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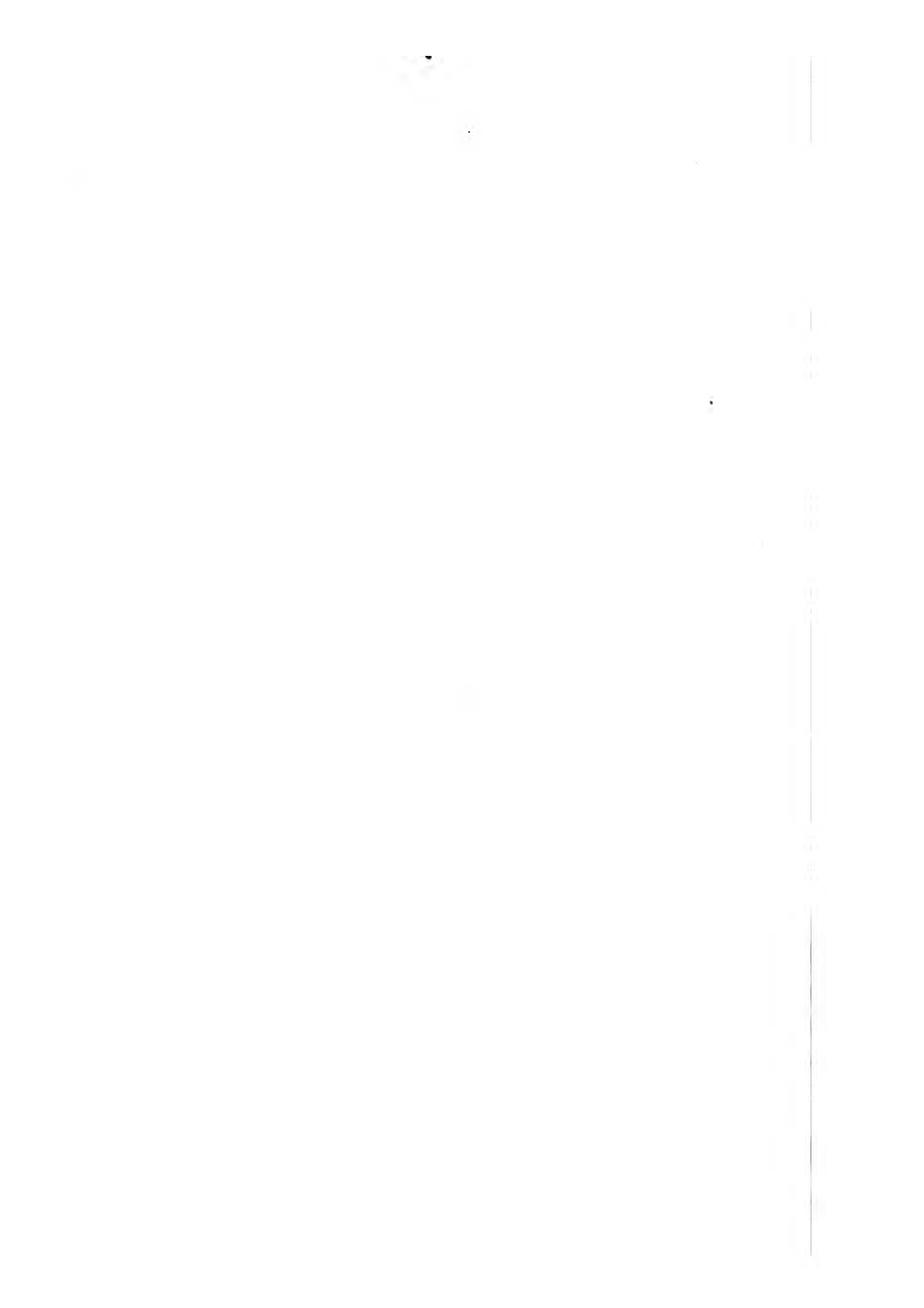


HOME
FOR THE
HOLIDAYS
AND OTHER STORIES.

A BOOK FOR BOYS



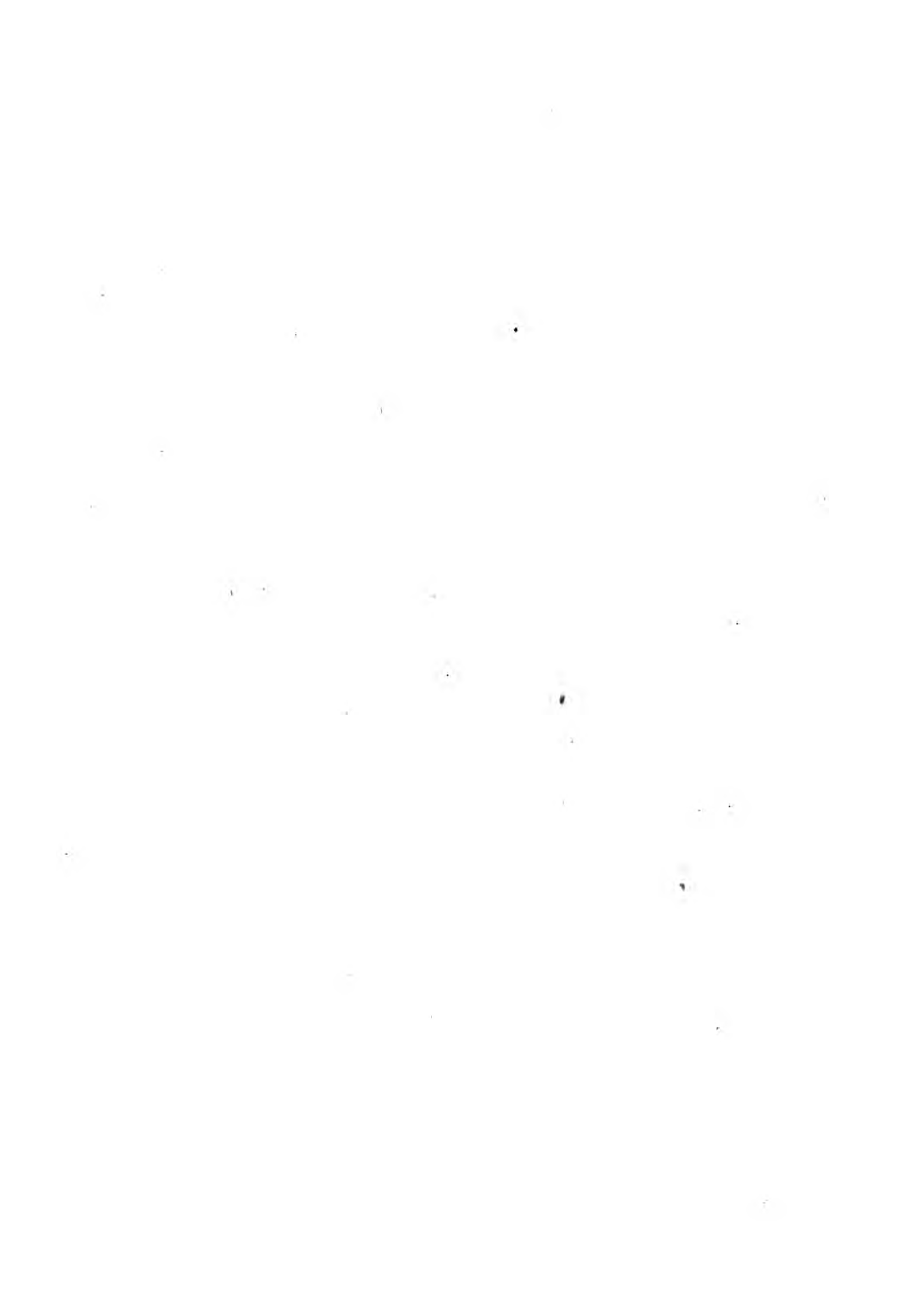




Home for the Holidays,

AND OTHER STORIES.

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H O M E
FOR THE
H O L I D A Y S.

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A B O O K F O R B O Y S.
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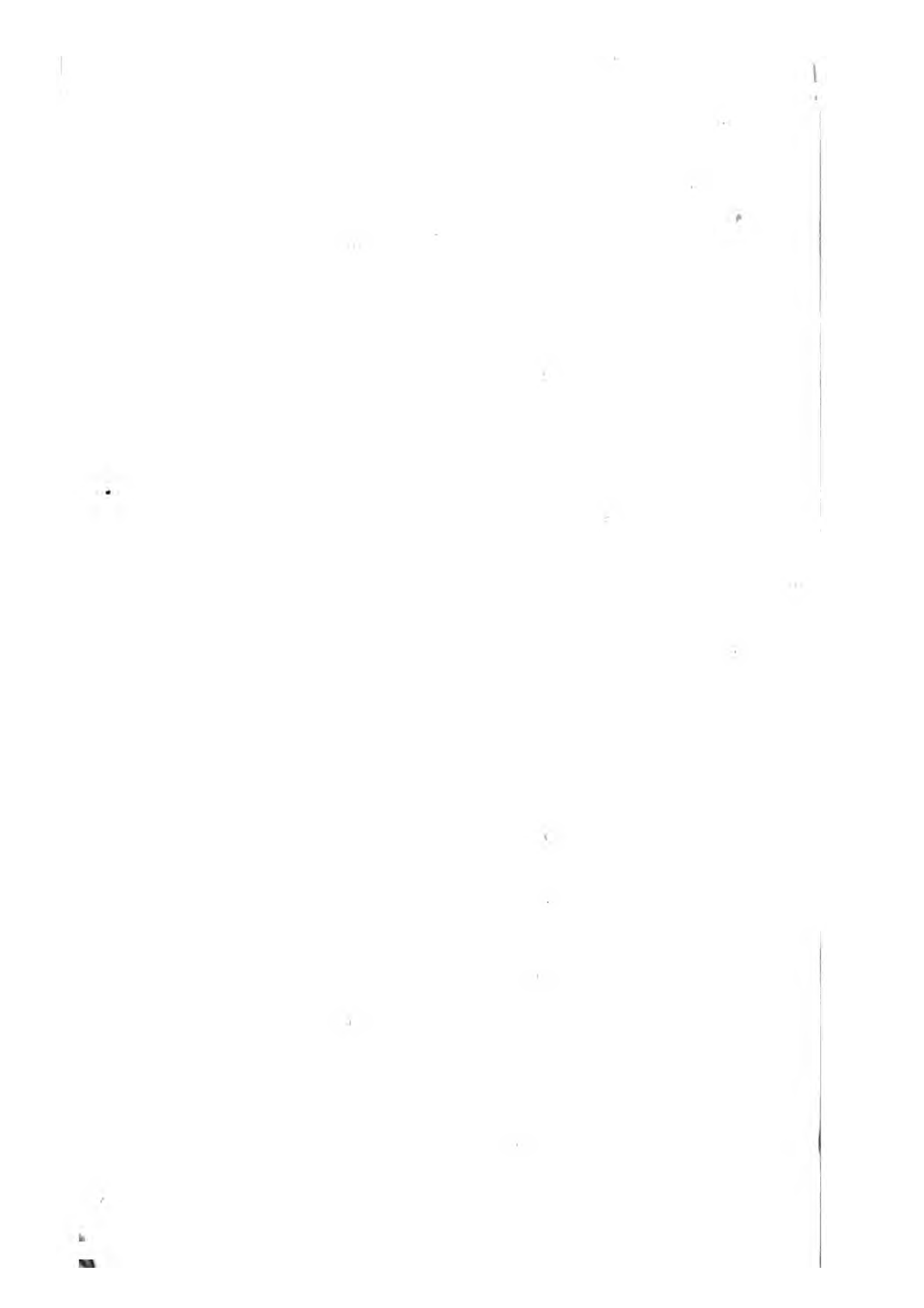
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Home for the Holidays.



“COMING at last,” said I, as the long dreary winter was shewing signs of retreating — for it had already swallowed up the ordinary time of spring — Whitsuntide was at hand, and we were really a few steps in “leafy June;” the holiday in the country, which I had long looked forward to, was come at last.

It was long since I had left school and gone to business, to take my share in the busy affairs of the commercial world; and being a hundred

miles away from home and friends, our meetings were few and far between.

But the long-looked for, long-desired hour arrived at last, and I was at Euston station with my big portmanteau, containing my belongings and "personal effects," and a warm heart beating with big hopes of a pleasant journey, and a happy and joyous meeting at the end. Taking a running survey of the long line of carriages, I at last jumped into one in the centre of the train, and after the usual important fussiness of a young traveller, settled down, well-cushioned and comfortable, feeling now it was high time the train was on the move.

How slowly the hands of the platform clock seemed to move those last seven minutes, and how reluctantly that huge minute-hand seemed to pass each dot that surmounted the long lean figures as it drew nearer and nearer the hour of starting!

Now there is a rush of travellers who have delayed, or have been delayed, till well nigh too late making desperate attempts at securing seats, each one expecting that a cosy corner has been reserved for him. Now the inspector visits us,

and gives our tickets his official clip, doors are banged, and the last passenger has been shut in with a bang of rebuke, the last box hustled into the luggage van, and I look at the clock.

Ah! the great hand has arrived at last, however reluctantly, at the very centre of the dot that graces the XII.

Time is up. The guard's eye notes it; he compares it with his own time-keeper in one hand, with the other he raises his whistle to his mouth, the piercing trill of which is answered by the more shrill whistle of the engine, the ready answer of obedience to the word of command.

Good-byes and good wishes, smiles and tears, waving of handkerchiefs and of hats, from little groups scattered the whole length of the train, and amid the unsmiling and untearful looks of porters and officials, we glide out of the station.

For a time we are in darkness, penetrating the long tunnel, every puff of the "iron horse" telling of increased energy and vigour; and in a few minutes we are again in the light of day, passing bonded stores and villas, whose miniature gardens come to the very verge of the rails

on which we speed, and soon we leave the metropolis of the world, with its busy hive of more than four millions, behind us, and we are fairly in the country.

In the early morning, rain had fallen, which gave great freshness to the scenery, and the blue and white lilacs, and the golden ringlets of the laburnum — which seem such especial favourites with Londoners—were heavy with the crystal drops.

But now we come upon the broad meadows, skirted with noble trees, and bounded by the hedgerows of living green; or in the close neighbourhood of some beautiful park, with its pile of buildings peeping out here and there.

What a variety of scenery! which passes before us as a huge panorama, and which wearies not because of the constant and rapid change.

At times we are steaming along a lofty embankment, and over viaducts that span the flower-decked meadows, beneath which, on either side, is a stretch of scenery for which our own loved country is so famous, and I find myself thinking of the old school-days, when I

was wont to be among the "buttercups and daisies."

But my reflections are somewhat abruptly terminated, as we dart into another long tunnel. The deep throbbings of our iron steed sound solemnly as he wends his way amid the darkness, while the sparks and flashes, that now and again issue from his nostrils, send a lurid glare through the dense cavern.

It is of short duration at the breathless speed at which we are travelling, and once more we are in the sunshine, speeding through fields which remind one of the text, "And the tender blade of grass appeared upon the earth."

With what rapid strides we cross the canal, whose serpentine wanderings touch our path more than once. Now we slacken speed, and at length come to a stand, for we are at our great half-way house, and our thirsty steed, like the camel — the "ship of the desert" — takes in his supply of water to recruit his strength. He is soon satisfied, and we resume our journey.

Most of the travellers shew signs of getting

weary, some being asleep, others looking as dull as though they were returning to school or to business.

Another hour's ride, and we approach the "Black Country," with its multitude of chimney stacks, its forges sending forth their volumes of flame, which give a weird appearance to the country at night. The "workers in iron" are busy at their furnaces; but before we have much time to contemplate the dusky aspect of the locality, we are gliding very stealthily into the little country station, and every carriage window has its occupant looking out for welcome faces to greet us.

Ah! there are Harry and Fred, with their eyes scanning the carriages.

The platform is a pleasant scene! What shaking of hands, and kisses, and rapid inquiries, as friend meets friend!

But there is the railway omnibus waiting; and after the usual amount of jolting, as the driver takes sharp turns at all sorts of angles, we arrive safely at home.

Dear old home! Father and mother, sisters and aunts and cousins, all smiles and gladness;

and though last, not least, our baby-brother Edgar, anxious to see the unravelled mysteries of that portmanteau, wondering what "Bwother Fwank" has brought in the shape of goodies and toys. What a scene of joy it all is!

"Oh the bliss, the joy of meeting!
 Words its sweetness cannot tell.
 Friends long parted join in greeting—
 Greeting one they love so well!"

Dear old home! What associations are treasured up there! what sacred charms surround you! The old eight-day clock in the sitting-room seems to give a tick of welcome home, and its well-remembered bell, as it strikes the hour, sends a thrill of glad joy to the heart of the long-absent one.

I feel inclined to sit on every chair in turn, their old, well-worn seats looking more charming than those of a stranger covered in velvet and elaborately carved.

There, too, is the old sofa, on which, in days gone by, I have kicked up my heels in delight, or writhed in the agony of tooth-ache.

Every picture, vase, and the numberless nick-nacks of home, are scanned with the keenest

interest. And as we assemble round the family meal, the well-known, well-loved voice, in giving thanks that we are once again gathered, sounds unspeakably dear.

Then comes the quiet evening-time, when the home treasures have to be examined, amid the recital of the experiences and wonders of the great city in which I had dwelt, not without a degree of importance attaching to the reciter, who had travelled far and seen much in comparison to the junior members of the family.

I am sure any boy who has been absent from home for six months among strangers, and where "furnished apartments and attendance" as much resembles *home* as do the cold and formal waiting-rooms at a railway-station, can understand my feelings, as I entered into the free and unfettered enjoyment of everything connected with the dear old home and all its hallowed associations.

That night, ere I went to sleep, what a crowd of memories thronged my mind (for I was too tired to fall asleep directly), as I gratefully remembered how the Lord had kept me amid the temptations of a great city, and brought me

back safely to all I hold dear on earth. I must tell you that I was converted when I was twelve years of age; and as I thought of the pure joy in meeting loved ones, my heart naturally turned to the happy day that is coming for all who love Jesus, when He will call us away home—not for the holidays, to go forth again amid trial and temptation, to learn His faithful love and sustaining grace, but to be with Himself for ever!

I do hope there will be no break in *our* family circle in that joyous meeting; and, I doubt not, every Christian feels the same as regards *his* family and friends.

The next morning we were “up with the lark,” well, not exactly that, unless some sleepy lark had overlaid himself—but we were up pretty early, and having pretty well fortified ourselves against any dangers which might arise from travelling on an empty stomach, we set out for a long stroll across the fields, just now in all their glory and beauty.

“When nature from her green lap throws,
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.”

It was deeply refreshing to the eyes and mind of one who had been for months confined

in the wilderness of "boxes of bricks," which are relieved here and there with patches of shrubs and flowers in what we call Squares, sometimes so house-locked that it requires an effort on the part of the sun to send in a few of his rays to give a little life to the scene. Here, however, I was in the midst of nature's loveliness in all its wild and luxuriant beauty. Of course I had made up my mind to be pleased, and that is more than half-way to enjoyment.

Every nook and cranny that I was familiar with, had to be visited. And on the old stile under the spreading oak that stood as a sentinel at the edge of the plantation, we sat and rested. There in days gone by I had built many a castle in the air, which I found had about as much solid work in its masonry as had the many-tinted sides of the bubbles that we at one time blew from our pipes. Everything in its season. It is not well perhaps to have to handle the stern realities of every-day life too early—they come without the seeking as a rule. Of course I am not speaking of divine realities here; we cannot lay hold on eternal life too soon, I am persuaded.

Having duly rested, and taken a draught from the stream at our feet, which had too rural a taste for my town-pampered appetite, or I had been so long used to the adulterated article, that a draught of pure water from the streamlet gave me no pleasure.

We were soon on our way again, exploring out-of-the-way corners. We were not exactly botanists searching for rare flowers or choice ferns, nor were we amateur geologists with pocket hammer rapping away at every gravel-heap, hoping in some broken stone to find a frog who had been buried for ages, or a fish or plant leaving their skeleton-marks imbedded on the hard granite; but we were mindful rather of old memories connected with every cranny or sequestered nook. But we found that engineering skill had spoiled many of our favourite retreats, for the huge embankment of a new railway had remorselessly swallowed up many a quiet pathway, which in summer time had been almost covered over with the beautiful dog-rose in its wild luxuriance.

Again we rest, this time on a grassy bank and in front of the ruins of an old castle, and

having in my readings dipped a little into history, I can tell my companions of the departed glories of the old baronial halls. I can point them out the hills in the distance where Oliver Cromwell planted his cannon and laid siege to the castle, whose garrison, being on the king's side, refused to surrender till the strong walls yielded to the mighty forces brought to bear against them, when the Protector's soldiers stormed the breach and put the garrison to the sword. I point out to them the only bit of wall remaining of that stronghold, and which is slowly crumbling to decay, over which the ivy has thrown its arms in a loving embrace as though desirous to preserve the relics of former grandeur from destruction.

Thus the time has passed on happily, and I hope not without profit, for amidst all this there came opportunities when we could speak of things which perish not, but which will abide when the sun shall cease shining, and the moon shall not give her light. The young ones know that I have chosen that good part which shall not be taken away, and I am not ashamed to speak of my hopes and joys, and of course I

want to attract them to Him whom my soul loveth.

May each young unsaved reader be attracted to Him who is able and willing to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him; and if I may have led one little heart to think of Him, and draw near to Him, it will not be in vain that I have written my account of going "home for the holidays."



THE SAILOR BOYS OF OLD ENGLAND.

IT WAS one fair summer evening, when the sun
was shining bright,

I sat beside a bustling throng, within a railway car ;
And watched their smiling faces, but my heart thrill'd
with delight,

As, leading his dear mother, came a blithe young
English tar.

A blithe young English tar was he, so fair, with eyes of
blue,

And with a bold and fearless mien, yet thoughtful and
sincere ;

“ When I'm away in far-off lands, I'll often think of
you,”

He said, then turned away his face to hide a falling
tear.

Nor cared he for the jeers and taunts his reckless com-
rades gave,

But kissed his own dear mother, as she whispered in
the train,

“ Ye'll soon be borne so far away, trust God, my boy, be
brave,

I'll pray Him speed your ship, and then ye'll soon be
back again.”

In all the deeds of daring, there's but few more brave
than he

Who'll dare to fear a mother's tear, and scorn the
drunkard's bane.

May God protect our sailor boys, my prayer shall
ever be,

And waft them back in safety to their own dear
homes again.

W. GILKES.



WILLIAM SUDDENLY FOUND HIMSELF FAMOUS.

A HAMPER FROM HOME.

“WILLIAM, here’s a hamper for you just come from home—a proper hamper it is too.”

“What a capital thing it is to be away from home, if it’s only to get a hamper now and then!”

Such and sundry are the comments made among William’s companions on so important an event as the arrival of a bulky basket per Railway Cart.

There were nearly a dozen boys in the same house. William was the last comer, and shared the fate of his class, who, not being skilful in the art of self-defence, have to take a good deal, and bear it all as kindly as they may. Just before the hamper came, he had rebelled against the tyranny of some of his seniors, and was consequently out of favour.

Had telegraph wires been laid on in every room, the news of this arrival could not have spread more rapidly through the house. And William suddenly “found himself famous” and exceedingly popular.

It was an unsigned but acknowledged "treaty of peace" — to be broken perhaps like other treaties, when it suited the will or the caprice of the stronger powers.

"William's a good sort of fellow, after all," said one, who knew the value of a bland smile to a prosperous friend — and the treatment generally given when that friend is in adverse times. "Shall I help you up with it into your room, William; it's too heavy for you to carry?"

"Here's a knife for you, William, to cut the strings," said little Bob—a boy as sharp as the edge of the proffered instrument, and as bright as its blade.

"I say, Will," exclaims a youth radiant with smiles, and bubbling over with fun, as he holds out to him a jack-knife; "this instrument is warranted to cut cake in slices without crumbling."

Poor William is for the moment a king surrounded with a group of flattering courtiers, but, good-natured lad as he is, takes the jack-knife, and is soon cutting into the cake at a rate that speedily promises a conclusion to the proceedings, leaving the hamper ready as a "returned empty."

Suffice it to say that ample justice was done to the contents by that interesting group.

But alas! for the popularity that depends upon the measure of boys' appetites and the endurance of the biggest cake from home! William soon found that while voted "a good sort of chap" in the midst of plenty, his goodness and his fame were as the morning cloud and as the dew that vanishes before the sun.

The incident recalled the time when I too had periodical hampers from home. Bonny mementoes of home love they were to the absent one. I could always tell who were the chief packers of them.

Brother Dick was a good hand at fastening up when all was ready — father also could give general directions. But if I were asked who superintended the filling in, I should say at once—*Mother!* with sister's helping hand.

Who could think of the way of filling in all the chinks and blank spaces like mother? I know Dick would put in screwed-up bits of paper to prevent things jostling—not so mother! I think I could hear her say, when the cakes, et cetera, et cetera, were put in, "See, we can

put this jar of jam in here; and this pot of black-currant jelly—poor boy, he has a sore throat sometimes—will fill in this hole.” “A pair of mittens between the jars prevents their breaking too.” “I know he’s fond of apples, they’ll go in that corner very well.” “Those tarts will only spoil if we keep them; I dare say the lad doesn’t get many tarts—there, wrap them in paper and put them in his new night-shirt, they won’t get crushed like that.”

Of course, you see a mother’s ingenuity in the internal arrangements, cleverly arranging socks and cakes and comforters, and making the whole a compact mass by filling up every space with numberless trifles which only home, and the “Chief of the Home Department,” can supply.

But was my love only measured by these things? Ah, no! There was a closer tie between us than even natural relationships—it was she who led me in early days to trust in Him whose love passes knowledge—it was she who helped to solve all my difficulties when faith and unbelief were struggling for the mastery, and by her help faith gained the day.

SAVED FROM THE WOLVES.



A WORKING man went to the woods
His daily task to do,
And there he work'd from morn till eve,
And often weary grew.
His little son he left at home,
Who play'd the live-long day :
To meet his father in the woods
At eventime would stray.

One day as eve came on apace,
His father he would meet—
Surprise him in the wood itself,
And be the first to greet.
Towards the forest off he went,
And *in* a little way,
Then, sitting on a fallen tree,
He for papa did stay.

But as he sat he fell asleep,
And on the moss did lay,
With leaves the wind soon cover'd him,
'Twas such a boisterous day.
The father's work at length is done,
The axe is laid aside,
And home he goes, just as the sun
Behind the trees does hide.

He comes to where that pile of leaves
Lies near his homeward way,
He wonders what that heap can be,
But thinks he will not stay.

And yet he seems impell'd to stop
And see what it can be ;
It was not there when last he pass'd—
Yes, he must go and see.

He gently lays aside the leaves,
When lo! his boy he sees.
Into his arms he lifts the lad,
And from the forest flees.
For at that moment greets his ears
The wolves' peculiar growl,
And to that very spot they come,
As through the woods they prowl.

They swiftly go towards the heap,
Attracted by the scent,
They scratch and fling the leaves about,
On prey intently bent.
Away, away the woodman runs,
His son clasp'd to his breast ;
Until he can his cottage reach,
He must not stop to rest.

But God is watching over them,
The wolves He keeps behind ;
They cannot overtake the man,
So other prey must find.
Let each and all of those who read
This story of God's care,
Look up to Him from day to day,
And they His love shall share.



"The widow was at last resigned to parting with her boy.

HE WOULD BE A SAILOR.

YES, in spite of all his mother's remonstrances and wishes, Johnny M. was determined to go to sea.

His brother was a sailor, and he would be one also. He had another brother in India, and he would like to see foreign parts. So, seeing her boy was determined to go to sea, the widow was at last resigned to parting with her last boy, and a berth being found for him he was soon on the "ocean wave."

Although he did not find a boy's life on board ship exactly as romantic as he had read about, or as his imagination had painted, yet when he had got over his first sickness, and found his "sea legs," he settled down to the life of a sailor. The first voyage over and a short visit home, he again left his native shores. John was not fond of writing letters home at any time, so that letters not arriving for some time did not cause much surprise.

But months passed on, and no news of John coming, his mother began to be alarmed.

One morning, on looking over the newspaper

his elder brother at home read an account of the wreck of the vessel in which John had sailed, and the loss of three hands, one of whom was John M., giving his age and description.

You will easily understand the grief of his mother and friends on learning this sad intelligence.

They were not satisfied with this, but applied to the ship-owners, who however, confirmed the report as true, and even in course of a few weeks sent on to Mrs. M. the clothes and belongings of her son. She did not recognise any of the things as belonging to her boy, but then, of course, all of them might have been purchased since leaving home. But she refused to believe it was her boy that had been drowned, and though all the rest thought she was hoping against hope, she still clung to the idea that after all it might not be John.

Still, as no news arrived of his being alive she reluctantly assented to go in mourning for him as lost, and she grieved for him with all the depth of a mother's grief.

Time wore on, when one morning the postman brought a letter, and no sooner did the widow

see the handwriting than in a transport of joy she exclaimed, "He lives—this is from John—I was sure he was not lost." With trembling hands she opened the letter, fearing lest after all she should be deceived. But no; it was from John sure enough, and in his brief, sailor-like style, said,

"Dear mother, we're just leaving China—hope to be home soon."

Of course he had heard nothing of the sad news that had afflicted them at home.

I must leave you to imagine what were the feelings and joy of his mother on this announcement, for I cannot describe them. The sable garments were laid aside with great relief and thankfulness.

You see her sad and joyful state of heart were alike based upon the facts she heard. She heard of the death of her son and it made her sorrowful: again, she heard that he was alive, and she was full of joy—just as you read of Jacob concerning his son Joseph: he mourned when he believed his son to be dead, and rejoiced when he found him alive. This may be helpful to any young readers who want to *feel* happy.

Well, if you hear from the unerring word of God, that he that believeth not shall perish, you may well be sad and sorrowful, for I judge you do not want to be lost for ever. So by hearing from that same word that he that believeth on the Son of God *shall not* perish, but shall have everlasting life, your heart will be full of grateful joy, and you will *feel* happy because you know God has said so: you see your feelings will depend on facts you know to be true, that Christ has died and has been raised again, and that He is able and willing to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him.

The widow *knew* it was her son's writing, and that was enough; faith knows that what God has said is true, and that, being justified by faith, we *have* peace with God.

The ship arrived safely in port, and in a few days John and his mother were again embracing, and now came the clearing up of the mystery.

The vessel which was wrecked was the one he had sailed in, but at one of the ports he had an opportunity of changing vessels, which he did, but he did not communicate the fact to his

mother. But, strange enough, on board the ill-fated vessel was a lad of the same age and name as himself—both christian and surname being alike, hence the misunderstanding; no wonder John's mother did not know the things sent to her.

Perhaps some other poor mother's heart was racked on account of the loss of her boy.

After this John went to sea again, and is now, at the time I am writing, in New Zealand, where quite by accident he met his brother. However, John writes home a little oftener than he used to, and his mother is now looking to see him again very soon, hoping he may have a prosperous voyage home.



An Incident in the Lancashire Distress.

AN old woman, in humble life, who resided in the Manchester district, although not herself a "mill-hand," found, from the general depression of trade, that her little means were getting less and less, until the pressure grew too great for her to bear.

In her sore poverty she resolved to pack up the few articles she had left, and go to Preston, where she had a daughter, who was married, and with whom she might live.

She went to take leave of the minister of a congregation of which she was a member; and on hearing her plan he endeavoured to dissuade her from it, urging her, if possible, to remain where she was, in hope of better times, and adding that perhaps her daughter might be even worse off than herself.

"That cannot be," said the old woman, "for I am *very* poor, and have nothing left to live

on ; I will go to my daughter--for that will be shelter for me, at any rate."

The minister, finding she had so miserable a prospect if she remained in her old dwelling, kindly gave her the amount of her railway fare to Preston, and half-a-crown besides ; and, with many thanks, she took her leave of him, and shortly afterwards departed on her journey.

When she reached Preston station a crowd of boys surrounded her, begging to carry her box, which she refused, as all the money now left in her purse was half-a-crown and three pennies. One poor lad, with a piteous look, besought her very earnestly to let him take it for her, adding "I will carry it to any part of the town for two pence—*do* let me, for it is the only way I can get a bit of bread—and we're *clemming** at home."

Small as was the sum the old woman had to begin anew her struggle with the world, she had a pitying heart—and the appeal thus made was enough.

The lad shouldered her box, and followed her

* Starving.

through the lamp-lit streets to a humble part of the town, where she knocked at the door of one of the houses, and after waiting a while and receiving no answer, she found it was locked. Supposing her daughter might be out on some errand, she desired the boy to put down the box ; and paying him for his services, she seated herself on it by the door to await the daughter's return.

After a time the latter came up, and, on finding her mother come to settle with her, burst into a lamentation, " Oh, why have you come, for we are starving. I have been out trying to get a morsel for the children, and I can't. What *can* we do ?"

Her mother calmed her a little, and begged her to open the door. " Let us go in, anyhow ; I have half-a-crown in my pocket, and you can take that and buy something—and that will carry us over to-morrow, at any rate."

They entered, and the old woman drew forth her purse, to take out the half-crown, when, to her dismay, she found she had paid it to the boy, in the dim light of the evening, in mistake for a penny. This was too much to bear, and

both the women sat down and cried long and bitterly over the prospect before them.

The mother, however, was a truly christian person, and when the first burst of sorrow was past, her faith rose triumphant over all. "Well," said she, "never mind; *we have twopence left*, and let us be thankful to God for *that*, and for a roof above our heads. You take it—it will buy bread for you and the children to-night, and I will go to bed, for I shall not want anything; and let us hope that God will provide for to-morrow when it comes." The daughter did accordingly, and that night passed away with its griefs and sorrows.

With the early morning came a tap at the door, which the daughter opened. A boy stood before her, who introduced himself somewhat briefly with, "Didn't I bring a box here for an old woman last night?"

"Yes, you did!"

"Where is she?"

"Upstairs."

"Then tell her to come down, for I want to see her."

Very soon the mother made her appearance,

and was greeted with, "Missis, do you know you gave me a half-crown last night instead of a penny? because you did; and I have brought it back. Here it is."

"Yes, my lad, I did—and I am *very much* obliged to you for bringing it back again. But I want to know how you came to do so, for I thought you told me you were clemming at home?"

"Yes, we *are very* badly off," said the boy, brightening up as he spoke; "but I go to Sunday-school, and I love Jesus—and *I couldn't be dishonest.*"

This needs no comment. It is simply an instance of what one who loves Jesus can do, when put to the sorest test; for it was trust in Him that overcame the sorrows of poverty and the dread of starvation in the aged Christian, when no earthly help seemed near—and it was *this* that made the noble boy more than a conqueror, in preferring to suffer the pangs of hunger rather than defile his conscience by a secret sin. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."



A ROW ON THE SEA.



WHENEVER it has been my good fortune to have a holiday for a few days I have generally managed to get away to the sea-side somewhere.

It is so delightful to stand on the shore and gaze at that ocean which contains so many wonders—to see it one day so calm and smooth that you might fancy it never could be rough, and the next day, perhaps, the water is dashed about with such fury that you begin to wonder if it will ever be calm again. Surely the sight of the sea ought to be enough to remind everyone, especially when it is seen for the first time, that this world could never have been formed by man's ingenuity, or have reached its present state in any other way than by the hand of the great God Himself, according to the account given us in the book of Genesis.

I was one day walking by the sea with a number of friends—there were Tom, and Jane,

and one or two others, when it was proposed that we should go for a row.

The sea looked very bright, as it reflected the rays of the sun, and we thought we should enjoy a row, so a man was soon found who had a boat, and was willing to take us out.

As soon as we got a little way from the shore we each wanted to try our hand with the oars, so Tom had one and I the other, and we got on pretty well. But we were not going to have it all smooth sailing, for an accident occurred which might have proved very serious, and it is chiefly that accident which has caused me to remember that day, though it is now some years ago.

We were rowing away very nicely when suddenly we heard a loud crash, and saw that Tom had broken his oar quite in two. Whether he dipped it too deep in the water, or pulled too hard, I do not know, but there it was in two pieces.

Now most of my little readers know that if you try to row with one oar, the boat will only go round and round, and then how could we get back to where we started from. I do not think

any of us knew how to send the boat along with only one oar, and yet, as we looked at the broken one lying in the boat, no one was afraid or thought we should never get home.

Why was it, do you think? Why did we not scream for help?

I will tell you.

We all had unbounded confidence in that big sailor, sitting at the head of the boat, and felt sure that he would know what to do, and so it proved, for he took up the largest piece of the broken oar and said "I can row with this; you keep the other oar." So back we went, little by little, till the spot for landing was reached.

Do you remember a boat that was in a storm a long while ago? There were some sailors on board with their Master. When the sea became rough the sailors were afraid, they ran to wake up their Master, and cried out, "Lord, save us, we perish!" Now their Master was a far more wonderful man than our sailor, yet they did not trust Him to keep them from the dangers of the sea; so He arose, rebuked the wind, and there was a great calm.

You all know who He was, the Lord Jesus ;
and He wants us to put our trust in Him,
then we shall be afraid of nothing, whether it
be life or death ; but we shall say each for him-
self and herself, I put my trust in Him .



THE LITTLE SENTINEL.

BOYS are generally very fond of their mothers. But now and then I have heard of cases of most devoted love and attachment in young children towards their mothers.

Perhaps I read these with more than usual interest, for I was what is called "a mother's boy."

I do not mean a spoiled child, that is unbearable to everybody else, but that I was dotingly fond of her; perhaps we were drawn closer to each other on account of a long illness I had in early boyhood, which brought out my own helplessness, and oftentimes great peevishness, but it also brought out a mother's love and tender care in a thousand little ways, that have left their sweetness to the riper days of middle age.

Did I not love my father, then? Aye, indeed

I did, and revered him, and, as a boy, thought him the perfection of all that was good and noble.

Well, I was reading the narrative of a great man, who died some sixty years ago. When a child under four years of age, his mother was very ill, and, as often as allowed, little John would be the companion of her sick-room. In the day-time when it was necessary for his mother to get a little rest and quiet sleep, the child would stand outside her door with his small wooden sword drawn soldier-fashion up to his shoulder, lest anyone should want to enter and so disturb her sleep.

There he stood, a little soldier-sentinel, guarding his dear mother's chamber with all the big purpose of a devoted guard. And, surely, never was monarch's chamber guarded with more real love and loyalty than was the sick-room of that dear mother the boy loved so much.

He had the *will* if he had not the *strength* of the real soldier—and above all, he was guarding one whom he tenderly loved.

No doubt the mother smiled when she heard how her slumbers were watched over and guarded

by her baby-boy sentinel. But she felt happy at the thought of the child-love that hovered at her door, if she knew his strength was no security. Before he was four years old, she whom he loved so fondly had passed away and left him motherless. His grief was great indeed, he was found hiding in a nook under a desk, and it was long before he was comforted.

Whether he found that only Comforter in trouble and sorrow, the Lord Jesus, I know not ; but his was a life of sorrow and disappointment. At the early age of twenty-six, he also passed away.

But the incident brought a precious truth to my mind, not only of our having forgiveness of sins, and life through believing in Jesus, but such a sweet sense of security. And let us bear in mind that the Lord not only *died* to save us, but *lives* to keep us to Himself, and for Himself—and watches and guards us night and day.

If you had to sleep in a neighbourhood which was infested with robbers, you would be afraid perhaps to go to sleep at night, but suppose

your bedroom were guarded by armed soldiers, would you not sleep calmly then? I think you would, little friends.

Now get your Bibles and turn to the Song of Solomon, and find the third chapter, and then let us read the seventh and eighth verses, "Behold his bed, which is Solomon's, *threescore* valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel. They all hold swords, being expert in war, every man hath his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night." You would not mind the enemy with sixty armed soldiers at your door, would you? Well, the bed means *rest*, and the soldiers *security*. But when I have received Christ as my Saviour and Friend, I learn that I am guarded by One to whom all power in heaven and earth is given.

Oh, how blessed to trust in Him at all times! Young Christians, learn to trust in Him every day and every hour. You may learn the lesson of His loving care in the sparrows that come to pick up the stray crumbs at the doorstep. You remember, no doubt, Jesus says, "Ye are of more value than many sparrows."

And then how glad you are to do anything

for Him—you may not be able to do much, but the Lord looks at the desire of the heart, and not the strength of the arm.

Just as that sick mother must have felt what a power of love was moving the heart of her little watchful sentinel at her chamber door.



FIFTY YEARS AGO.

I AM sitting alone. Business is over, and I have a little leisure for quiet thought.

It has been to-day the first touch of winter. He appeared in his snowy garb early in the morning, and the large fleeces he was scattering from his robe in such profusion had a very picturesque effect on the surrounding landscape, so that every little hillock had the appearance of a large twelfth cake without the ornaments which confectioners deck them with. But the beauty was soon gone, for the sun put in his protest against the unwelcome visitor by shining afterwards very brightly, so that between the two the streets were anything but picturesque.

However, the day has come to a close, and I am glad to draw down the blinds, stir the fire to a cheerful blaze, and "welcome peaceful evening in."

My thoughts wandered back fifty years, and I was again a child at the fireside of the old cottage home in the country. I have a good

memory, and to-night I was thinking of what I could longest remember, which was the little prayer, or rather the two first sentences of it my mother taught me before laying me in my small crib. It was this, "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name."

I thank God for putting it into my parents' hearts to teach me thus early about Himself. And though it was many years after before I could say with other Christians, "*Our* Father which art in heaven," the next sentence was so impressed on my heart, that its holy and precious influence was never lost through all the wilfulness of boyhood, and the vanity and pride of youth.

It is very painful to hear bad language too often used in the street, when I hear that *holy name* so thoughtlessly uttered, I call to mind the prayer of infancy, "*hallowed be thy name*"—and I shrink as if in contact with that which defiles.

As soon as I was old enough I went with my brothers to the Sunday School.

The clergyman took our class; and to-day I remember with great clearness one text we had

to learn and recite from memory. It seemed as though I was to move another step in the right direction, and school was to finish what home had begun—this was it, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain ; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.” Thus I was early taught, and the young heart and mind fortified, by the precious truth of God.

I have read somewhere that the Jewish scribes when writing the holy scriptures, or any portion of them, when they came to the word JEHOVAH, always *wiped their pens* before writing that holy name.

I am only now speaking of the *lips* — of course, there may be all this care not to use that name with thoughtless lightness, yet the *heart* may be estranged from God. Do you not remember that Jesus spoke of the Jews—who were very zealous in their religious observances —when He said, “This people draw nigh to me with their lips, but their heart is far from me” ? If the heart is right with God, the lips are sure to be.

While I am writing, a little fellow of some

three and a half years comes to my side to have his good-night kiss ; but before leaving asks me to hear him say his prayers. I leave my writing to do his bidding. I sit by his crib and hear him, and remembering a similar scene fifty years ago, I try to drop a small grain of truth in the infant mind—trustful and prayerful that it may find good soil, and in years to come bring forth precious fruit to God.

Do I think it waste of time thus to unbend to a little child? Indeed I do not! The deeds of heroes may be sounded far and wide—in devotion to Queen and country—they may at the sacrifice of even life accomplish much ; but after all what greater victory could be gained than the rescue of a soul from the power of Satan?

It may have been done in weakness, and in a way known only to God, but it is written in His book of remembrance.

Perhaps the little prayer taught to-night may in youth or manhood be forgotten for a time ; but memory is a faithful keeper, and in God's own good time will bring it again to mind, even as an old tune hummed over by some one brings back the past with striking force.

A BRAVE BOY.

UNSELFISHNESS is the very essence of all bravery. This was shewn in the case of a poor boy who worked in a Birmingham factory, whose daily toil was amid the deafening noise of the mighty monster machines, with their ruthless wheels and shafts, and which deal destruction to any who come within their fearful grasp.

He was but a poor mechanic's child, earning his small wage towards the support of the family. He had no opportunity of shewing prowess on the battle-field, or like the drummer boy who was with Lord Napier at the taking of the city of Magdala in the Abyssinian war, who as they neared the open gates, slipped from the General's side, and was the first to enter the captured city, and was rewarded for his bravery. No! his was the daily toil in which he endeavoured to do his duty in his humble sphere.

But the time came when the poor boy's courage and bravery were to be put to the test.

One day as he was passing near the machines in his cap and apron, the terrible wheels caught his apron, and quick as lightning he was in the fearful embrace of the monster, and drawn into the machinery. Help quickly arrived, and the machinery stopped immediately, and he was disentangled, but though horribly mangled, to the surprise of all he was still conscious.

Yet torn and bruised as he was, no agonising cry arose from him as to his pain, but with unselfish bravery he thought of his father's feelings, not of himself. As gentle hands lifted him and bore him away, he was heard to murmur, "*Don't let my father see me.*"

Poor boy! who can tell the sufferings he must have been enduring at that time! Yet with a rare spirit of unselfish love, his last thoughts were to spare his father a sight of his mangled body.

So he passed away, and while the afflicted father mourned the loss of his boy, he was comforted by the thought that love triumphed over death, and that he held a place in his

child's heart which no danger, not even death itself, could displace. Where this is the case, there can be no lack of honouring father and mother; but such love I am sorry to say is not very often seen.

Need I say how my thoughts run to a different scene? that hour, when forsaken by all, and when bearing our sin on the cross, Jesus heard the shouts of derision from the multitude around, and amidst His sufferings cried, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And when seeing His mother, He said, speaking of John, "Woman, behold thy son—son, behold thy mother." Here love shone forth in undimmed splendour.

Amid a world of sin and suffering we are glad to catch a little beam of that same unselfish love shining in the heart of even a poor factory boy.





“ He shewed the astonished woman the five-pound note.”

The King and the Cottager.

KING GEORGE the Third was very fond of walking about in a quiet and simple way, unattended, and frequently during his walks he would step into cottages by the wayside and talk with the occupants, and many, taking him for a country gentleman or a farmer, would talk very freely with him. On one of his walks he one day entered a cottage, but found nobody there. Looking about him he saw signs of poverty, and noticing a Bible on a shelf that did not appear to be often used, he took it down and placed a five-pound note between its pages; putting it again on the shelf he left the cottage.

Some time after, he was passing that way again, and entered the cottage, but this time saw the mother, who, in conversation with her visitor, complained of her hard lot and trying circumstances.

The king, as was often his custom, spoke of

the Bible as the source of all comfort, and that none ever sought its comfort and strength in vain.

He offered to read a few verses, and taking down the dusty Bible read some very precious verses about the love of God to sinners. Then turning over the leaves he shewed the astonished woman the five-pound note, which had lain there since he put it in—not telling her who put it there—but shewing how rich she was while she complained of poverty, and that riches were within her reach. Alas! the Bible was the last place she thought of looking in for happiness and wealth.

The king left her, thankful that at a trifling expense he had been able to speak about God to a burdened heart.

Little friends, study the word of God, and while I do not promise that you will find five-pound notes there, I can promise that you may find a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no moths corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal; for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Neglecting the word of God, you neglect the

abiding treasures of eternity. Study it, and you will find it true that "they are more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter than honey or the honey-comb." (Ps. xix. 10.)

A SMALL REQUEST.

A LITTLE Sunday-school boy, who was just recovering from a long illness, one day heard his father swearing in a fit of anger. The boy shuddered as he heard the awful words. As soon as he could he crept upstairs to his bed-room, and, having shut the door, knelt down and prayed, "Lord Jesus, please make my father a good man, and not let him swear." He felt relieved, for he knew the Lord hears the prayer of faith, even when it is from a little child.

At night the boy saw his father looking at his sick child as he lay in bed, and tears were in his eyes as he stood there. The boy believed this was an answer to his prayer, and he never after forgot to take all his troubles to Jesus.

ALEXANDER DE BELLEVILLE.

(From the French.)

M DE BELLEVILLE loved his son Alexander very much, who was not yet twelve years old; he often took him for a walk during the summer holidays. This child, although endowed with a natural genius, was very giddy, and improved but little in his studies. One day as he was walking with his father, he was passing a bookseller's shop, where he stopped to look at some pretty books, embellished with engravings, and begged his father to buy him two or three to read in the evening.

“No, my dear,” replied his father, “when I am more content with you than I have been lately, and when you apply yourself to your studies more than you have done since you have been at school, I shall then seize with joy every occasion to recompense your activity, and to satisfy your desires.”



“ Alexander opened his little desk and presented to his father the four prizes.

Alexander, mortified, was silent, and fully resolved to make all efforts not to displease so good a father any more. On his return to the school, Alexander began to attend more closely to his studies, and before the holidays, he prepared himself to undergo a general examination, which was to take place at his school. This day, so dreaded by the careless and idle boys, came at length. The parents of the pupils, invited to this ceremony, already fill the hall of the school, they are sitting upon forms raised in an amphitheatre round the judges, where the first magistrate of the province resides. What emotions then agitate both the children and their respective parents!

The most profound silence reigned in the assembly, and the examinations commenced after the names had been called over. Alexander, who during the half-year had been very attentive to his studies, surpassed almost all the boys of his class, who did not expect to meet with such a formidable opponent in the one who the year before had not obtained a single prize. At length the judges crown him four times, amid the shouts of all the assembly, and adjudge him

four prizes. He is congratulated ; they bestow praises on him ; a lady of the neighbourhood even invited him to come and spend some days at her mansion with her sons ; but Alexander politely refused this invitation.

Very soon a servant came to tell him that his father's carriage was waiting at the door. He took leave of his schoolfellows, after having thanked the venerable schoolmaster, and set out to join his father, who lived some miles from there. At length he arrived at the house ; his father was waiting, surrounded by his other children who had just presented to him different prizes, which they had obtained at other schools.

Alexander threw himself into the arms of his father, who pressed him with uneasiness against his breast.

After some moments given to the joy of his return, Alexander opened his little desk, and presented to his father the four prizes which had been adjudged him, accompanied with certificates attesting his good conduct. The father, pleased to see so happy a change in his son, asked him if he remembered the observation made concerning the pretty books.

“Yes,” replied Alexander, “and it is this observation which, since I left you, has caused me to think more, and to reflect seriously on my past conduct. Forget, my dear father, my faults, rely on my blind obedience to your will, and I beg you to believe that my only desire will always be to use all my efforts to please you.”

“I accept, my dear,” replied his father, “the assurance that you have given me of it, and to prove to you that I also keep my promise, I will take you to the shop of the bookseller where you received some reproaches.”

They went there immediately, the bookseller’s shop being only a few steps from the house. Alexander chose a good many volumes very well bound, but in which there was something useful. This was very pleasing to his father.

From this moment Alexander made rapid progress; he was soon placed at the university, where he distinguished himself in a brilliant manner. The king, informed of the talents of the young student, appointed him to a considerable office. This he filled with honour; he was afterwards appointed to the Parliament at Paris.

Thus it is that a reproof made in time to a heedless and inattentive child may very often in after life be the cause of his success in the profession he has chosen.

CHERRY RIPE, 13 years.

[This interesting tale we insert as an encouragement to our youthful translator, and in the hope that it may be useful to many a young plodding student or worker who is apt to grow weary or fainthearted on account of the difficulties or trials in the path.

The efforts of the boy remind us of the text "Seest thou a man diligent in business ; he shall stand before kings." (Prov. xv. 14.)

But lest the heart should be craving only after honour or wealth, let us remind such as will be pressing forward to get beyond others in the race, that with all the wealth and honours that talent may win, the heart will be still craving—indeed, there will be no complete satisfaction to the heart till it has received Christ Jesus.

When we know that through faith in Him we have peace with God, and are happy in His

love, and that when life's short race is over, we shall go to be with Him, there will be rest, and this does not hinder us working to the best of our ability. We can understand a christian shoeblack shining people's shoes better than anyone else, *because* he is a Christian, and works with a will and a good conscience.

If Alexander, with all his honour and rewards, lacked the best gift of heaven, he was poor indeed, and he would find that though wealth and fame might lay their coveted treasures at his feet, he would still be craving for more, and, like his great namesake, have to weep that there were no more worlds to conquer.]



MY EARLY DAYS,

I CANNOT tell you half the joy,
The pleasure I received,
In days gone by, when, as a boy,
I on the Lord believed.

My conscience told me what was wrong,
And bade me seek the right ;
Through unbelief I laboured long,
And vainly sought for light.

I tried in pleasure's busy crowd
To silence doubt and grief,
And though my conscience cried aloud,
It gave me no relief.

I sought the Lord in deep distress,
And told Him all my care—
I knew His willingness to bless,
And answer all my prayer.

I knew His willingness and power
To save me on the spot ;
Then came the word in that blest hour,
“ To him that worketh not.”

“ To him who on my name believes,
Doubts shall for ever cease,
He life—eternal life—receives,
And joy and lasting peace.”

And then again I sought His word,
And recognized His voice,
The tidings that I read and heard
Made me indeed rejoice.

And every page, and every line,
I read with eager joy—
What peace and happiness were mine!
Which nothing could destroy?

As streamlets into rivers run,
And rivers to the sea,
Truth swells and deepens, one by one—
May it be thus with me.

And as the former years I trace,
I raise this note of praise,
He brought me to Himself in grace,
In boyhood's early days!



The Captain's Confidence.

SPEAKING of the confidence a Christian ought to shew in the care of God in the hour of danger or sorrow, as well as in times of peace, a gentleman gives the following pretty illustration of it.

While on its voyage, Captain B——'s ship was overtaken by a heavy storm, and for two or three days it lay heavily upon the vessel.

The captain had on board with him his wife and little daughter, which of course increased his anxiety when at times hope of the vessel's safety seemed faint. But the captain was at his post through the terrible storm, giving his orders with a calmness that surprised his wife, who was terribly agitated, and fearing for all their safety. At last the storm abated, and with a thankful heart the captain conveyed the news

to his trembling partner that the storm had passed over, and that they were safe.

She could not help praising him for his courage and boldness through the hour of danger.

“No,” said he; “it was not courage or boldness.”

“What was it, then,” asked his wife, “that enabled you to be so calm and fearless when even your sailors were alarmed?”

“It was confidence,” replied he. “I will shew you.” He took his little daughter, and stood her on the table; then reaching a most formidable sword, he passed it before the child’s face, then pretended to strike her on the head. She only smiled; and when again he flourished the gleaming weapon before her, she did not flinch.

“Were you not frightened at that terrible sword?” asked the captain.

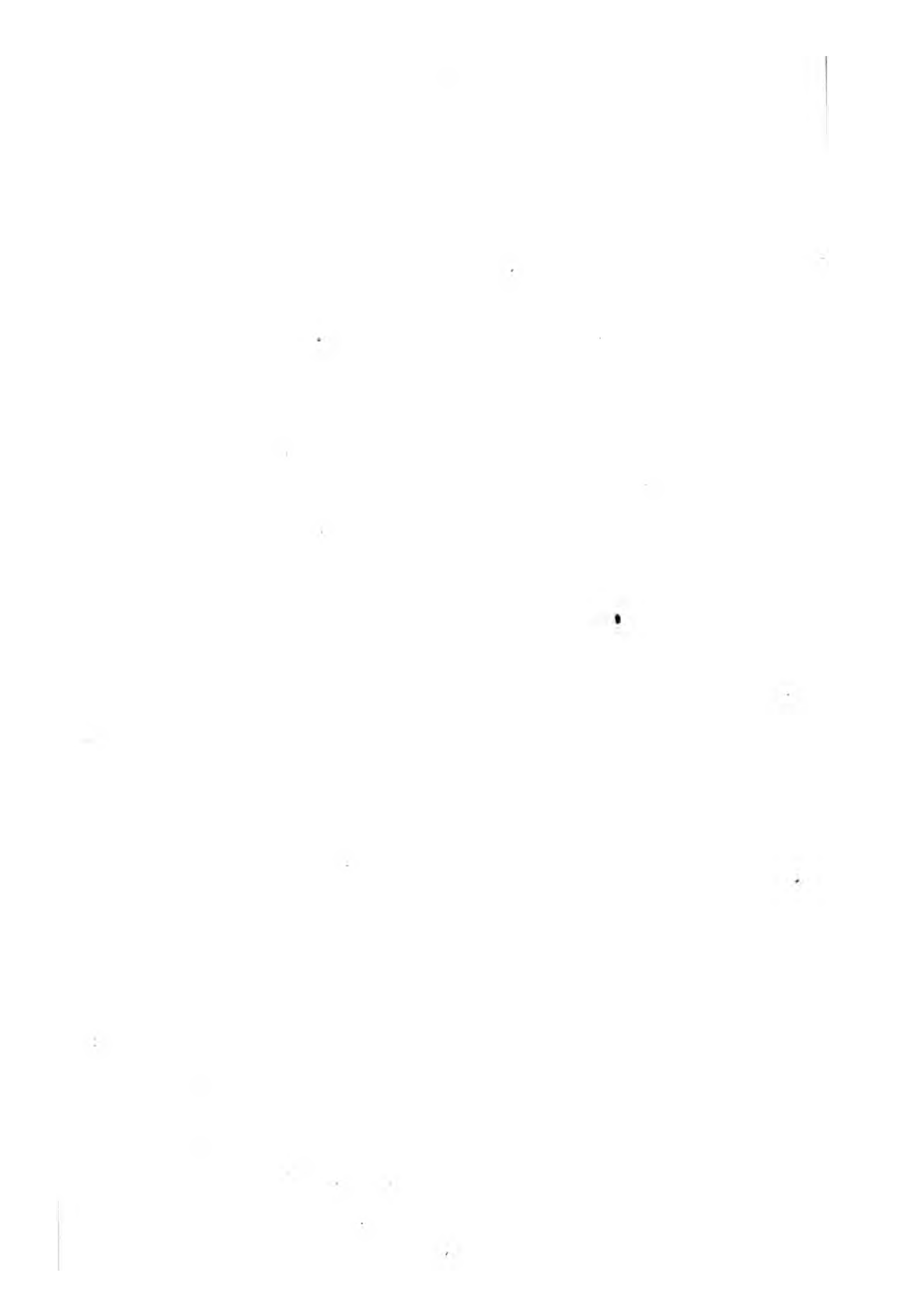
“No, father; it was in your hands, *and I knew you would not hurt me!*”

Turning to his wife, he said, “My dear, that storm was in my Father’s hands, *and I knew He would not hurt me.* I did my part as the captain of the ship, and left all to Him; it was confi-

dence in a Father's care that kept me peaceable in the storm."

How blessed it is to learn in early days that *God is love*, and that He changes not, and that if trouble or sorrow come, it is but to draw our hearts in confidence to Himself, and to put our whole trust in Him at all times! And the heart that has thus learned this can say with the Psalmist, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." (Ps. xlv. 1-3.)







“ Half frightened I, threw down the bundle at their feet.” (Page 75.)

ME AND MY BUNDLE.

THIRTY-five years ago I was in my teens. I had served a good part of my apprenticeship, and pretty well knew the meaning of hard work. The hours were six in the morning till seven at night, and as much longer as the master wished, which meant late work several nights a week, and no overtime money on Saturday nights, Saturday nights being no exception. There were no half-holidays once a week in those days.

My home was a few miles distant, and when I went there, which I did as often as possible, the journey was a late one, as I did not like going home on a Sunday morning.

This was pleasant enough in summer evenings, or when going through the cornfields by the light of the harvest moon, but in the dark foggy nights when the way lay through a lonely road or the country lanes, it required a degree of moral courage to nerve oneself to the task.

There were few railways in those days, and they were far between.

Christmas eve had arrived, and I wished to reach home that night, for Sunday coming next day to Christmas, I had the privilege of two whole days' holiday—which was quite a favour, for we sometimes had to work on the Christmas day. It was late however before we were done work, so there was nothing left but to pack up my Sunday clothes in a bundle, which I did, and was soon on my way.

It was a beautiful star-lit night, and a heavy bundle was counterbalanced by a light heart and a clear conscience.

Perfectly acquainted with the short cuts, I hastened on. Home at the end of the journey was a beacon-light to my spirit, and cheered the otherwise dull road.

What a still night was that! and its very quietness caused a tremor now and then, especially when a frightened bird crossed the road, or a rat plunged into the ditch by the side of the road. One spot I remember was rather murky. For some distance the road was very dark, owing to the overhanging trees on either

side. Then I hastened my footsteps, and was right glad to be again in the open. I must confess to an unnamed feeling creeping over me as I passed the churchyard on the outskirts of the town, and am afraid, like the boy the poet speaks of,

“I whistled aloud to keep my courage up.”

But of course there was nothing to fear, and I kept on my course. A very short distance from home I suddenly came upon two tall policemen who were standing in a dark corner. I don't know that I was a suspicious-looking character, but the time was now about midnight, and a youth with a big bundle was a right sort of person to be challenged.

“Hullo, my lad, what have you got there?” was the stern question of one of these stalwart keepers of the peace, as the flash from the bull's eyes of their lanterns dazzled me.

“Only my Sunday clothes, sir,” was a timid answer to the unexpected demand.

“Oh I dare say, but we must see.”

So, half frightened, I threw down the bundle at their feet. But while they were undoing it

I mentioned my father's name which I found to my great joy was a passport, for they ceased their examination, and returning me the bundle I passed on, glad enough to get home, and my sleep was not disturbed by dreams of policemen.

Having a good conscience that all was right in my bundle, I did not fear meeting any challenge, not even if it had been from the Superintendent of Police himself. But I was often disturbed about another bundle I carried, concerning which I had a very bad conscience, and which often caused me sleepless nights, and years afterwards I was brought face to face with the word of God, which is the keenest detective a sinner can meet with, whose challenges were not so easily answered, and to which I had to confess guilty.

The bundle I refer to was *Me and my sins*, and a very heavy matter it was, and I was anxious to get rid of it.

But just as when you are suffering from any particular pain, and speak of it to twenty different persons, you are sure to get twenty different remedies pointed out as a certain cure, to find

perhaps that none of them suit your case. But naming my difficulties one day to an aged Christian, she said, "Why not go to the Good Physician? He has the only remedy." Thereupon she opened her well-worn Bible, and pointed me to text after text, beginning with Romans iii., and ending with, "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."

God blessed that searching word, and what a difference! it was passing from darkness to light—from death to life. Glad was I to get rid of my bundle of sins and iniquities, and to know the blessing of a purged conscience.

The only bundle that troubles me now is the daily care and anxiety. But for this I know the Lord says, "Cast all your care upon me, for I care for you," and this is equally true for christian boys or girls who have their little troubles, worries and anxieties, as for a christian merchant whose ships are trading in different parts of the world.



THE FAITHFUL NEGRO BOY.

*A true story concerning a little boy who was whipped to death
for going to Sunday School.*

SOME years ago, on foreign shores,
Where feathery palm-trees wave,
Beneath whose shade at close of day
Reclines the weary slave,
Among the negroes, christian men
Had read God's precious word,
And dusky faces beamed with joy
As they God's message heard,
God's word was blessed—though Satan tried
To make their labours cease ;
But all in vain, for hearts were found
Rejoicing in His peace.
From field to field, from hut to hut,
The gospel message rung,
And God's great love in giving Christ
Was heard on many a tongue.
When work was o'er, the dusty throng
From 'mid the sugar canes
Would all unite in happy song,
And sing their cheerful strains.
And families were thus made glad,
And hearts were filled with joy ;
The tott'ring negro bent with age,
And many a girl and boy.

As weekly came the day of rest,
The negroes had a rule
Of meeting in a shanty rude,
For preaching and for school.
Among the rest, a bright-eyed lad
Might often there be found,
And plodding o'er God's precious word,
While sitting on the ground.
Poor little Sambo loved the Lord,
And sought Him much in prayer ;
His message heard, he read the word,
And kept its truths with care.
He seemed so blest on days of rest,
When he could get away
To be amongst the happy throng,
Who loved to sing and pray ;
But Sambo's master oftentimes
Forbad the boy to go
To listen to the teacher's words,—
Which filled *his* heart with woe.
His master was a cruel man,
Who oft his men would strip,
And beat them with a strong bamboo,
Or his most powerful whip.
Another truth young Sambo learnt,
As well as sing and pray—
To love his parents and his friends,
His master to obey.
It cost poor Sambo many tears,
He sorrow'd night and day,
When he was told he must not go
To hear them preach or pray.

'Twas at the school he learnt to read,
 And learnt his Lord to love ;
 And there his little heart was set
 On better things above.
 He loved his school, and now and then
 From home he fain would slip,
 But that he fear'd some wicked men,
 And fear'd his master's whip.
 At last he could no more forbea ,
 In spite of dreaded rod ;
 How could he stay and disobey
 His loving Lord and God ?
 And once again poor Sambo's voice
 Was heard among the rest ;
 They did rejoice at such a choice,
 And thought him highly blest.
 But Sambo's master soon found out
 About his broken rule ;
 He ask'd the youth, who spoke the truth—
 " Yes massa, been to school.
 " Me heard of Jesus—precious Lord !"
 Escaped his smiling lips ;
 His heart was glad ! the happy lad
 Fear'd neither men nor whips.
 " Me love my Jesus, massa, much,
 Me love to school to go ;
 For, massa, Jesus' precious blood
 Has wash'd me white as snow."
 The master stared ; his face was red,
 He clutch'd his dreadful whip,
 And bade a negro, tall and strong,
 Poor little Sambo strip.

Poor boy ! he trembled, though his heart
 Was very full of glee,
 As soon his hands above his head
 Were fasten'd to a tree.

The master bade the negro get
 A whip, both stout and strong ;
 The dreaded weapon soon appear'd,
 And crack soon went the thong.

Then said the master, ere the strokes
 Had number'd twenty-five,
 " What can *your Jesus* do for you
 When whipping-times arrive ?"
 " Oh, massa, Jesus love me much !"
 The suffering boy replied ;
 " I know that He is very near,—
 Yes, massa, by my side."

The master's face was very wroth,
 And with a dreadful roar,
 He bade the negro with the whip
 " *Give five-and-twenty more !*"
 And thick and fast the lashes fell ;
 The master foam'd with rage,—
 He did not care, nor would he spare
 The child of tender age.

The monster laugh'd his loudest laugh,
 And cried with cruel hiss,
 " What can *your Jesus* do for you
 In such an hour as this ?"
 " Oh, massa ! Jesus faithful Lord,"
 Replied the suffering boy ;

“ My back does smart—but oh, my heart
 Is full of heavenly joy.”
 Again the monster stamp'd with rage,
 And shouted as before,
 Drew near his side, and once more cried,
 “ *Give five-and-twenty more !*”

Again the planter cried aloud,
 With frown upon His brow,
 “ What can *your Jesus* do for you ?—
 How can He help you now ?”
 “ I love my Jesus, massa, much ;
 My Jesus loves me too ;
 Whip very sharp—de precious Lord
 He helps me pray for you !”

* * * *

Around dear little Sambo's grave
 The weeping negroes stay'd,
 And many a heart, with pity moved,
 For “ cruel massa ” pray'd !
 And when these loving prayers are heard,
 In heaven, there will be joy ;
 When massa meets in heaven above
 The faithful negro boy.



THE STOLEN ORANGE.

IT is a great many years since I was a little boy, for I see some grey hairs are making their appearance ; but one incident of my early boyhood I have not forgotten, and I think I never shall forget. My parents sought to bring up their children carefully, and taught them to do what was right.

I do not think we ever went to bed without saying our prayers. And I, for one, have to thank God for Sunday schools, for there I learned the way to heaven through faith in the Lord Jesus.

Close by my mother's cottage door was a shop, where oranges and sweetmeats were sold. As mother dealt at this shop, I was frequently sent there on errands.

One day I had been sent there, but before going in was looking in the window, admiring the beautiful things exposed for sale. While standing there a boy came up, and after talking

with me on things interesting to boys generally, he told me how clever he was at taking an orange when he went in to buy something else, and the thing was put in such a tempting manner that I was fain to try my hand at stealing. But I am glad to say I was not clever, in fact I was a clumsy thief—and was taken in the act.

“What! Mrs. Howard’s son steal an orange?” were the woman’s words; “I *am* astonished.”

And well she might be! There I stood speechless, and when my mother had been sent for, and stood before me, she looked at me.

Oh, what a look was that!

It was not anger, but full of grief and pity for her child. But the tears that were in my own eyes, and the look of misery upon my face, satisfied them both that it was sorrow for the sinful act and not for being found out, and I was forgiven. But that look I shall never forget! It has often reminded me since of the words, “And the Lord *looked* upon Peter, and he went out and wept bitterly.”

As I stood in that shop a guilty one, how in my inmost heart I wished the orange had been a

red-hot coal and burned my fingers, rather than I should have taken it. And even now I rarely look upon oranges without thinking of those solemn words, 'THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.'

How cheery and light my heart felt when I heard I was forgiven! Such as I felt years afterwards when I could take my place amongst the redeemed people of God, and could say, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, *the forgiveness of sins*, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. i. 7.)

How pleased I used to be afterwards to run on any little errand for that woman, to think she could trust me. I felt I could do anything for her, just as I have felt in a much greater degree doing anything for *Him* who loved me and gave Himself for me, when He has trusted me to run on His errands of love and mercy here and there. This is just how God loves to act. When we have known the power of sin and have come to Him confessing all, and have gone away with the sweet sense of His forgiveness, how well able He is to use us in telling others what we have found.

I dare say most of you have read how Peter,

in the Acts, says to the house of Israel, "*Ye denied the Holy One and the Just.*" (Acts iii. 14.) But he had done the same with oaths and curses. Ah, but the *look* of Jesus had broken Peter down, and he wept bitterly, and now, having a purged conscience, he can speak with power of the hideousness of such an act.

As one who remembers the days of his youth, and knowing the temptations that beset the young on every hand, I would press on the hearts of my young readers to beware of listening to evil counsels.

"Evil communications corrupt good
Manners."

"If sinners entice thee, consent
thou not."

TOO OLD FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL.

WHEN Fred Taylor was a little boy in our Sunday school, I thought him a promising young Christian.

He seemed so happy with us in everything concerning divine things, that I hoped to see a future standard-bearer of Christ in Fred. But time went on with all its changes, bringing in fresh faces, and taking away others: some had gone to the clerk's desk in the banker's counting-house, or behind the haberdasher's or chemist's counter; while the girls that had outgrown us, had also gone to find their places in the field of labour.

At last the long looked for 14th year of Fred Taylor's life came, and after the month of trial there was a scroll of parchment, and a solemn signing of indentures, that fastened him for the usual seven years. But presently Fred's place at the Sunday school was vacant. When kindly

sought after he was very lofty, *very*; you would have thought he had grown up into a man all at once after signing that parchment.

We had hoped to find a good helper in Fred as a teacher himself. But what a change! Once he had acknowledged Jesus as his Saviour, but to talk of Him now in Fred's presence was to run the risk of hearing him speak lightly of divine things.

The very bearing of Fred as you saw him in the street shewed the change his heart had undergone. I believe Fred was converted, but lately such a lot of things had choked the seed, and prevented its springing into fruitfulness.

Oh, how pained I was sometimes when I met that once bright sunny-faced Sunday scholar! On such occasions he suddenly seemed interested in the architecture of the building opposite, or had to make a note in his red morocco diary. And since he had become a sort of—what shall I say?—model on which the tailor's first-class garments could be shewn off to advantage with the help of a little gilded jewelry, and the nameless knick-knacks of youthhood, you would have

thought he was the eldest son of Sir Anthony Somebody ; but he wasn't.

If I told you he was the youngest son of a worthy and respectable bootmaker in Small Street, I should be nearer the mark.

But when I think of dear Fred, I also think of what I saw in our back kitchen once. It was an old-fashioned grate, where wood was used instead of coal. Well, one day the fire was wanted, and I thought it was out—it looked as if there was no spark there. The white ashes looked dead enough ; but my sister gave it a little stir, and blew softly upon it, and lo ! there was the fire—and a little blowing and careful stirring soon brought out a beautiful blaze, which a little fresh fuel strengthened.

Ah ! thought I, I will yet have hope of my old Sunday scholar who is grown too old for school. I do believe there is life there, and—but the Lord must do the *stirring* and the *blowing* before the warm and serviceable blaze of light shall spring forth.

But I can watch and wait patiently over the embers. I often wonder what becomes of our elder scholars. Perhaps as teachers, we do not

watch the turn of the tide with them : each one wants a different leading, a different training, a prayerful and loving care for them, a brotherliness, and a companionable kind of way.

I wish I could express what I feel about those who, as tender saplings, twined round us, but growing into stout branches, shoot up in all sorts of ways that defy training.

✱ YOUNG HERO.

I HAVE just been reading an account of a brave little boy only seven years of age, who, with a number of others, was upon the ice sliding.

He saw one of his companions (a few months younger than himself) approach a weak part of the ice, and before the alarm could be given, the ice gave way, and the boy disappeared.

Young B., the brave little boy I refer to, saw the accident, and with great coolness and courage, threw himself full length upon the ice, and slid along carefully to where his companion was immersed. Then with a tone of quiet con-

fidence he bade the other boy extend his arms and keep still, which he did, until B. reached the spot, and could lay hold of the other's hand.

Then like a little general giving orders, knowing that so much depended upon presence of mind, he told him how to spread himself out over the ice, so as to cover the largest portion, and eventually succeeded in rescuing his companion. The same little boy had, in the preceding summer, saved a boy older than himself, who in bathing had got beyond his depth; young B., being a good swimmer, swam to his assistance, and was the means of bringing him safely to land.

When we read of wars and deeds of heroism, with the deadly bullets flying around, it is refreshing to turn to quieter scenes, where noble deeds are done in the saving of life, and where no thought of honour or reward enters the mind.

But we could hardly expect to see a mere child risk his life to save that of a companion; yet such was the fact, and no doubt the two boys would become closer friends than ever, and

the saved one would certainly desire an opportunity to serve his deliverer.

I do not think my boots were so well polished by any one as they were by a young shoeblick, to whom I had shewn a little kindness.

His own joy seemed to be reflected in the polish that he gave to the leather; again and again the blacking-brush dimmed the surface, only to glow yet brighter and brighter beneath the boy's busy hands; and while I know there is a pleasure in doing good for its own sake, how much more so when it is valued and understood! May we not in our measure follow the example of Jesus, "who went about doing good"?



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