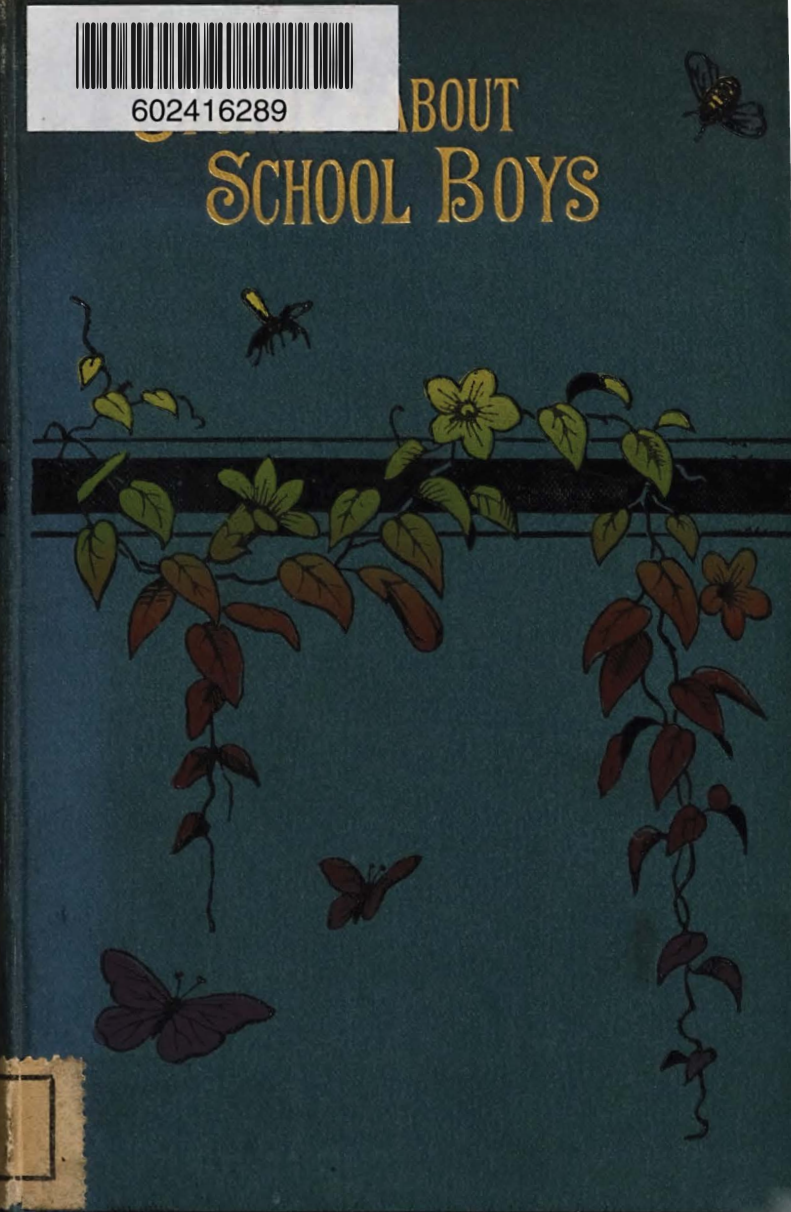
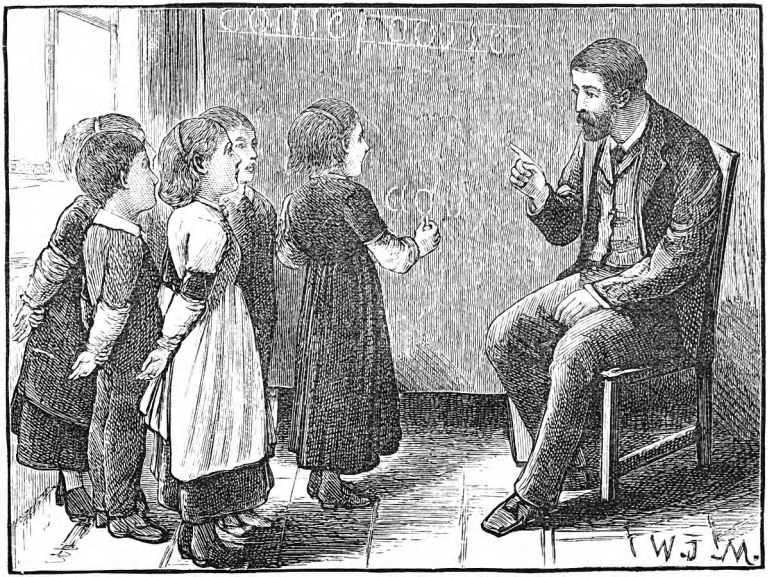
ABOUT SCHOOL BOYS



Stories about School Boys.



A PLEASANT VISIT—*(See page 99)*.

STORIES

ABOUT

SCHOOL BOYS.

(By the author of "Walks and Talks with Cousin Edith," and "Stories about School Girls," &c.)

THE LONDON GOSPEL TRACT DEPOT,
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CONTENTS.

Stories about School Boys.

CHAPTER I.

THE ROUGH HOUSE.

IT was a lovely evening, near the end of October, in the year 1832, when a young German student, Immanuel, who was better known in after years by the name of Dr. Wichern, left his house in Hamburg to visit some very poor people who lived in a narrow dirty court not far from the waterside in that busy port.

It was not the first visit Dr. Wichern had paid to the wretched homes of the boys who were his Sunday scholars, for at the time my story begins, the cholera,

which had raged during the hot months of July and August, was still lingering in Hamburg, and all Dr. Wichern's boys were very poor. Some who were just getting better after an attack of cholera, needed the good food taken to them by their kind teacher, and others, having lost one or both parents, were orphans.

The young doctor had a kind heart, and it grieved him deeply to see the sad sights and hear the tales of suffering that met his eyes and ears, as day by day he went on his mission of mercy. He saw a great work needed to be done, but he could not see clearly how or where to begin it, and so he was led to pray that God would shew him the way; and before long the answer came, though I do not think quite in the way in which Dr. Wichern was really looking for it.

He was not a rich man, and he had no great or powerful friends, only a few earnest christian men and women, whose hearts, like his own, pitied and longed to help the poor neglected boys of their town. And as the little band of workers for Christ prayed and talked together, they felt sure the very best thing to do

any lasting good would be to open a home where a few boys who had either no parents, or wicked ones who sent them into the streets to beg or steal, could live, and be taught some way of earning daily bread.

Three months had passed away, much prayer had been made that a house suitable for a home, or money to build one, might be given them by God, when one day one of Dr. Wichern's friends thought of a small house that belonged to him at a village called Horn, a short distance from Hamburg. He knew it was only a poor tumble-down place, but he told the Doctor about it, and they went together to have a look at it. "The Rough House," as it was called, was only a small cottage half in ruins. The roof in some places let in the rain, the windows were broken, but the walls were pretty good, and it had a large garden, with a well of pure water, near which grew the finest chestnut tree in the village.

About the same time, another friend of Dr. Wichern's died, and left some money to repair and furnish "The Rough House," so with a glad and

thankful heart he set about his life work. He was not married at the time, and knew he could not afford to pay wages to a housekeeper, but in this difficulty his own dear mother proved a true friend, for she told him she was quite willing to live with her son at "The Rough House," and as far as she could, be a mother to the orphan boys who were to find a home under its roof. When all was ready, and just a year after the October evening I told you about in the beginning of my story, Dr. Wichern and his mother left their home in Hamburg and went to live at "The Rough House." There was no noise, no bustle, no meeting of friends to welcome them. But the gentleman who gave the cottage had hung on the walls of its one small sitting-room a beautiful picture of "Christ blessing little children."

On November 8th, the first three boys came; by the end of December there were twelve, the youngest five, the oldest eighteen years of age. They were all wild rough boys, more than one had been in prison. One little fellow, only twelve years old, was well known to the police, as ninety-two thefts had

been proved against him; another was almost an idiot. They had all been used to telling lies and stealing, and some could hardly speak without using bad words. They had all known what it was to sleep on doorsteps or in empty carts, and one boy had often slept on the ice.

If Dr. Wichern felt a little discouraged when he looked at the rough boys who were to be his first family, he did not let them think he was afraid they were going to give him trouble. He told them in a kind pleasant way that he believed that, with the blessing of the Lord, they could all live useful happy lives. He said he loved them, and would do all in his power to help them. He did not want them to think or talk about all the sin and sorrow of their past lives. His mother, he told them, would be their mother. The poor lads listened very quietly, then looked at each other in wonder, only half-believing Dr. Wichern was really telling them the truth. Nobody had shewn much love for them; they had been used to hard names and harder blows, and now Dr. Wichern told them they were to have a

home and a mother. Good news indeed, but could it be true?

Yes, it was all true, for Dr. Wichern and his gentle mother not only talked about but lived the gospel before these poor outcasts. At first some of them were very rough and troublesome, but love won even their hearts, and long before their first year in "The Rough House" was at an end, Madame Wichern had only to say, "Now boys, I wonder who would like to run an errand or carry a parcel for me," and the answer was quite a bustle of excitement and delight: the boys were all so glad to be of any use to their kind friend, and so pleased to find they were trusted.

Dr. Wichern gave each boy a small plot of ground for a garden, and also a few flower seeds and roots. The young gardeners went about their work with a will, and when it became known that Madame was very fond of flowers, they quite enjoyed giving her pleasant little surprises, by placing tiny nosegays gathered from their own gardens near her plate at breakfast time.

One day a boy ran away. It was the time of a great yearly fair in Hamburg,

but as the runaway had no money, he could not buy any of the cakes or other eatables that made such a tempting show on the stalls, so he wandered about cold and hungry, we may be sure, till it began to get dark. A friend of Dr. Wichern's met him, and advised him to return. The boy said he was sorry he had left "The Rough House," and was ashamed to go back, but at last was persuaded to do so. It was late when he arrived, the boys had all had their suppers, and were seated round Madame singing a hymn, while a bright wood fire burned in the stove. How comfortable and homelike it all looked. At that moment Dr. Wichern saw the little wanderer, who stood in the doorway afraid to enter, and after telling him to come in and have some supper, turned to the boys and asked how they would advise the runaway to be treated. "Punish him, Sir, punish him," was the united verdict.

"I will leave you a little while to talk it over, and perhaps you may think of a better way," said Dr. Wichern. When half an hour later he returned to the room, the oldest boy, leading the culprit by the hand, said, "If you please, Sir,

we all think now it would be best to FORGIVE him." So the offender was forgiven, and you will be glad to hear, never made another attempt at running off.

But "The Rough House" had its schools, its workshops and Bible classes, as well as pleasant gatherings round the fireside, and I hope to tell you something about all these in my next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THE YOUNG WORKMEN.

THE blessing of the Lord rested upon The Rough House and its inmates, and year by year the work grew and prospered. As Dr. Wichern looked at the twelve rough boys, of whom I told you in my last chapter, he saw most of them were strong healthy lads, who looked quite capable of good honest work. He knew, too, that if he set them to work against their wills, they would run away and go back to their old, idle, wandering lives.

A high bank, or wall of earth, enclosed "The Rough House" on three of its sides.

"Do you know, boys, what I have been thinking?" said Dr. Wichern as soon as prayers were over one morning, "'The Rough House' is a home, but

strangers seeing that wall might almost mistake it for a prison. If any of you think it would be a good plan to level it, you can follow me." And taking up a shovel and pickaxe, Dr. Wichern led the way, followed by his whole family. The boys worked well, and when the short winter's day drew to a close, and it began to grow dark, begged they might have a lantern, they were so anxious to finish their work.

A stunted and sickly-looking poplar-tree grew so near the house as to shut out light and air. Dr. Wichern proposed cutting it down. The boys were all anxious to help when the tree was felled. The next question was, How can we best make use of it? "The small branches and twigs will do for firewood," said one boy. A laugh went round among his companions, for they all knew the speaker was fond of a good fire. But a party of young wood-choppers were quickly at work, and soon firewood enough to last several weeks was neatly stacked and the trunk of the tree sawn into lengths.

"My father used to get his living by making wooden shoes and clogs and I

often helped him," said a boy whom we will call Carl; "I am almost sure I could make a pair."

"Try your hand at it, Carl," the Doctor said with a smile. And though Carl spoilt several pairs, and wasted a good deal of wood, he kept on trying. The village shoemaker hearing of his attempts, kindly gave him a few lessons, and in time Carl became quite a first-rate workman.

"I can make wooden spoons out of the small pieces Carl cannot use," said another boy, and quite a stock of new spoons were soon in daily use at meals.

"Our mother has need of a box to hold candles, and I am going to make her one," said another, and so the work went on till quite a number of useful articles were made from the old tree.

The carpenter's shop at first was only an outhouse, so small, that two boys found it almost impossible to work within at the same time, without getting into each other's way, and sometimes it needed a great deal of good nature not to mind the knocks and pushes they could hardly help giving each other, in such close quarters.

To build a new and larger workshop was of course a great undertaking, but willing hands carried it through.

Much of the corn needed for bread was grown in two or three fields belonging to "The Rough House," and as the boys worked they sang, in the words of a German hymn-writer—

"We plough it and we dig it,
And we sow the furrow'd land,
But the growing and the reaping,
Are in the Lord's own hand."

But time passed on, and more boys than "The Rough House" could hold came pleading to be received to its shelter. They, like the first comers, were homeless, and very, very poor, and it grieved Dr. Wichern deeply to be obliged to tell them they must go away, as the Home was quite full.

The boys were sorry too, and often talked matters over among themselves, and one day asked Dr. Wichern if he did not think it would be a good plan to build a new house for themselves, leaving the old one for new-comers.

After waiting upon God in prayer for some days, Dr. Wichern felt sure he

would be right in building. Money and land were given, and in time a new house was built, and "The Rough House" once more filled with homeless starving lads.

As Dr. Wichern could not be in both houses at the same time, a young man who himself loved the Lord Jesus Christ, and who had a kind way with the boys, and besides, had proved himself one whom they could trust and look up to, took charge of the new house, and in this way was a great help to the Doctor.

When the New Home (called the Swiss House) was opened, a friend sent a valuable present, in the shape of a printing press, and several sets of type, or as printers call them "founts of type" so another workshop had to be built, and soon a party of young printers were at work in it printing Gospel books and tracts for Dr. Wichern. While he was anxious that his boys should grow up good workmen, he cared still more about the salvation of their souls. Knowing for himself the value of God's word, he could say with David, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." (Psalm cxix.

130.) And so in faith and prayer he sowed the good seed of simple Bible teaching. The histories of Joseph and Daniel were great favourites with the boys, and they never seemed to get tired of listening to them. But I think the story that won the hearts and changed the lives of many, was that of the Lord Jesus, of His sufferings and death for sinners.

One day a boy was brought to "The Rough House" who, though not more than twelve years of age, was old in sin, and who said he did not believe there was a God. Another boy who had been some time in the home, took the newcomer to Dr. Wichern, saying as he did so, "Please, Sir, I think he would soon understand if you wouldn't mind reading to him out of the Gospel by John."

In the case of this boy, the story of a Saviour's love shewed him his need of salvation, and after three weeks of deep trouble of soul, he could sing—

"Now I have found a friend,
Jesus is mine."

In less than two years from the time

the Swiss House was opened, the young builders were at work again on a house intended as a home for poor homeless girls. When it was finished, a sister of Dr. Wichern's kindly took charge of it and it was soon filled.

But we must say good-bye now to "The Rough House," and its young workmen. Any of my readers who would like to know more of Dr. Wichern and his work, may find the information they seek in a book called, "Praying and Working," by W. F. Stevenson, published in 1866, by A. Strahan, London. In its pages under the heading of Immanuel Wichern, they will find a long and interesting account of work among orphans and homeless boys in Germany.

CHAPTER III.

THE DUTCH SAILOR BOY.

NOW many of my young readers have visited Dover I wonder? Few, I think, would be content to say good-bye to its white cliffs without having climbed the long flight of stone steps leading to the Keep of its grand old castle, and enjoying the glorious sea views to be had from its ramparts.

English history, too, as every schoolboy knows, has something to tell us about Dover.

There, many years ago, an English king might have been seen kneeling before a messenger from the pope of Rome, from whose hand he received the crown which for a time he had given up, at the same time making a very strange promise in all things to obey the pope.

I have not told you the name of the king, of the pope's messenger, or the year in which all this happened; but, as I think some of you would like to help me to write stories about schoolboys, I am going to leave room for you to fill in what I have left out. Just so—In the year , king received his from the hand of , and agreed to hold it as a vassal of the .

If you do not know the meaning of the word vassal, look for it in your dictionary, and when you have filled in all the blank spaces I have left, if any one should ask who wrote Stories about Schoolboys, you will be able to say, "We wrote it—C. J. L. and I."

But I have not told you about the Dutch sailor boy yet.

It was an autumn evening, shadows were beginning to gather, and the air was growing cool, when, returning by the sea-front, we noticed a number of persons standing quite still, and all seemed to be much interested in watching some one or something.

Going nearer we saw a boy whose appearance told us he acted as a cabin

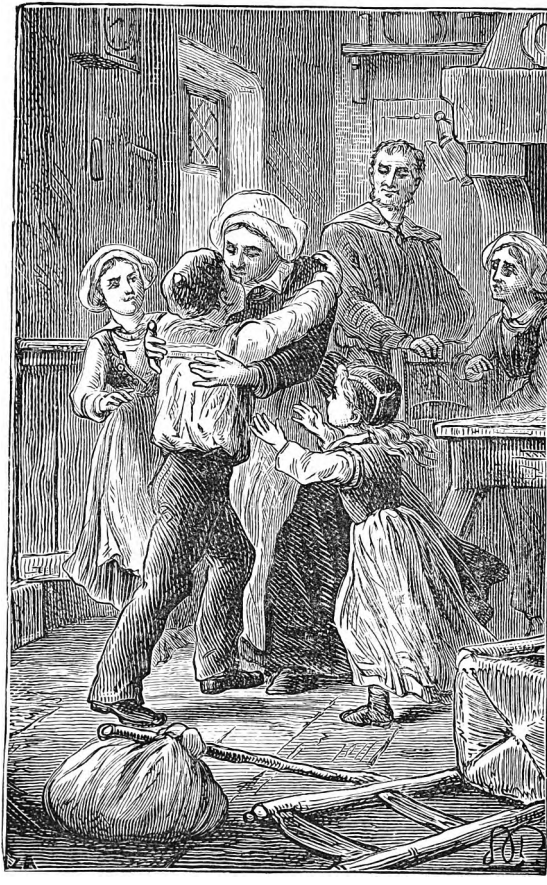
boy on board a Dutch ship then in the harbour, sitting, his face almost hidden in his hands, on the sea wall, at a point where it was too steep to be climbed.

How had he got there?

Easily enough: he had wandered along the beach when the tide was out, and scrambled over some loose stones to what seemed a comfortable seat, where he had most likely gone to sleep, awaking to find his return by the way he had come was out of the question, as the waves had washed over the stones and the tide was coming in fast.

Only one way of escape was left: by going for some distance along a narrow and slippery ledge of rock, he would be able to gain a higher part of the sea wall, from which it would be easy to reach a flight of wooden steps leading to the parade.

The boy saw his danger, he saw, too, there was a way of escape, but did not seem to have courage to try it. For, like most Dutch boys, he was not a good climber; perhaps because his native country, Holland, is so flat that he could not have had much practice, though I have no doubt that, provided



THE DUTCH BOY'S RETURN HOME.

with a pair of skates, on some good ice, he would soon have proved, if he could not climb, that he could skate as well as any English boy, for most of the Dutch are first-rate skaters.

We were all getting anxious about him, as we saw the tide would soon cover the wall, for the part where he was sitting was some distance below high-water mark. One old gentleman, like ourselves a visitor, said he thought the only way of reaching him would be by putting off a boat from the pier.

While we were talking about what could be done, a party of Dover fisher boys came up, all ready and willing to help.

Taking off their shoes and stockings, they went along the ledge of rock, and were soon trying to induce him to follow their example. But, as the Dutch boy and his new friends could not speak a word of each other's language, it was not easy to make him understand how it could be done, and the poor boy only shook his head and looked unwilling to make the attempt. But the fisher lads would not give it up. They shewed him by signs how high the tide would

soon rise, and one little fellow ran backwards and forwards several times to encourage his timid companion.

At last the sailor boy, grasping a hand of two of his rescuers, was half led, half dragged over the rocks to the steps. Out of danger, but unable to thank his young deliverers, he stood still, and then pointed upwards with such a reverent look, we felt sure he owned the hand of God in his escape from danger.

And now, boys, I want to say just a few loving, earnest words to you about your danger and your Deliverer.

I am sure you have all read the beautiful story of David, Israel's shepherd king, and you know how one day, when he was quite a youth, while keeping his father's sheep in a field near Bethlehem, he risked his life and went down into the place of danger, rather than give up one helpless lamb to the fierce lion and the cruel bear (1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35), and I think you know, too, that in so doing, David was only a type or shadow of the Lord Jesus Christ, who became a Saviour that He might seek and save the lost.

I have told you how the Dover fisher

boys went along the rocky ledge to the very spot where the one they were going to help was. It would have been no help at all if they had only stood on the parade and called to him to leave his dangerous position and come to them where they were.

Perhaps you have often sung

> "For His love to ruin'd sinners,
> To this wretched world He came;
> Here He died to make atonement.
> Justice now no more can claim."

But have you ever really thought that it was because He loved *you*, that he not only risked but gave His life that you might be saved?

Some of the noblest, bravest boys I have known were on the Lord's side. It did one good to look at their happy faces. They did not mind being laughed at for doing right; but no boys in the school enjoyed a merry game of play more than these young soldiers of Christ, and they were good at lessons, too, so you will not be surprised that they carried off quite a large share of prizes and honours.

I have often seen one of them leave

his companions, and run to carry a basket for widow Dalton, or take blind Peter Wilts safely across the road; and all was done in such a bright pleasant way, it made one think of the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts xx. 35.)

A friend said to him one day, "Eddie, how is it you are always trying to make other people happy?"

Eddie was silent for a moment, a bright flush crimsoned his fair young brow, then, simply and modestly his answer was given: "I think it is just because He loved me and gave Himself for me."

Happy Eddie, to have so early learnt the secret of a useful and truly blessed life.

CHAPTER IV.

SWIFTER THAN THE TELEGRAPH.

"A TELEGRAM from uncle Gerald; he will be here this evening!" And with the above interesting piece of news, Herbert Graham rushed into the pleasant little parlour, where his elder sister Elsie was busy with some plain sewing.

Elsie lifted her eyes for a moment to her brother's handsome face, and said with a smile, "Oh Herbert, I am so glad, it is always a comfort to have uncle Gerald among us. But when did the telegram arrive?"

"Only just now. It was addressed to mother, but she said I might open it. And look here, Elsie (as he spoke, Herbert pointed to the envelope), it is

little more than an hour since the message left Glasgow. Is it not wonderful; I never heard of anything to come up to the telegraph, did you, Elsie?"

Elsie was silent for a few moments, but the light in her eyes told that her thoughts were happy ones. Then she answered in a low gentle voice, "The telegraph is, I think, Herbert dear, one of the most wonderful inventions of the nineteenth century. But just as you came into the room I was thinking of such a beautiful Bible verse, 'Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear.' (Is. lxv. 24.) Do you remember meeting Mr. and Mrs. Lane when we were at the seaside last autumn?"

"Oh yes, Elsie, I liked them so much; Mr. Lane was so kind. He shewed me how to put new rigging to my ship, and told me lots of things about foreign countries. He used to go to sea, and one day he told me he had sailed more than half round the world."

"Did he ever tell you how his wife and he were brought to the Lord? If not, I think I can tell you of answers to

prayer swifter even than the wonders of the telegraph."

"No, Elsie, I can't remember his having done so."

"I think it is twelve or thirteen years since Mr. and Mrs. Lane found themselves obliged to leave their pretty home in Scotland; Mr. Lane went to sea, his wife to London. At the time of which I am telling you, neither of them knew the Lord; but Mrs. Lane, who for some time had been in feeble health, was really anxious about her soul.

"Soon after her arrival in London, Mrs. Lane went to see a clever doctor. The doctor asked several questions, but spoke hopefully to Mrs. Lane, telling her he thought in time she might get quite well, but she must be very careful to avoid taking cold, and must on no account get her clothes damp or her feet wet.

"Shortly after her visit to the doctor, Mrs. Lane, who had been tempted by the beauty of a spring morning to leave home without an umbrella, found herself overtaken by a heavy shower of rain. Remembering the advice of the doctor, her first thought was to enter a tram car;

but the sudden rain had caused quite a rush to the first that passed, and the 'Full inside' of the conductor, told her she must seek some other means of escape from the shower. Mrs. Lane then noticed that while waiting for the car she had been standing very near the open door of a shop. Entering, she asked if she might take shelter till the rain was over.

"Miss Hill, the young lady who was that day in charge of the shop, was a simple happy believer in the Lord Jesus. Having found rest of soul through His finished work, she loved to speak of Him to the weary hearts and sin-burdened souls who often entered her shop.

"Kindly giving the permission for which Mrs. Lane had asked, and inviting her to take a seat, Miss Hill returned to the little parlour behind the shop, anxious to finish a letter she had been writing before the entrance of Mrs. Lane. But I do not think the letter was finished that day, for a voice seemed to whisper, 'Go and speak to that stranger about her soul; perhaps she is weary, and does not know her Saviour.'

"Miss Hill closed her desk, and went to look for a gospel book or tract. It was some time before she found one she thought quite suitable. Then looking to the Lord for His blessing, she went into the shop, saying with a pleasant smile, 'I have brought you something to read while you are waiting.' A long talk followed, and Miss Hill soon found that her visitor was truly an anxious soul; one really longing for the rest and peace the Lord Jesus offers to all who simply trust His finished work. So Miss Hill told her of Him, of all His power and willingness to save those who come unto God by Him. And the Lord, who guided the feet of Mrs. Lane to one who would tell her of Christ, opened her heart to receive the gospel message, and it was not long before she was able to rejoice in the knowledge that she was saved. One great desire now filled her soul—that her absent husband might know and trust the Saviour, too.

"She wrote him a long loving letter, telling Him what great things the Lord had done for her soul. She asked him to receive Christ as his Saviour, and

sent him the name and address of one of the Lord's servants who lived at the place to which Mr. Lane's ship was going. But Mrs. Lane did more than write, she prayed for the salvation of her husband; and I am going to tell you how, before the mail steamer took his wife's letter out to Mr. Lane, her prayer went to God, and an answer of blessing was given.

"Mr. Lane was busy in the discharge of his duties in the engine room of his ship, when an earnest worker for Christ, the very same whose name and address was on its way across the sea in Mrs. Lane's letter to her husband, went on board, his errand being to speak of Christ to any who were willing to listen. To some of the sailors who had visited that port on former voyages, his face was that of an old friend, while to others it was quite a stranger, and some, among whom was Mr. Lane, were careless about the great salvation of which Mr. White loved to tell.

"Tracts and gospels had been placed in the hands of all willing to receive them, and all who had leave to be ashore the following Lord's day were

invited to a gospel address, and Mr. White was about to leave the ship, when hearing voices in the engine room, he turned that way, and said pleasantly, 'May I come down?'

"Perhaps something in Mr. Lane's work had gone wrong, and he did not want to talk just then, so he answered crossly that he was too busy to have a visitor. Did Mr. White, turn away saying to himself, 'What a strange-minded man that is, I won't try to speak to him again'? Oh no; he had read in his Bible that 'the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient' (2 Tim. ii. 24); so he answered quietly, 'Never mind now, if you are busy; I am in no hurry, and can wait till your work is done.'

"It seemed a long waiting time, but at last Mr. Lane, who could no longer find an excuse for remaining below, came on deck, where he found Mr. White waiting for him. At first Mr. Lane gave short answers, but soon his heart was won by the kindness of Mr. White, and before they parted, Mr. Lane had promised to go and hear the

gospel the first time he was on shore. He went, and then and there the Lord met with him, and he too had a long letter to write, telling his wife how as a poor lost sinner he had been sought and found by a loving Saviour.

"I think the meeting of husband and wife must have been a very joyous one, when early in the spring of the year following Mr. Lane's ship entered the London Docks, and he was once more free to go home, don't you, Herbert?"

"Oh yes, Elsie, I should have liked to look in on them the day after, to see how happy they were, enjoying one another's company in a way they had never done before. I'm sure such a picture would do one good to see, and I think Mrs. Lane would not want her husband to go to sea any more."

CHAPTER V.

BERTIE LEE'S TEMPTATION.

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." (Prov. xv. 3.)

"IT is only a farthing, and I do not believe it would be stealing if I spent it. And I do not think Aunt Mary would mind, besides she need never know. If it were a penny or even a halfpenny, I would not be mean enough to keep it; but what is the use of a farthing? and I should like to taste those red sweets so much."

Half aloud Bertie Lee was turning the matter over in his mind, as, instead of making haste home with the flour for which he had been sent an hour before,

he lingered near the window of a shop where trays of candy and hardbake vied with a long row of show glasses filled with acid and pear drops, as well as other sweet things, in tempting small boys and girls to enter and spend their pocket money.

Bertie's mother had died a year before my story opens, but Aunt Mary, who kept house for Mr. Lee, was very fond of, and kind to her little nephew, and Bertie loved her dearly, though he was sometimes wilful and disobedient.

When sending Bertie for the flour, Aunt Mary had been careful to give him the exact sum she thought would be needed to pay for it, but the price of flour having fallen slightly during the week, Mrs. Mills who kept the baker's shop in the High Street, had, after weighing Bertie's flour, taken a farthing from the till and handed it him with his bag.

"It is only a farthing," Bertie repeated this time in a louder tone, "and who knows but Mrs. Mills meant it for me? She gave me a large currant bun one day when I ran to the Chemist's for the cough mixture, and I know that was

worth more than a farthing. Besides, I must have some sweets, so it is no use my standing here all day." And Bertie turned quickly, and was about to enter the shop, when the sound of crutches coming round the corner made him stop.

He knew who was coming—Archie Craig, or, as all the boys called him, lame Archie. A fall from a high chair when quite an infant had hurt his hip so badly that he was unable to walk or even stand without crutches. But the look of peace on his thin pain-worn face, and the light in his large grey eyes, had won their way to many hearts, and the lame boy was a general favourite.

At almost any other time Bertie would have been pleased to meet his friend and eager to tell him some story of schoolboy fun; but on the present occasion he advanced without a word, only opening the hand which still held the farthing.

Archie's quick eye saw it in a moment, and he asked, "Who gave it you, Bertie?"

A simple question, but Bertie turned quite red in the face and hesitated before answering. Then he said, "Mrs.

Mills;" but added quickly, "No, I do not mean she gave it to me, but it was change out of the flour money, and I am going to spend it; only a farthing you know, and so not worth making a fuss about."

But the look on Archie's face, and the pleading tone of his voice, made Bertie start, as his friend said gently, "Oh do not, Bertie, please do not think of spending that farthing. It is not yours, you know, and what is not yours must be somebody else's. So it would be stealing to keep it. You do not know how sorry I should be to think Bertie Lee had turned thief. But there is somebody else who would be more grieved than Archie Craig."

"Whom do you mean?" Bertie asked, "You do not know Aunt Mary if you think she would take the loss of a farthing very deeply to heart."

"It was not your Aunt Mary I was thinking of, but of the Lord Jesus Christ," Archie replied. "Do not you remember the motto text Miss King gave us when we all went to tea at her house? 'The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the

good.' (Prov. xv. 3.) And I cannot tell you, Bertie, what a help it has been to me, when tempted to go wrong, just to remember that God sees me, and a comfort, too, when I am trying to do right, for then I love to think that the eyes of the Lord are upon me and that He knows how hard the battle is sometimes; but all Christ's soldiers must fight, you know, and He has said, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'" (Heb. xiii. 5.)

"'The eyes of the Lord,'" Bertie repeated slowly. "I wonder I did not think of that before. How different things do look when we put them side by side with Bible words, do they not, Archie?"

"But I think I must make haste home now with this flour. I have been gone long enough to fetch it twice over. So good-bye, old fellow." And without another word Bertie was off.

When he reached home he found Aunt Mary had gone to see the sick child of a neighbour, so his long absence was not noticed.

But that evening, when tea was over and Bertie and his Aunt were having a

quiet talk—somehow or other he never could be sure how it began—Bertie found himself telling her the whole story of his temptation.

Aunt Mary was a good listener; Bertie always felt sure she understood him better than any one had ever done, except perhaps his own dear mother.

She heard him through, then said, as she kissed him, "I am so glad you were kept from doing wrong to-day. I think Archie Craig must have been the King's messenger. But your story reminds me of something that happened many years ago when Uncle George was about your age. Shall I tell you about it, Bertie?"

"Yes, please, Auntie," Bertie said eagerly, for there are few things he enjoyed more than one of Aunt Mary's stories.

"You know, dear, that when Uncle George and myself were young we lived with our parents in a pretty cottage in Kent. We were very happy children. After school, or on half-holidays we used to go for long rambles in the woods and fields, always returning with hands and baskets well filled, in the spring-time,

with wild flowers and in autumn with nuts and berries.

"But perhaps the greatest treat of all was when mother gave us leave to pay a visit to our much-loved grandmother, who lived about two miles from our cottage. She was always pleased to see us, and would often take us into her pretty little parlour, and opening a drawer in her sideboard, where a store of things good to eat was kept, give us each a slice of home-made cake or a rosy apple.

"What a wonderful place that parlour always seemed to us, I cannot stop now to tell you, or all the curious things that were in it. But I think what we admired most was a large china plate brought by grandfather from a place called Delft in Holland.

"In the centre of the plate was a large eye, and round its edge in old English letters, 'Thou God seest me.'

"One day George had gone alone on a visit to grandmother. The day was hot, the road dusty, and when George got to the end of his journey he was tired and thirsty.

"The cottage door stood open, but

grandmother was nowhere to be seen, so George walked into the parlour, meaning to amuse himself with a book. But before long he began to wonder what nice things were hidden away in the drawer. He knew it was not kept locked; could there be any harm in just looking? He was not going to touch anything. So thinking, George opened the drawer. It was half full of large rosy-cheeked apples. How good they looked; grandmother would be sure to give him one when she came in. Would it make any difference if he took one?

"His hand was stretched out when some slight noise outside made him look round. Was the painted eye on the plate looking at him? It seemed as if it was. And as the words, 'Thou God seest me,' came to his mind, forgetting in his fright even to close the drawer, he rushed out of the house, and never stopped running till he got across two or three fields.

"When grandmother heard all about it, she said, 'The best thing, George, would have been not to open the drawer, but the next best thing was to run away from temptation. Always remember

that the all-seeing eye of God is upon you, and you will be kept from many a sin and many a sorrow, too.' I have never forgotten that little incident, and I dare say your Uncle George has not forgotten it either. It would be a lesson for him in all his after life."

CHAPTER VI.

BENNIE HAY'S TROUBLES;

OR,

HOW A BAD MEMORY BECAME A GOOD ONE.

"BENNIE dear, I want you to call at Dr. Hall's surgery on your way to school, and leave this note. Willie seems so poorly this morning, I should like the doctor to see him, so I have written asking him to call on his way to G——. You will not forget, will you, Bennie?" Mrs. Hay asked in a very earnest tone. "I should not like you to be late for school; but you have to pass Dr. Hall's door, and need not wait for an answer. If you think you cannot remember, I will ask father to step round."

"All right, mother, I will not forget this time; I am going to shew you what

a steady, careful sort of boy your Bennie is, after all." And putting the note into his pocket, and kissing his mother, Bennie started for school.

His mother looked after him till a turn in the road hid him from sight, then turning to her sister, Bennie's aunt Agnes said, "What a dear boy Bennie is, so kind and affectionate, he is truthful and generous, too; but sometimes I cannot help feeling a little anxious about his one great fault, his bad memory, though perhaps it seems a little too hard a name to call it a fault; but at home or school he is always getting into trouble because he cannot remember what he is told to do."

Aunt Agnes asked, with a smile, "Are you sure that Bennie *cannot* remember? He does not seem by any means a dull boy, and he did not forget I promised him a fishing-rod for a birthday present."

"You are right, Agnes; Bennie is on the whole a clever boy, and I find he remembers anything in which he is interested, and hope he will soon improve."

Bennie Hay had not gone far on his

way to the doctor's when, hearing his own name loudly called, he turned and saw a class-mate, Harold King, running after him. Harold was almost out of breath, but said, "Come this way, Bennie, I have something very particular to tell you, and something to shew you that is just splendid. My uncle came home from sea last night, and brought with him a lot of things for mother, and Bella, and oh! such a dear, funny, old-fashioned monkey for me. His name is Jack, and on the voyage home uncle taught him lots of tricks—he can make a bow and dive into your pockets for nuts. Come in and you shall see him."

Bennie said something about having to do an errand for his mother, but Harold cut him short with an impatient, "But you must come, I want you to be the first of our boys to see Jack. If we leave our house when the school-bell begins to ring, and run all the way, we can get there in time, and you can do your mother's errand when school is over. She will not mind, I dare say; so come along."

Without another word, Bennie allowed himself to be tempted out of the path of

duty, and, once in sight of the monkey's cage, forgot his mother's words and his own promise to her.

Jack was really a very amusing little fellow, full of fun and mischief. One of his favourite tricks being to take small articles out of the pocket, he soon contrived to get the note Bennie ought to have left at Dr. Hall's, and tearing it into fragments, threw it on the floor of his cage. But just then both the boys were too busy talking to observe it.

"Are you deaf this morning, boy?" Mrs. King asked, as she entered the kitchen: "the school-bell has been ringing for quite two minutes, so you had better make haste."

In another moment the boys were running at full speed along the road leading from Harold's home to the school, and, quite out of breath, just managed to take their seats as the bell ceased ringing, and the order to close the door was given from the master's desk.

Bennie's class was now going into long division sums. Mr. Grant, the master, had taken great care the day before to explain the manner of working

these to the boys, going through several examples with them, and telling them he expected them the next day to work all alone.

When the sum was written on the blackboard, Bennie who had *not* been paying attention to the master's explanation, could not remember a single word. He made one or two attempts at getting through his sum, but in vain. When the boys were called up, Mr. Grant, after one glance at Bennie's slate, asked sternly for an explanation. Bennie, looking very much ashamed of himself, faltered out his favourite excuse, "Please, sir, I forgot." Mr. Grant looked at him for a moment, evidently much displeased, then said, "I cannot overlook such carelessness as yours, Bennie, so you will remain after school till you have written out eight pages of English history; now go to the foot of your class."

Bennie took the lowest seat, feeling for once that he was justly punished. As his broken promise to his mother came to mind, he could hardly help shedding tears. He knew that eight pages of history meant almost two hours

BENNIE SENT BACK TO HIS SEAT.

hard writing, and that long before he would be free, Dr. Hall would have started for his country house at G——.

As soon as school was over, Bennie went up to Mr. Grant's desk, and said, in a very timid voice, "If you please, sir, may I just step up to Dr. Hall's surgery with a note from mother? I was told to leave it on my way to school, but forgot all about it. And please, sir, our little Willie is so poorly to-day. Do let me go, sir, I will run all the way, and come back quick and write my history."

"Where is the note, Bennie?" said Mr. Grant. Poor Bennie fumbled in his pockets; but, as my young readers know, the note was not there. After trying for some time, and getting very red in the face, he was obliged to confess he could not find it.

Mr. Grant now fairly out of patience, told him to take his seat and begin writing at once.

It was almost dark when Bennie reached home, feeling very unhappy. His dinner was waiting for him, and his aunt Agnes sat sewing near the window. She welcomed him with kind words, and before Bennie had been in the house

half an hour he had told her the whole story of his broken promise and school troubles.

She answered gently, "I am very sorry, Bennie, not only that you have got into disgrace at school; but because I think you love the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is grieved when, by careless ways, we dishonour Him. You often sing

'Jesus looks from heaven
To see us shine.'

Have you been shining for Him to-day, Bennie?"

Bennie looked very grave as he answered slowly, "No, aunt Agnes, I am sure I have not, and I am really sorry; but I have a bad memory, and do not see how I can help it."

Aunt Agnes was silent for a few moments, then said gently, "The Jews you know, Bennie, were God's earthly people. Even the food they ate and the clothes they wore interested Him. Every Jewish boy was expected to learn and remember many things commanded by God through Moses their great law-

giver. But what about those who had bad memories? Just get your Bible and turn to Deuteronomy viii. Now read the second verse: 'And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee;' now verse 11, 'Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God;' and verse 18, 'But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God.'

"There, Bennie, is there a word in all that like, 'I cannot help my bad memory'? Your troubles to-day were not the fault of your memory, but of your own failure in obedience and attention. You would not have forgotten your mother's errand if you had done it *at once.* You would have understood how to work your sums if you had been *attentive* to Mr. Grant's explanation.

"You need to watch against your besetting sin of carelessness, and you need help, too, such help as none but the Lord Jesus can give; but if you look to Him, and say from your heart when you are tempted to be idle or careless, 'Lord, help me,' you will learn what a strong, loving Saviour you have."

"I see it, auntie; I see it all now; I can remember if I really try and ask the

Lord's help." Bennie added, almost in a whisper, "I am going to begin at once.

"But tell me about Willie, has the doctor seen him?"

"Oh yes, Bennie, as I was going to see a sick friend this afternoon, I met Dr. Hall, and he kindly came at once. Willie is, I think, better this evening."

Bennie kept his promise. After a few weeks of steady, patient trying, it was noticed that his memory began to improve; and when, at the end of the school year, he carried home a handsome prize awarded to him for diligence and improvement in his studies, I do not think any one was more really pleased than his aunt Agnes.

CHAPTER VII.

BILLY BRAY.

DOUBTLESS some of my young readers may have visited Cornwall. Those who have may perhaps have been taken as a holiday treat to visit some lead or tin mine, and when after going down the shaft, they found themselves in the midst of strange-looking dark passages, may have listened with interest to an account given by the guide of how long ago, even before the first landing of the Romans in Britain, 43 B.C., about which we have all read so much in our history books, galleys, or long boats rowed by oars, and coming from France, or as it was then called, Gaul, used to visit the south of England to purchase metal ore dug out from the very same mine.

And as Billy Bray, whose story I am

going to tell you, was a miner's son, and during many years of his life himself a miner, you will be able to understand why we began with a little talk about mines and mining.

It was a very poor home in which the father and mother of Billy lived, only a small cottage with mud walls and a thatched roof, no better and no worse than most of the miners and their families lived in at the time of which I am telling you.

I do not think there were any large houses in his native village of Twelve-heads, near Truro, in Cornwall, where one bright June morning in the year 1794, there was rejoicing in the humble cottage of a miner over the birth of a little son. In due time the infant received the name of William, but none of his friends or relations ever thought of calling him anything but Billy; and when years passed on, and Billy had through the grace of God become an earnest faithful preacher of the gospel, he was best known and loved as Billy Bray.

The Cornish miners used to be a rough godless set of men; of most it

could be truly said, "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom. iii. 18); but not many years before the birth of Billy, more than one of the Lord's servants had preached the gospel among them, and through God's blessing many of them had given their hearts to the Lord. Billy's grandfather was one of that little band of christian men who, in the midst of much persecution from their neighbours and workmates, stood firmly for Christ. His father also loved the Lord Jesus Christ, but as he died when his little son was only two years old, Billy could not remember much about his words and ways.

After his father's death Billy went with his widowed mother to live with his grandfather, who was very kind to the little fellow, and would often take him on his knee and tell him Bible stories, and sometimes in the long winter evenings give him a reading lesson. Billy did not go to school, as his relations were too poor to pay for his schooling, and there was no free school near Twelveheads. When quite a small boy, he was sent to work in a tin mine. It must have seemed a dull life at first

to him to spend long days underground, opening and closing the small trap-doors which are used to secure ventilation to mines.

His Sundays were spent on the village green, playing football or leapfrog with rough boys. All this grieved his dear old grandfather; often, with tears filling his eyes, he would beg Billy to give up wicked and idle companions, and go with him to the preaching; but though Billy quite intended being a Christian some day, he kept putting off, and when he was about seventeen, hearing that he could get better wages by going to work in a mine some distance from his home, he said good-bye to the humble roof that had so long sheltered him, and went to live in Devonshire.

We must pass quickly over the next few years of Billy Bray's life, only just stopping to tell you they were very sad ones. In Devonshire he got into bad company, spent much time and money at the public-houses, and was known among his workmates as a ringleader in all kinds of wickedness.

After his conversion, when speaking

of those wasted years, he would say, with deep feeling, "The Lord was good to me, when I was the servant of the devil, or I should have been down in hell now; praise the Lord for all His mercy."

He returned to his native county of Cornwall, and got work in a lead mine. About the same time, he began to see himself as a sinner against God. He wanted to pray, but was ashamed to let his wife see him kneel down, so got into bed without praying, but his soul-trouble kept him awake. About three o'clock in the morning, he jumped out of bed, and fell on his knees crying out, "O Lord, save me."

When the time came for him to go to work, he left home with a heavy heart. When he reached the shaft, a number of his old companions were waiting their turn to go down. They soon noticed a change of some kind had taken place in their mate, and began to ask questions.

Billy told them plainly that he felt his sins a heavy load, and meant to cry to God for pardon till the burden was gone.

Some laughed, others mocked, and

most of them said he would forget all about his trouble when pay day came round. But they were mistaken. Pay day came, and Billy still sought for peace and pardon. At first he did not see clearly God's way of peace, but God, who is rich in mercy, was leading him by a way he knew not; and when he took his place as a lost sinner before God, and owned the work he could not do had been done by the Son of God, his burden of sin fell off, and Billy Bray was so very happy, that he could not help shouting aloud for joy. He was, as he said, a King's son, and he wanted everybody to know what great things the Lord had done for his soul, and so he went from one miner's cottage to another, telling of his joy, and urging his neighbours to accept salvation. His young wife gave herself to the Lord only a few days after the conversion of her husband, and her joy in the Lord was almost as great as his own.

Billy Bray was very fond of singing, his favourite hymn was one beginning with the lines:—

"Oh for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise."

He would often stop singing, and say, "A thousand tongues! How many would that be? Why, nine hundred and ninety-nine more than I have; I have only one, but I mean to praise the Lord all I can with it."

He was very kind to young people and children. "The Master loves the young ones, and so should His servants," he would say; and his young friends felt the charm of his bright kind manner, and would run to meet him, carry his Bible or hymn book, and listen very patiently while he spoke to them of the Saviour's love for even little children.

He was often very poor, but he loved to say, his Father was very rich and very good to him, and so he wanted for no good thing. Once he had been preaching a long way from his home. The night was dark, and the roads very bad and dirty; he got stuck fast in the mud, and in getting out tore the sole off one of his boots, so rendering it quite useless. Very simply he told his need to the Lord in some such words as, "Father, Thou knowest these are all the boots I have, and now they are worn out going Thy errands, and I have no

money to buy any more, so please help me, for Christ's sake. Amen."

The prayer of faith was heard, for early the next day a friend called on Billy, and asked him if he could spare time to go out with him for an hour. They went out, and before long found themselves at the shoemaker's, and Billy heard the order given to take his measure for a new pair of boots, for which his friend promised to pay.

I could tell you of many still more wonderful answers to prayer Billy Bray received, but have only room to add that, after more than fifty years spent in his Master's service, at the good old age of seventy-five, he went home full of joy in the Lord.

CHAPTER VIII.

BLIND ARNOLD.

"MOTHER, what do you think? a blind boy is coming to our school next week, a blind boy! Mr. Young has been telling us about him. He said when he was quite a baby he took a fever, and after he got well the doctor found out he had lost his sight; he is coming to our school just for a year, then he is going to enter a blind school at S. His mother is a widow, and he has no brothers or sisters. They have only just come to live at Rivermouth, in the little white cottage at the end of our road, and Mr. Young said, if you had no objection, it would be a good plan for me to call for him on my way to school every day, and leave him at his own gate as we come home."

Willie Burns had said the above very quickly, not even stopping to take breath, but he was quite sure of the interest and sympathy of his listener; he knew his mother would pity and long to help the afflicted boy, whose guide he was quite willing to become.

Mrs. Burns, who had been folding away her work, said, with a smile, "Thank you, Willie, for telling me about the poor blind boy and his mother. But come to tea now, and when you have finished your home lessons, perhaps you can take me to the white cottage; if they are strangers here, they may need friends."

"First-rate, mother," Willie exclaimed gratefully, "I have only three sums, and they shall not take me long; then we'll be off on a visit to master Arnold Burr and his mother."

Willie's mind was so full of the blind boy, that he only just waited while his mother asked a blessing on their evening meal, before he returned to the subject with, "How dreadful it must be to be blind, do not you think it is, mother? If I were blind, I am afraid I should not want to do anything but sit and cry

all day. Poor Arnold, I am really sorry for him; I dare say he sits in a corner and frets because he cannot see. And I cannot think it will be of much use his coming to school, for he will not be able to learn anything except—perhaps," Willie added in a thoughtful tone—"how to make baskets, like that blind man we sometimes meet on the road to F."

"You are looking on the dark side, Willie," Mrs. Burns said gently; "now I am going to try if I cannot help you to think and speak of the affliction of blindness in a more cheerful and trustful way. I too am sorry for Arnold Burr, but do not think his blindness need hinder his life from being a useful and happy one. Many blind persons have done good work of various kinds; I think you can tell me the names of more than one blind poet."

"Oh yes, mother, now you remind me of it, I remember Mr. Young telling us that Homer, the great Greek poet, was blind, and I think I have read that Milton, who wrote a grand poem called 'Paradise Lost,' was blind for many years; but they were very clever, so

perhaps losing their sight did not make much difference to them, do you think it did?

"Yes, Willie, I think the trial must have been just as great, but with brave, hopeful spirits they kept on trying till the work they had in hand was done. Handel, the famous composer of music, was blind during the last years of his life; and the hymn you are so fond of singing, 'Safe in the arms of Jesus,' was written by an American lady still living, who has never known the blessing of sight. We cannot tell if our old friend Arnold will ever become famous, but one thing we may be sure of, that if he loves the Lord Jesus, the eye of his soul will see wondrous beauty in Him, and he will be able to say, in the words of a blind lady I know, 'The first face I expect to SEE will be that of my Saviour.' But you had better begin your sums, or we shall not have time for our visit."

An hour later, Willie and his mother were on their way to the white cottage. As they stopped at the gate, they heard a clear sweet voice singing, and stood still to listen. The evening was very

calm and still, and they were able to distinguish the words :—

"In darkest shades if Thou appear,
My dawning has begun ;
Thou art my soul's bright Morning Star,
And Thou my Rising Sun."

The quick ear of the blind boy caught the sound of footsteps, so he ceased his song, and told his mother two persons were at the gate. Mrs. Burr rose to open it, saying as she did so, "I think there must be some mistake, Arnold dear ; as we do not know any one here but the schoolmaster, we can hardly expect visitors."

A few gentle words from Mrs. Burns soon convinced Mrs. Burr that the strangers would prove friends. She was much pleased to learn Willie Burns was willing to be her son's guide to and from school. The two boys went into the garden, while their mothers remained indoors to enjoy a quiet talk.

At first Willie felt a little shy, it was a strange and new experience for him to be talking to a boy who could not see him. He could not look at Arnold's bright face, or listen to his merry laugh,

and think of him as unhappy, yet he felt almost sure he should be so if not able to see. After a time he found courage to say, "Oh, Arnold, you do not know how sorry I am for you, it must be dreadful to be blind."

Arnold turned his sightless eyes to Willie, and answered, "You are kind, and I know we shall be great friends, for I like your voice. But please do not feel so bad about my blindness, I am sure it is all right. When I was quite a baby I could see, but I cannot remember how things and people used to look; but I am not a bit dull, and dear mother is always so kind to me, she tells me Bible stories, and we sing hymns together. And, do you know, Willie, I am getting on quite nicely with my reading, and Miss Mead, the lady who taught me, gave me the Gospel of John in Dr. Moon's type. Perhaps some day I shall have a whole Bible, but one in raised type for the blind costs almost eight pounds, and mother could not afford that."

"Learning to read!" Willie exclaimed, in quite a perplexed tone, "how can you read when you cannot see?"

Arnold smiled as he answered, "True, Willie, I cannot see your books, but mother says it is by the goodness of God that almost all blind persons have great quickness of touch, so if we do not see, we can often tell what things are like by passing our fingers over them; and Dr. Moon, a blind gentleman, who lives at Brighton, wished very much that all blind boys and girls could be taught to read the Bible. I think he must have prayed a great deal about it, for after he had tried a long time to find out the very best way of teaching the blind to read, it came into his mind to try to teach some poor blind people he knew by letters raised above the paper.

"His first scholars got on so well that a great many books were raised, or, as it is called, embossed. But mother says when I go to the blind school at S., I shall learn another way of reading and writing too, in what is known as the dotted or pricked system. It was invented by a very clever Frenchman called Louis Braille, and is now used in many schools for the blind.

"Do you like learning Bible verses, Willie? I do dearly, but I think my

favourite verses are those about light and seeing, because I know the darkness will not be for long; some day I shall see the Lord Jesus, the Saviour, 'who loved me and gave himself for me' (Gal. ii. 20), and then perhaps He will tell me why it was best for me to be blind."

As Arnold ceased speaking, his mother came into the garden, and Mrs. Burns, who was with her, told Willie it was time to say good-night to his new friend as it was getting late, and they must make haste home.

CHAPTER IX.

ARTHUR'S HARD LESSONS.

"NOW I wish Mr. Crane would give us boys sensible lessons to learn, and not all these hard names and stupid figures; I can't think why China was ever put in the geography at all. Of course, everybody knows a great deal of tea comes from China, and those very old plates mother has, with strange-looking pictures of birds and fishes on them, are, she says, real china, so I suppose they were made there; but I don't see the good of knowing any more about it."

Mary Wells could hardly help smiling as she listened to her brother Arthur's grave statement of some of his school-boy troubles; but she had learnt from

her much-loved Bible, that "A soft answer turneth away wrath" (Prov. xv. 1), so she said, "Perhaps I can help to make your hard lesson seem not quite so difficult. When I was at Hastings last summer, I read a very interesting book about China and the Chinese; if I tell you just a few things I can remember, I am sure you will agree with me in thinking much that is worth knowing is to be known about China."

Every trace of his recent vexation was gone from Arthur's face in a moment. There were few things he liked better than a true story, and his sister Mary's stories were all true, and seldom failed to be very interesting. So he threw himself into a chair, asking as he did so, "Do boys have to go to school in China, Mary?"

"Oh yes, Arthur, there are a great many more school-boys in China than in England, partly because China is such a large country, nearly fifteen times larger than England; and as in most parts of that great empire the people of China live very close to each other, of course the boys of China far outnumber the boys of England, and partly because

"PERHAPS I CAN HELP YOU WITH YOUR LESSON."

every boy in China wishes to grow up a learned man.

"He knows if even his father and mother are very poor people, who have to work hard all day to get a living, this need not hinder him from becoming a rich man when he is grown up, if he can only study hard and learn enough to pass some very difficult examinations, as then he will be able to teach in a school, or get a place under government, something like being in the civil service, you know; and if he works very hard indeed, he may even rise to be a Mandarin, as the great officers in China are called.

"A Chinese boy does not go to school till he is ten years old, though he has almost always been taught to read at home by his father, or elder brothers if he has any. It is a very great day for the boy when he goes to school, as for the first time in his life he is dressed like a man. He will have to get up very early in the morning if he has far to walk, as schools in China always begin at seven o'clock in the morning, and go on till four or five in the afternoon; there is no playtime or dinner hour, only when a boy has said all his

lessons the master will give him leave to go home and get his dinner, which being only a little rice, does not take him very long to eat; then he goes back to school, without stopping to loiter or play on the way. And this goes on seven days in the week. There are no Wednesday or Saturday half-holidays, and no Sunday rest, where at gospel preaching or Bible class we are free to learn so much about the Lord Jesus and His great love to us."

"Well, Mary, I am glad I don't have to go to school in China; but please tell me some more, Do they ever get any holidays at all?"

"Yes, Arthur, I believe all schools in China are closed for about three weeks at the beginning of their new year, and sometimes, but not very often, a day something like a holiday is kept in honour of one of their idols, or some wise man who lived in China hundreds of years ago.

"When a boy goes to school for the first time, I have read, he always takes with him two candles, three sticks of incense, some paper money, and three sheets of paper with pictures of clothes

painted on them. In almost every schoolroom in China there is a slab or small stone table put up in honour of Confucius, a very learned man, who died in the year 477 B.C. Before this tablet the new boy, as you would call him, lights his candles and burns his sticks of incense or perfume, then the paper money and clothes."

"Why do you think that all this is done?"

"Because he has been told that these things will go to the spirit of Confucius, who in return will help him to learn fast, and so become a clever man. Then he bows very low before the schoolmaster four times, sometimes so low as to strike his head upon the ground; this is done to shew he means always to obey and try to please him.

"But I have not told you anything about lessons and lesson books yet. All the lessons must be learnt by heart. I mean the master does not give lessons or take any trouble to explain what his pupils are learning. Every boy goes to his seat and begins to study his lesson always by saying it over and over ALOUD. So you see it is quite impos-

sible for the schoolroom to be quiet and orderly.

"When the boy thinks he knows his task, he goes to the teacher, turns his back to him, and begins to recite. If his lesson has been well learnt he gets a fresh one, so a great part of the day is taken up with learning and repeating. When a writing lesson is given, every boy uses a small brush instead of a pen, and writes or paints upon paper so thin he can see through it, with his copy underneath. Instead of a slate and pencil, he has a board painted white, on which he writes with black paint that can easily be washed off."

"How strange, Mary; everything in China seems to be done in just an opposite way to ours. But do you know any more about these Chinese schools?"

"When the scholars get on well with their lessons, the master, by way of reward, will often tell his boys stories of how boys whose parents were very poor studied hard and behaved well, and at last became rich and famous men. But disobedience and inattention meet with punishment in China as elsewhere.

Sometimes a boy who has been naughty is punished by being made to kneel before his seat or at the door till a stick of lighted incense which he holds in his hand has burnt so low as almost to burn his fingers. Another curious punishment is for a boy to hold a jar or basin quite full of water on his head. The master stands near and whips him every time he spills any.

"It is sad to think of China with all its learning, for except a bright spot here and there where the gospel has been preached, and there are a few Chinese Christians, the whole land seems given up to the darkness of idol worship. Shall not we who have so many Bibles, and who know so much about a loving living Saviour, sometimes think of and pray for China, and for the Lord's servants who are seeking to serve Him there, that He may make them wise and patient, and give them the joy of seeing many souls won for Christ there? Perhaps another time I may be able to tell you more about China; for the present I would just remind you of one short text, of which very few boys in China have ever even

heard. 'Do all things without murmurings and disputings.'"

"I know what you mean, Mary, and I am going to work away with a will at my hard lesson. China is I see more interesting than I thought it was before you told me these things about it.

CHAPTER X.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

"SHUT the schoolroom door, Harold! Now, Aunt Ellen, you are fairly our prisoner, and can only be set free on payment of a ransom." And two merry boys, Charles and Harold Hurst, led the lady they had thus addressed to an easy chair.

Aunt Ellen seemed to enjoy the fun as well as her nephews, and joined heartily in their laughter, then asked her young captors to name her ransom.

"A story, Aunt Ellen, a story! You must please tell us a true story, for we are quite tired of playing horses, and you know we promised mother not to go out till the rain is quite over, of course we must keep our word, though it does not rain much now," Harold said, with a somewhat wistful look out of the window.

"Brave boys," said Aunt Ellen. "I

am much pleased to find you can be trusted, and perhaps I can't do better than tell you something about the early life of George Washington, a truth-loving, truth-telling boy, who was born in America, rather more than a hundred and fifty years ago, in the year 1732.

"The part of America where George was born is called Virginia. At the time of which I am telling you, several rich families lived near Mr. and Mrs. Washington, whose fathers and grandfathers, like Mr. Washington's, had once had happy homes in England, but during the dark days to friends of King Charles the First, when Oliver Cromwell ruled in England, they left their loved country, and went to seek new homes in America.

"Mr. and Mrs. Washington lived in a large house, and kept quite a number of servants, some to work in the sugar and cotton plantations, others to serve in the house; but George was early taught to obey his parents and to speak the truth.

"When he was about six years old, a friend made him a present of a new hatchet or small axe. Nothing could have pleased George better. In a state of great delight he ran into the garden,

and began chopping at everything that came in his way. After a time he thought it would be very amusing to play that he was a real woodsman, and going to cut down a tree. He was standing near a young English cherry-tree, which his father valued very much, when, without thinking of the mischief he was doing, he began to chop away at its bark with so much energy, that in a short time it was quite spoiled. George then ran off to some other play.

"It was not till the next day that Mr. Washington going into his garden saw what had been done. He went at once to the house, looking very sad, and saying, 'My beautiful cherry-tree is killed! who could have done it? Nobody knew. I would not have taken five pounds for it,' Mr. Washington continued. In a moment George understood it all, the mischief he had done and his father's sorrow. His eyes filled with tears, and his heart beat quickly. Springing forward, he exclaimed, 'I cannot tell a lie, father! I cannot tell a lie! I killed your tree. I did it playing with my new hatchet,' 'Come to my arms, my son,' said his father, 'I forgive

you, and I would rather have a son who is brave enough to tell the truth, than own an orchard full of cherry-trees.'

"George often heard the Bible read, and from quite a little child had been taught to kneel in prayer, but his father felt sure he did not really understand that God was the Creator of all things. So one day he traced the name of his son, George Washington, in large letters on some ground that had been prepared for the purpose, and sowed cabbage seed in the spaces made by his tracing stick.

"A few weeks later and George was again playing in the garden, when, to his great surprise, he saw his own name growing near the gravel walk. He stopped his play in a moment, looked again and again, but could not understand how it came there, so he set off to the house to find his father. Mr. Washington was in his study. 'Father, please come into the garden, I have something to shew you,' George pleaded.

"Mr. W. laid aside his books, and followed his son into the garden. 'There, father,' said George, pointing to his own name in cabbage plants, 'did you ever see anything so strange before?'

"'It does look curious, certainly, George,' his father answered.

"'But who could have made it, father,' was George's next question.

"'It grew so, my boy,' was an answer that did not at all satisfy George, for he said, 'Oh, no, father, I feel sure it did not grow so of itself. I never saw one letter grow, and here is my whole name. I am certain some one must have done it on purpose, and I believe it was your doing, father.'

"'Yes, George, it was my doing, and I want you to learn a lesson. I am your father, and I love you with a father's love. But you have another Father, who is far greater and more tender than I am, and who is able to do more for you than I can.'

"'I know whom you mean, father, said George, 'you are talking to me about God.'

"A long conversation followed, one never forgotten by George. His father told him in simple words about the power and goodness of God in making all the bright and beautiful things around him. He told him, too, of the still greater love of God in giving His own Son to die for

sinners, in such a way that the young heart of George was fairly won.

"But I have not told you anything about his school-days. The first school he went to was taught by a Mr. Hobby, and George and his master soon became fast friends. Mr. Hobby was not learned, and thus unable to teach Greek or Latin, but he took care that his pupils should know how to read, write and spell well. He watched over them too in their play hours, and took great pains to encourage fair-play and kindness to each other.

"George was very fond of playing at soldiers, and though some of the boys were older than himself, the whole school chose him as their captain. He always seemed full of fun, and had plenty of time for play, though he was at the head of his class, and did extra lessons at home with his father.

"His copy and exercise books were very neat, and free from blots. Sometimes his master would say as he held up George's books in view of the whole school, 'Look here, boys, it is no more trouble to work well than it is to work badly. It costs no more to have a clean copy-book than a dirty one. There is

always plenty of water in the brook that runs past the school-house with which to wash your hands, so there is no excuse for dirty finger marks, and there is no law that a boy SHALL blot his copy book.'"

Charles and Harold looked at each other, and Charles began to wonder if Aunt Ellen had noticed all the blots in his new exercise book. He did not like to ask, and she continued.

"I should like to tell you, too, how when George was only eleven years of age, his father's death was the first real sorrow he had ever known, and how truly he honoured and obeyed his widowed mother, by giving up his great desire of going to sea, rather than grieve or vex her; but my time is gone now. When you know more of the history of America, you will be able to understand better how important a part George Washington took in the history of his country. But I should like to give you one short Bible verse to think about and remember, 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.'" (Prov. xvi. 32.)

CHAPTER XI.

A PLEASANT VISIT.

"ARE you going out this afternoon, mother?" Alfred May asked one bright September afternoon, as, standing near his mother's dressing-table, he watched her movements with great interest. Mrs. May and her three children, of whom Alfred was the eldest, had arrived at Ramsgate to spend a short holiday, only a few days before my story begins.

"Yes, Alfred; I am going to pay a visit. You can go with me, if you please, unless you would rather run down to the sands with nurse and the children, and build castles till tea time."

"Oh no, mother; if I am to choose, it will be to go with you. But where are we going?"

"To a pretty village called St. Lawrence, about a mile out of Ramsgate,

and our visit will be to a school for the Oral Teaching of the Deaf and Dumb."

"Oral Teaching of the Deaf and Dumb," Alfred repeated with a puzzled look; "I do not know what that means, but I mean to find out before we come home; or perhaps, mother, you will tell me all about it as we walk; but I must get ready now, or I shall keep you waiting."

A few moments later, Mrs. May and Alfred were walking along the pretty road that leads to St. Lawrence. Alfred had met a few deaf mutes before going to Ramsgate, but had never paid a visit to a school for the deaf and dumb. He was quite delighted at the prospect of his visit, and said, "Oh, mother, how strange it will look to see a whole school doing lessons on their fingers. I am glad you will be able to talk to them, and I know all the letters; though my finger-talking is very slow by the side of yours or Aunt Mabel's, perhaps I can ask some of the boys to tell me their names if the master will give me leave."

Mrs. May smiled. "Our finger-talking, as you call it, Alfred, will not be of any use to-day, as the ninety boys and girls,

at whose school we are going to have a peep, are not taught to use their fingers in talking. Perhaps you will learn more from your visit, if I tell you a little about different ways of teaching the deaf and dumb.

"I think it is about a hundred years since the first school for deaf and dumb children was opened in London. At first the number of scholars was not large, and even some Christian people seemed to think it was almost a waste of time and money to try to teach deaf children anything, dumb only because they were unable to hear and so could not learn to speak. But the teachers were very kind and patient, and year by year the number of scholars grew larger, and many deaf-mutes were taught to converse by means of the finger alphabet with their teachers and each other. They also learnt to read and write, and some, I am glad to be able to tell you, became true Christians. Most of the boys on leaving school were sent to learn trades: bookbinding, shoemaking, wood turning, &c., and many became clever workmen and were able to earn good wages, while some of the girls were taught dress-

making, straw bonnet work, book folding, and other light trades.

"But all this time the teaching was by means of what you call finger-talking, or, to give it its right name, the Sign and Manual System. Some years since, news came from teachers of schools for the deaf and dumb in Germany and America that a new, and they thought better, way of teaching deaf and dumb children had been tried with good success. It was called the Oral, or lip reading, System. The deaf could, it was said, be taught to understand what was said by watching the movements of the lips and even to say words by learning to make the right movements of lips and tongue.

"Wonderful, but was it quite true? The head master went on a visit to several schools where the new system was in use. On his return to London, he said he was sure from all he had seen and heard, that *some* deaf and dumb children could be taught to speak and understand lip reading; so a house suitable for a school was taken near Ramsgate, and Mr. Elliott, who for many years had been head master of the schools at Old Kent Road, set about

the new and difficult work of teaching deaf children to speak, in a brave, whole-hearted way.

"But here we are at the school, and you will be able to see for yourself what is being done."

Mrs. May and her son were kindly received and taken at once to the school-room, where about ninety children, boys and girls, divided into classes, were having a reading lesson. Mr. Elliott was not in the room when they entered, but all seemed to be going on well.

Alfred was much surprised to hear quite a hum of voices. Some, he soon noticed, could not speak plainly, and others spoke louder than was necessary. All were anxious to please their kind teachers. A rather dull-looking boy, of about twelve years old, stood at the head of his class. A teacher turned to him and said in almost a whisper, "Fetch a chair for the lady." In a moment he crossed the room, returning with a chair which he placed for Mrs. May, with a polite bow. Mrs. May said, "Thank you," and asked, "What is your name?" The answer given was, "My name is Charles Smith."

Alfred could not forbear saying, "How wonderful! I did not know he could hear." The teacher turned to Alfred and said, with a smile, "Charles Smith cannot hear, he is quite deaf; but he is one of our best scholars. He has been with us almost four years, and understands almost everything that is said by looking at the movement of our lips."

Several other boys seemed much pleased to shew Mrs. May their copy books, all of which were very neat and free from blots.

Mr. Elliott now entered the room, and it was pleasant to see the bright faces and happy looks that greeted him. All his pupils loved and were anxious to please him.

Mrs. May who had much personal knowledge of the deaf and dumb, and had known several of Mr. Elliott's old schoolboys, was soon engaged in an interesting conversation with him, while Alfred went, after receiving permission to do so, to a class of younger children who, grouped round a lady teacher, were having a picture lesson.

The picture just placed on the stand

was one of a man seated on horseback, blowing a trumpet. The children readily named "A man," "A horse," when the teacher touched different objects in the picture with the pointer; but seemed at first a little puzzled when asked to give a name to the trumpet. One small boy called it a music, then the teacher gave its right name, and explained that the man was blowing it. As both trumpet and blowing were new words to the class, it needed great patience on the part of the teacher before all her pupils were able to pronounce them, but when the lesson was learnt, Alfred could not be quite sure which looked most pleased, the kind teacher or her class.

When, after tea the same evening, Mrs. May and Alfred sat down for their usual Bible reading, Alfred asked if he might read the account of Christ healing the deaf man. (Mark vii. 31–37.) When he had read it he said, "Mother, I think the Lord in glory must be pleased with the work we have seen to-day."

CHAPTER XII.

THE JAPANESE KITE.

"WHAT a number of presents! I wonder if another boy in our class feels half as rich to-day as Henry Walton?"

It was Henry's tenth birthday, and if you could have peeped into the pleasant breakfast room at Myrtle Cottage, and seen how loving hearts and hands had tried to give him pleasure, you would have thought him ungrateful if he had not been, for at least one day, a thankful and happy boy.

"A new ball from Father—the very thing I wanted—how jolly! I think he was kind to get it for me. And here is mother's present, such a beautiful Text Book, and what is this in her own writing on the fly-leaf, under my name. Oh, I see now, 'Remember now thy Creator

in the days of thy youth.'" (Eccles. xii. 1.) And for a moment the eager boy paused, and his bright face grew thoughtful as he read and re-read the words of holy writ.

A gaily painted top, and a bag of marbles, from his sisters Grace and Lily, shewed they had not forgotten him; while his much-loved Sunday-school teacher, Mr. Jones, had sent a book, "Pictures of Bible Scenes."

Were these all Henry's presents?

No, there were a parcel and a letter, both from grandpapa. The parcel was quickly untied, and, to his great delight, proved to be a large Japanese kite, shaped like a bird, the body blue, with bright, yellow spots, and the wings bright red, while a short tail of stiff green paper completed the strange-looking object.

"Now for grandpapa's letter, his letters are always so interesting, just like a story book, mother says they are better, because they are true." And Henry began to read.

"*Mayfield, Tuesday.*

"MY VERY DEAR HENRY,

"As I shall not be able to pay a visit

to Myrtle Cottage this week, we must be content to have a talk by way of pen and ink. I wish you a very bright and happy birthday. I quite expect to hear that during the last school year you have been getting on well with your lessons ; but do not forget that the Bible says, 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.' (Prov. i. 7.)

"I hope you will be pleased with your new kite. It really came from Japan, so has been quite a traveller. Japanese children use just such kites as yours ; indeed, I believe in Japan, as well as China, grown-up men sometimes spend their evenings in flying kites.

"As I know you will be pleased to learn something about Japan and its people, I am going to tell you in what a wonderful way, not many years ago, God prepared the heart of a Japanese noble to accept Christ as his Saviour.

"I think it is about thirty years since Christian missionaries were first allowed to settle in Japan, but at first they did not seem to make any real progress. They found the language of Japan very difficult to learn ; but their great trouble was with the Japanese themselves. 'They

did not like foreigners and their ways,' the Japanese said, and they did not wish to give up worshipping idols. Still the missionaries would not give up trying to tell the people about the Lord Jesus. They knew God's promise was of His own word, 'It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please.' (Isa. lv. 11.)

"So the missionaries were very glad and thankful when a Japanese, in his long, loose dress and strange-looking white turban, called at the mission station, to ask questions about the Bible, or when any children were allowed to attend school.

"The emperor of Japan made a law, forbidding any of his subjects to become Christians, and things went on in this way for some years. But God, who is rich in mercy, was about to open a door for the gospel in Japan.

"A young nobleman, whom, as I am not quite sure of his real name, I will call Iddo, had received a superior education, and was very fond of reading.

"Walking one day near the banks of a canal, he saw a book floating on the surface of the water. His servant, at a

sign from his master, swam out from the shore, and soon brought the book to Iddo, who, on opening it, was quite disappointed to find it was printed in a language of which he could not read a word. It was an English New Testament. So Iddo took it home with him, placed it in his library, and after some weeks shewed it to the skipper of a Dutch vessel, who had come to Japan to trade, thinking, perhaps, he might be able to read it.

"But, as the Dutch skipper only knew a few words of English, he could not read more than the title of the Book: 'The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' He told Iddo it was the Book most read and loved by Christians, also that if he wished to learn more about it, he could do so by going to the house of the English missionary.

"Iddo was not willing to do this, for he said his friends would be sure to hear of it if he went, and he did not wish them to know he was being taught by foreigners, and asked if there was no other way of learning.

"He was then told that the Book had been translated into Chinese, which

language Iddo could read quite well, and that by sending to Canton he could obtain a copy.

"Iddo was much pleased on hearing this, and lost no time in sending a servant whom he could trust on the long journey. When, after an absence of some weeks, he returned with a Chinese Testament, Iddo began at once to read it. The more he read, the more he wanted to read. At last his heart was won to Christ, and he became a true believer.

"Could he keep the good news to himself? No; he longed to tell others of the treasure he had found. He invited several of his friends to meet at his house, and began to read the scriptures to them. God, in His grace, blessed those little Bible readings, and in less than a year, Iddo was one of a little band of Christians who, though tried by much persecution, were not ashamed to confess Christ.

"I find my letter is quite a long one; but do not you think this true story reminds us of a verse in Psalm cxix.: 'The entrance of thy words giveth light'? (Ver. 130.)

"Several young Japanese are at the

present time being educated in England, and I think those of us who love the Lord Jesus Christ will not forget to pray that they may not only gain learning from our schools and colleges, but carry with them, on their return to Japan, a saving knowledge of Christ.

"With much love to mother, Lily, Grace, and yourself,

"I am, dear Henry,

"Your affectionate

"GRANDPAPA."

Having read his letter through, Henry said to himself, "Mother will be pleased to read this; then I can fly my new kite on the common, as we have no school to-day," and he bounded upstairs, three steps at a time, in search of his mother.

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