This was a sad disappointment to Sarah; and, though she did not say much about it, it was one which she murmured at very often to herself. It was hard, she thought, when so many idle girls would never take a needle into their fingers if they could help it, that she should be denied the opportunity. Though she had been taught at the Sunday school that her first duty as a child was to

love, honour, and succour her only remaining parent, she did not so learn the lesson by heart as to put it into daily practice.

Time slipped away, though not without Sarah's improvement in sewing, for her desire to gain a prize made her diligent under all her disadvantages. In the spring the shirts were given out to be made; and word was sent one Monday morning that Sarah was to go up to the Great House for hers.

Any one would have smiled to see the little maiden's frightened look as she was taken up the wide staircase, and shown into a room where Miss Maynard was sitting alone, with a table beside her, on which were laid several small square packages, with a few reels of cotton, and some shirt-buttons, needles, and pins. Miss Maynard was a pale, gentle-looking young lady, in very ill health, so that she was seldom seen in the village; and Sarah had never spoken to her before.

"Come in, little girl," she said, as Sarah, afraid to look round, stood curtsying at the door. So she went in and told her name; and by the time she had answered some of Miss Maynard's questions she gained courage to observe the pretty pictures that hung on the walls, and to admire the grey parrot with the beautiful red tail, that was swinging in his bright shining cage by the window.

"So you have never yet made a shirt," said Miss Maynard, "although you tell me that you are eleven years old?"

"Please, ma'am," replied Sarah, thinking this was meant as a reproof, "I can hardly ever go to school, mother has so many things for me to do at home; and when I try to sit down to my sewing of an afternoon, I'm always sure to be called off from it."

It was either these words of the little girl, or the tone in which they were spoken, that caused Miss Maynard to look earnestly in her face for a moment before she made any

further remark. "It is right that you should help your mother," she said at last. "If you only reflect how she has worked and cared for you all your life long, you must certainly feel that she deserves all, and more than all, that you can do for her. Your mother is a laundress, I think. I suppose you like needlework better than washing or ironing?"

"Oh yes, ma'am," answered Sarah, readily; "and governess says I ought to learn to be handy at my needle."

"True," said Miss Maynard, "and therefore I hope you will take every proper opportunity to improve yourself. But I should like you always to remember, Sarah, that God gives us many duties to fulfil in this world; and one duty must not be permitted to interfere with or stand in the place of another. And so, though it is very important that you should learn both to make and to mend, it would not be right for you to employ your

time in that way when your mother requires your help in doing something else. To work well with your needle is a very necessary thing for you ; but to obey your mother, and assist her to the utmost of your ability, is more necessary still. We are not to choose our duties just as we like best, but to do that which God sets immediately before us."

Sarah made a curtsey, and said, "Yes, ma'am ;" but Miss Maynard saw that she did not quite understand ; and so she went on, "I have just said that God gives us many duties to fulfil in this world, and you have your duties, Sarah, and I have mine. Now it is one of my duties to go into the village, and the school, and try to teach and help little girls like you ; and this is what I wish very much to do. But as God sees it good to withhold from me the blessing of health, He gives me other duties to fulfil which are not so pleasant. For instance, I have to stay in the house all this lovely spring weather ;

and one duty that God sets before me is to bear this patiently, because it is His will, and not to want to be doing other things which I should like to do, and which it would be right for me to do if I were well. Do you see now what I mean, Sarah, by our having different duties, and by not letting one duty stand in the way of another?"

Yes, now Miss Maynard had so kindly explained the matter Sarah understood it very well; and then the young lady went on talking to her still more seriously about the weakness of her sinful nature, which made it impossible for her rightly to perform any duty without the help of the Holy Spirit, who is given to those who humbly pray in the Saviour's name. "If we think over our best actions," continued Miss Maynard, "we shall find them so full of sin that they need to be brought to Christ for pardon. Do you ever think what a blessed thing it is for us that Jesus, the Son of God, has given

Himself to bear our iniquities, and to wash away our guilt in His own most precious blood? Let us ask Him to take away from us the hard, stony heart, which loves its own way, and to give us grace that we may love God's way, and seek to please Him."

These last words of Miss Maynard made Sarah look very serious; and after she had left the Great House, as she quietly walked towards home, she thought a good deal about them; and when she went to bed that night, she earnestly prayed for the help of the Holy Spirit to keep good desires in her mind, and to make her way of duty plain.

Children who really wish to do right often make mistakes through not knowing how to put everything relating to their duty in its proper place. Thus Sarah, wishing to be clever at her needle, which was a *right* thing in itself, had applied herself to sewing when she ought to have been helping her mother, which was *wrong*. She had put that first

which ought to have been second ; but she now resolved to guard against it.

The strength of this resolution was tried the very next day. Sarah had been hard at work all the morning and afternoon, but now the clothes were hanging out in the drying-ground, and Mrs. Sandford said she could get them in very well by herself at the proper time ; so the shirt was brought out, and the side-seam fixed very carefully ; but Sarah had scarcely set in a dozen stitches when a few heavy drops of rain were seen on the white doorstep, and away went her mother to save the things from the coming shower. " How very tiresome ! " cried Sarah ; and she was half inclined to sit still at her sewing ; but in another minute she was running to help her mother as fast as her feet could carry her.

The clothes were got in safely ; but Mrs. Sandford said they were dry enough for folding, and so there was an end of Sarah's sewing for that day. She could not have

borne the disappointment so patiently if she had not recollected Miss Maynard's advice ; but the thought of that helped her wonderfully, and she also remembered some words which were in her lesson at school the Sunday before : Jesus said, " I came not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." " Oh !" thought Sarah, " may I have grace, as that dear young lady said, to love God's way better than my own, and to try not to please myself, but Him."

She had better success the next time she sat down for an hour's sewing ; yet again and again the same hindrances came to vex and try her, and it was by slow degrees that she got her shirt completed. But if the needlework did not prosper as she could have wished, Sarah carried a light and happy heart ; for she was trying, by God's help, to fulfil the duties set before her in the right order ; and though she often failed, there was forgiveness, she knew, for all that was wrong,

if she asked it, with true repentance, for her Saviour's sake.

And now the day came round again when the work was to be examined. Sarah Sandford's was sent in with the rest; and, full of hopes and fears, she waited for the result, not much expecting to gain a prize, and yet thinking what comforts she should get for her mother if she did obtain one.

Sarah had not courage to go up to the Great House in the evening, as some of the other girls did, in order to learn how everything had been decided; but she was standing with her mother at their cottage door, thinking that some one might pass who could tell them the news, when they saw Miss Maynard in her little pony carriage coming along the lane.

She came into the cottage with a smile; but as she looked at Sarah, Mrs. Sandford saw at once that her daughter had not gained a prize. A girl in the next village was

queen this year; and Mary Baylis and two or three of her companions had been successful; but Sarah's work, though considered creditable, was not finished off so neatly as the ladies required. Miss Maynard said that, knowing what pains Sarah had taken, she thought it might lessen her disappointment if she heard it first from herself.

The poor girl shed some tears; but yet it was a satisfaction to be told that she had failed from no carelessness of her own. She resolved to try again another year, knowing that by diligence and perseverance she was sure to succeed at last; and when she heard her mother tell of the comfort she was to her, she agreed with Miss Maynard that it was better to deserve such praise than to carry off the very highest prize, while conscious of neglecting the first of her earthly duties.



HARRY BROWN.

IN the little back parlour behind a tailor's shop sat a tall, quiet-looking boy of fourteen. He was making out the bill for a new coat, which was to be sent home that evening to Mr. Wilkins, the schoolmaster. He had just finished it, when a little lively, rosy-cheeked girl came running into the room : throwing her arms around the boy's neck at the same time, she cried, " Oh, Harry, we shall miss you so ! I wish you would not go away ; I wish you would stay here and live with us always. Why can't you ? "

" Because, dear Lizzie," he said, " it is time that I got my own living. I have been

a burden long enough to my uncle and aunt; and I must go out into the world now, and work for myself. I don't want to be an idle boy."

"Idle! I am sure you are never idle, Harry; nobody can say that. Why, you are as busy as you can be from morning till night, helping father, going on mother's errands, and teaching me to write and to do sums."

"But, Lizzie, all this does not bring in any *money*; and how is your father to be paid for what I eat and drink, and for my clothes?"

"Oh, Harry, father don't want to be paid for it; besides, you eat so very little; and your jacket has lasted such a time. Don't go, Harry; only say you won't go, and I will try and do with less, that there may be enough for you; and when I am bigger I will work at my needle, as Aunt Betsy does, and get some money to give you."

"Thank you, Lizzie," said Harry, with a smile; "but that would never do; it is my place to work for you, not yours to work for me; and I mean to work very hard indeed, and get on famously, until I have a shop of my own."

This beautiful "castle in the air" quite pleased Lizzie, and made her almost forget her present dislike to part with her cousin. "Only it will be such a long time, Harry," she said, "before you are big enough to keep a shop like father."

"Not so long as you think, Lizzie," replied Harry, who fancied himself almost a man already: "it seems a good while, to be sure, when you look at it all together; but take it bit by bit, and it will soon pass away. Besides, Lizzie, you must first learn to sew on buttons, and to make shirts, because I shall want you to make and mend my things; and then you ought to know how to cook, and to go to market, because while I am

busy in the shop you will have to buy the meat and the potatoes, and manage the servant girl."

Lizzie looked very serious and self-important at the idea of managing a servant girl and ordering the dinner; while Harry talked as gravely as if he had just taken possession of his shop, and saw his name put up in gold letters over the window. A very pleasant dream this was; but it never came true.

But who was Harry? and where was he going? I will tell you. Harry Brown was an orphan, without either brother or sister. When his parents died—which was about two years before I have thus described him to you as sitting and talking to Lizzie in the little back parlour—they left him penniless, and, with the exception of an uncle, almost friendless in the world. This uncle, who was Lizzie's father, was a hasty, quick-tempered man, very hard-working, and very

saving; but he had a kind, feeling heart, and he took the poor boy at once to his home, and did his best to make him comfortable and happy. His wife, too, a bustling, energetic sort of woman, acted a good part towards the motherless boy, and treated him almost as if he were her own child. So that Harry had nothing to complain of, and he had much to be thankful for. The only want which he felt in his new home was the want of pious counsel and example. His father and mother had been plain, earnest Christians; and they had early trained their boy in the way which he should go, trusting that when old he would not depart from it. They had taught him the truths contained in the best of all books; and Harry had not only listened to, but had loved their instructions.

But his uncle and aunt, although honest and upright in their daily conduct, were not sincere believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

They paid their debts, never cheated anybody, and went to church on Sunday, if they had nothing else to do; but they had never felt their need of a Saviour, nor tried to serve and honour Him. They quite neglected to read the Bible, or to talk about heaven and holy things, unless it were on a sick bed, or at a funeral. Poor Harry soon found that if he did not want to be laughed at he must hold his tongue on such subjects, and keep his thoughts to himself. But he could not, and he did not wish to forget the sweet lessons which he had learned in his childhood's home; and day by day he read the Scriptures, and prayed earnestly to God that He would guide and bless him, and help him to do that which was right. And I am sure that God heard and answered him. Why am I sure of this?

Because God has promised to hear and answer prayers such as these, and He always fulfils His promises; and also because Harry's

future life proved that God preserved him from evil, and kept him even amidst temptation. Are *you* asking God, dear young reader, thus to bless and take care of you?

But if Harry's uncle and aunt did not share in the pleasure which he felt in reading his Bible and in serving God, he had a warm and sympathizing friend in his little cousin Lizzie. She soon became very fond of hearing the Scripture stories which he told her, and of learning texts and hymns, and seemed wishful to love the kind Saviour who took the little children up in His arms and blessed them. She was a nice little companion for Harry, and he sought to teach her all that he knew, and to find for her all the fresh amusements that he could. The two children were a great deal together, for Harry had plenty of spare time; and Lizzie's parents were glad that she liked so well to be with her cousin, because it kept her quiet and out of mischief; and so long as she did not trouble

them, they let her do pretty much as she chose. She was their only child, and had been greatly indulged from her infancy ; and being naturally high-spirited and self-willed, she was not now easily controlled. But Harry, by his kind behaviour and gentle persuasions, gained great influence over her ; and an imploring look from him often checked her quick temper, and stopped her angry words. So it was no wonder that, as you have seen, she was so sorry to part with Harry, and so desirous that he should remain at home. Harry, too, was as sorry to leave Lizzie as she was to lose him ; but then he understood better than she did the necessity which there was for him to be earning something for himself ; and, like all right-minded boys, he was anxious to be usefully employed.

And whither was he going ? A few miles off to live with Mr. Hilton, a fruiterer and greengrocer. Harry was to keep the accounts, serve in the shop, and, as people

say, make himself generally useful ; in return for which he was to have a comfortable home, and, considering his age, a large salary, for Mr. Hilton's wife had taken a great fancy to him. Besides, a respectable, genteel-looking lad like Harry, whose steadiness and honesty might be thoroughly depended upon, was worth a good deal to Mr. Hilton.

Well, Harry went to his situation ; and Lizzie fretted sadly for the first two days after his departure. Then a letter came to her from Harry, containing all the news he could put into it, assuring her that he liked his work very well so far, and had got on with it much better than he had expected, and asking her to write to him in return. Lizzie cheered up at once at the idea of sending Harry a letter. It took her two or three days to write, for she was not very clever at using pen and ink, and she also found a great deal to say ; and before it was

ready to be posted Harry came back again, and so it never reached him.

But what did Harry come back for?

That is just what Lizzie wanted to know directly she heard of his return ; and as her curiosity was easily satisfied, so yours shall soon be.

One evening the servant girl, Jane, went to fetch Lizzie from her aunt Betsy's, where she had been spending the day, and getting her new doll dressed in the last fashion by one of her aunt's apprentices. The minute the door was closed after them, Jane said, " You don't know what's happened since you've been gone, Lizzie."

" What ? " asked Lizzie, eagerly.

" I left somebody at home," answered Jane, mysteriously, " whom you don't no more expect to see than you expect to see the Queen."

" Now, Jane, don't tease," said Lizzie : " tell me who it is ! "

"Your cousin Harry."

"Harry? Oh, I am so glad! But what is *he* come for? what is the matter, Jane?"

"Oh, his master sent him back by the coach," said Jane; "he wouldn't keep him any longer. There has been such a to-do at home, I can assure you; it's as well you were out of it, for you would have been sure to take his part; and your father was so angry that he would not bear a word said to him."

"Well, but what has Harry done? nothing bad, I am sure: I won't believe that!" exclaimed Lizzie.

"No; it is nothing *bad*, exactly," said Jane, "but Mr. Hilton keeps his shop open on Sundays, and Harry wouldn't serve in it on Sunday. He told Mr. Hilton he couldn't do it; and so on Monday morning Mr. Hilton told him he was to pack up his things, and go back to his uncle that very day: if he was too good for his place, he said, it

was quite time he left it. Harry wanted to try and get another place before he came home, but Mr. Hilton wouldn't hear a word about it, and declared he should not stop a night longer in his house. And master is in such a rage to think that Harry has lost such a good situation, all through being so particular; and missis is vexed about it too, only she don't say so much.

"He had been crying, I fancy, for his eyes were red; but he was as firm as a rock when master wanted him to say that he had been wrong, and that he would own that he had to Mr. Hilton; and I believe that made master so much more angry with him."

"Did not Harry ask where I was?"

"Yes, that was the first thing he said to me when he came downstairs; and he seemed so sorry when he heard you were out."

Lizzie quickened her steps directly, that

she might try and comfort poor Harry. Her father was busy in the shop with a customer when she went through; and her mother was in next door, giving some advice to a neighbour whose baby was ill; so she had Harry all to herself. And Harry's face might well brighten when his little cousin entered the kitchen, for he had not seen such kind looks nor heard such kind words all that day as he did then. Lizzie was brimful of sympathy, and she blamed Mr. Hilton very much indeed.

Harry was obliged to check her resentful feelings, and to remind her of what Jesus says about loving our enemies, and of doing good to those who ill-use us; and he explained to her how likely it was that Mr. Hilton should be displeased with him.

"He cares nothing about the Bible, Lizzie; he did not care for the words I said about the commandment to keep the Sabbath holy: he told me that it was very conceited of a young

boy like me to pretend that I was so much better and wiser than he was. It was natural he should think so, Lizzie, and that he should be offended with my refusal to do what he himself did. "I can understand it, though I'm sorry for it."

But Lizzie could not understand it; and her regard for her cousin would not let her allow that there could be any excuse made for Harry's master. He was a very bad, unfeeling man, she said, to turn away such a good boy as Harry, especially when he knew that he had no father nor mother to go to. Lizzie had not yet learned to be gentle and forgiving.

Presently she heard voices overhead. Her mother had come in, and was talking to her father. She would go up and say what she could on Harry's behalf. Angry as her father might be, she did not mind, for she knew how he doted upon her and humoured her; he would not be cross with her, that

was certain; and he should not be cross with Harry if she could help it. Slipping away from her cousin, she ran upstairs; and as she opened the parlour door she heard her father saying, "Harry may go to the workhouse for what I care; I am not going to trouble myself about a boy like that."

Lizzie's anger was roused afresh by this speech; she thought her father *really* meant to send Harry to the workhouse; and stepping forward with flushed cheek and sparkling eye, she said quickly, "Father, Harry shall not go to the workhouse. How can the people be so cruel and unkind to him, father, when he has nobody but us to care for him, and when you know all the time that he had no business to sell things on a Sunday?"

Lizzie did not know how wrongly she behaved in making these remarks. She had never been taught to "honour her father and mother;" and her parents had encouraged her in an unchildlike pertness

and freedom of manner towards them, thinking that it showed how clever and spirited she was. Ah, how much sorrow both for themselves and for their little ones do parents store up by home training like this!

But Lizzie's mother thought, I suppose, that she was going rather too far. "Hush, Lizzie!" she said; "that is not the way to speak to your father."

"Harry has only done just what he ought to have done," answered Lizzie.

Her grief and anger had been worked up to its highest pitch before she could utter it; but her feelings were now overworked, and she covered her face with her hands, and burst into tears.

Lizzie's father never liked her to cry. She was a delicate child, and fretting always made her ill. So, instead of reproving her, he drew her towards him, wiped her eyes with his handkerchief, and said soothingly, "There, don't take on so about it, you silly

child; I am not going to send Harry away at present."

Lizzie was very glad to hear this. "And you will forgive him, father, won't you," she said, "and not be cross with him again?"

"I don't know, Lizzie; he has thrown himself out of a good situation just for a mere whim of his own; and it is not an easy thing to start a boy well in life."

"No, father; but it is done now, and it can't be undone. And, father, that last story-book you gave me, about the widow Gray and her son, says that a boy who will rather suffer than do what he thinks wrong is sure to be respected and to make his way in the world."

"Why, child, you talk like an old woman." But though he said this, he could not help secretly owning to himself that Lizzie was right. He was also conscious that he had been too harsh with Harry.

Lizzie smiled. She saw that her father was not displeased, and she felt that her point was gained. "Then you will be friends with Harry now, father?"

"Well, I suppose I must, Lizzie, or else there will be no peace with you."

"Thank you, thank you; that is a good father!" said Lizzie, as she gave him plenty of kisses, and squeezed him as tightly as she could. Then she ran away with a light heart, and a face which looked as if it had never worn anything but a smile.

Her father looked fondly after her as she left the room, and then he turned to his wife and said, "That child, somehow, always manages to get her own way."

"Nothing very surprising in that," said Lizzie's mother, "when she has you to deal with. I don't believe you could deny her anything she wanted."

Lizzie's father seemed to think, as worldly, careless fathers often think, that this weak-

ness was rather a virtue than a fault. "Well," he said, "I suppose I am rather too easy with her; but she is such a dear little thing, it is impossible to help it." It is in this way that so many children are ruined.

Harry was thus restored to his uncle's favour; but it was not pleasant for him to feel that he had nothing to do, and was evidently in everybody's way but Lizzie's. It seemed to him that he had no longer any right to the food which he ate at his uncle's table, because if he had not of his own accord left Mr. Hilton's, he might have been earning plenty for himself. He tried hard to meet with another place, but he did not succeed, and it made him very unhappy, especially when his uncle would sometimes say that "*he* thought it quite as much a person's duty to get their own living as to shut up his shop once a week."

But at length Harry was again provided for. It happened in this way: Jane, in her

gossiping at the butcher's, told all about Harry's return ; the butcher's wife repeated the story to Mrs. Benson, the baker's wife ; Mrs. Benson's servant had a sister living as cook with Mr. Graham, the coal merchant, and one day, as they were talking, she mentioned it to her. There it might, perhaps, have rested, had not Mr. Graham wanted a youth in his office to keep the books ; and the cook, learning this through the porter, named Harry at once to her master.

Mr. Graham was a truly Christian man, and the account of Harry's refusal to break the Sabbath greatly interested him in the lad. He sent for Harry directly, and told him the reason ; and then finding that he was tolerably quick at accounts, engaged him for the office, with good wages and a promise of steady increase. Good news this was to Lizzie, both because it showed her father that Harry's religion had gained him a place this time, and also because Harry was

to board with them, and she should still see a great deal of him. And it was a happy thing for her that she did ; for Harry's bright example and pious teaching were the means, under God's blessing, of leading his little cousin to give her heart to the Saviour, and to choose, as Harry had done, that good part which should never be taken away from them. And then I need not tell you that she became, not only an affectionate, but also a dutiful child.

From the day he entered Mr. Graham's office Harry went on steadily and prosperously. He never regretted the trial which he had met with at Mr. Hilton's, nor the boldness with which he had faced it. On the contrary, he was very thankful that his principles had been thus early tested, and that, through God's grace, they had not wavered ; for the discipline did him good, and strengthened his character. If he had then yielded to the ungodly influence of his

master, it might have been the first downward step in the path of evil. From breaking one commandment of his Maker, he might have been persuaded to break another, and who can tell where he would have stopped?

Lads, remember this. You will have to go out into the world some day, and you will be forced, as Harry was, to act for yourselves. Imitate him in this respect; be faithful and courageous in doing your duty. Never shrink from what you know to be right because of the unpleasant consequences which may follow. Obey God's will, and trustfully leave the consequences to Him. If you serve Him, He will take care of you; and those that honour Him He will assuredly honour.





