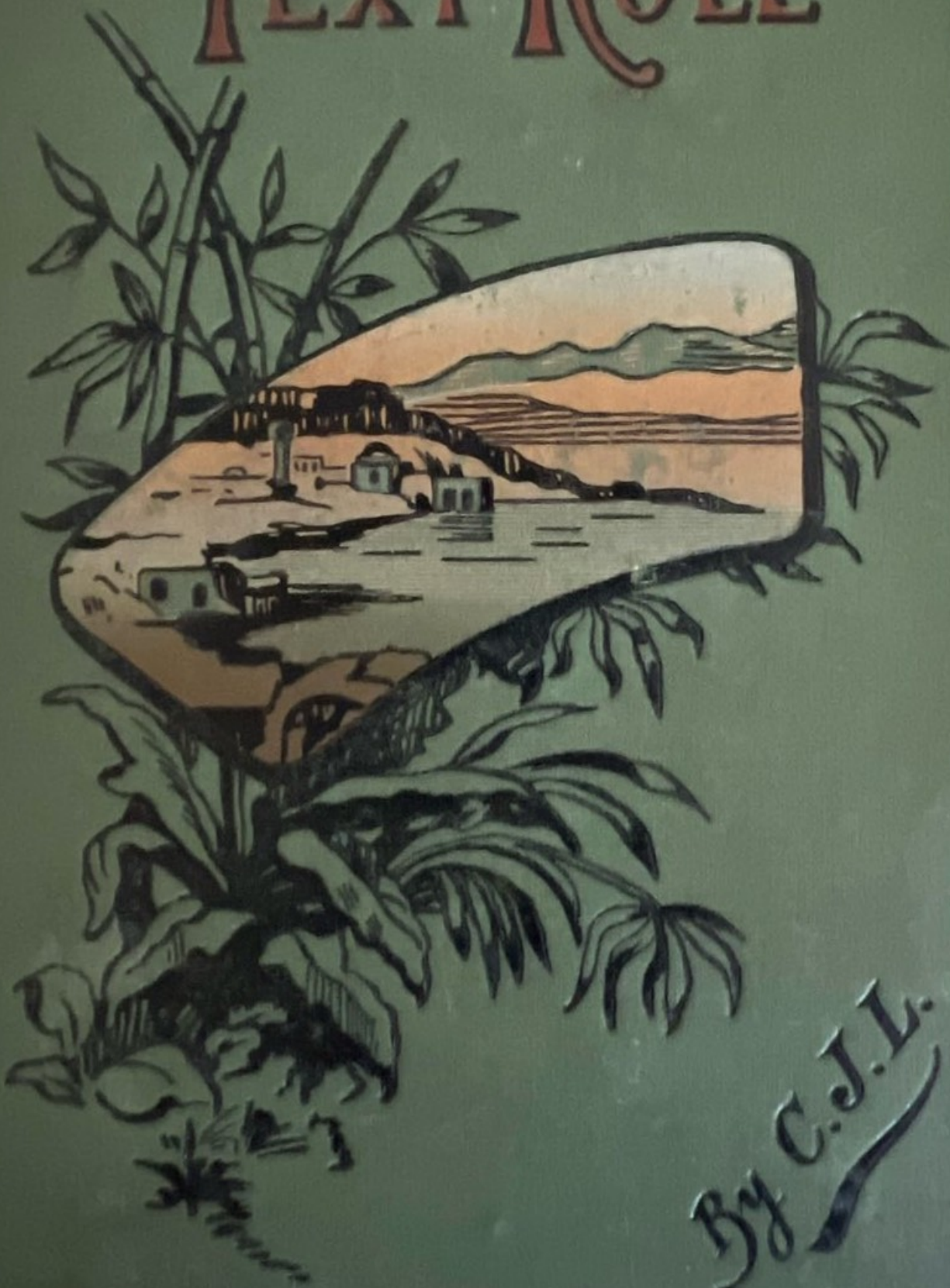


# WILFRID GRAY'S TEXT ROLL



By C. J. L.





THE CHILDREN RAN TO WELCOME MRS. GRAY.



WILFRID GRAY'S

TEXT ROLL.

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BY C. J. L.

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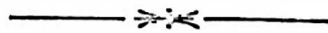
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# Wilfrid Gray's Text Roll.

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## CHAPTER I

AUNT FANNY.

*"She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness." (Prov. xxxi. 26.)*

"HO do you think is coming to-day, Hilda? you do not know, do you? and I do not believe you could guess, so I may as well tell you—Aunt Fanny is coming to stay for two whole weeks. Mother says so, she told me herself, so I know it is true."

And in his delight, Wilfrid Gray capered round the playroom, upsetting two chairs and a wooden horse as he went.

Hilda, who was a very tidy little girl,

left the blocks with which she had been building a toy house, picked up the chairs and put them in their places, stabled the horse comfortably under the window, then went over to Wilfrid, who was beginning to quiet down a little, saying, as she did so, "I am glad! Dear aunt Fanny, I do love her so much. How pleased she will be to find we can say almost all the texts and hymns she taught us when she was here last year, and perhaps she will tell us true stories, and explain Bible verses. You like aunt Fanny's stories, do you not, Wilfrid?"

"Oh yes, Hilda; but last year we had all those nice times out in the garden. Now I do not think mother will say Yes to our being out much, as you have had a sore throat, and the evenings are getting cold and damp."

"Never mind, Wilfrid, I will tell you what we can do: we will ask aunt Fanny to come here to our very own playroom, and tell us about the boys and girls she knows in London, and about all the poor deaf and dumb and blind people she goes to visit; aunt Fanny often reads the Bible to the blind, you know, and one day she told me about a poor blind girl she is teach-

ing to read. At first I could not understand how any one not able to see could learn to read ; but aunt Fanny shewed me a card with marks almost like letters standing up all over it, and she said it was an alphabet card in raised type for the blind, and then I shut my eyes very tight and tried if I could tell the difference between the letters by passing my fingers over them. I could just feel they were not all quite alike, but I told auntie I was afraid I should be a long time learning to read by touch, as it is called."

"I do not remember seeing the alphabet card, Hilda ; do you think I was here?"

"No ; it was when you were away at school at Deal, and aunt Fanny came here just for a few days to rest, mother said, because she had not been well. But I do not think she did rest much, for she seemed to be always thinking of others and trying to comfort or help somebody. But here comes mother, and I know she is just as well pleased aunt Fanny is coming as we are."

Both children ran into the hall to welcome Mrs. Gray, who had been out shopping. Wilfrid took the parcel, while Hilda helped her mother to untie her bonnet and



unfasten her shawl, then carried them upstairs. When she returned it was to ask a question :

“ Please, mother, will you tell us why all of us love aunt Fanny so much ? ”

Mrs. Gray smiled at Hilda's question, then said in a low voice, almost as if speaking to herself : “ She openeth her mouth with wisdom ; and in her tongue is the law of kindness ” (Prov. xxxi. 26) ; then seeing her little daughter was still waiting for an answer, said : “ I think, Hilda, the reason why every one loves aunt Fanny is because she loves the Lord Jesus Christ. When aunt Fanny was quite a little girl, about your age, Hilda, she listened to the loving voice of the Lord Jesus, saying to her, in His word, ‘ Come unto me, and I will give you rest. ’ (Matt. xi. 28.) And as a lost and sinful child she came to Jesus, and now she is a grown-up woman she is still learning of Him who said, ‘ Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. ’ (Matt. xi. 29.) And it is the love of God shed abroad by the Holy Ghost in aunt Fanny's heart that makes her so loving and unselfish. ”

“ Aunt Fanny is not really your own

sister, like aunt Clara, is she, mother?" Wilfrid asked, after a short silence.

"Yes, Wilfrid, aunt Fanny is my sister, though not in the same way as your aunt Clara; she is my sister in Christ. But I think Hilda does not quite understand what I mean. Get your Bible, darling, and read a verse I will shew you. Here it is: 'For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.' (Gal. iii. 26.) Now, Hilda, can you tell me what the children of one family are always called?"

"Yes, mamma, I know—brothers and sisters. Wilfrid is my brother and I am his sister, because we have the same father and mother."

"Quite right, Hilda, and the verse you have just read says that all believers are the children of God, so those who have the same Father are brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus. The family of God is a very large one and a very loving one, too."

"Did you know aunt Fanny when she was a little girl, just like our Hilda, mother?"

"No, Wilfrid, aunt Fanny and myself had both left school when we first met. We had, through the mercy of God, given our hearts to the Lord, and, as we wanted

very much to tell others about our Saviour, we had each a class in the Sunday school, and very precious times we used to have telling 'The old, old story' to the poor little children who used to be so pleased to come and hear about the Lord Jesus ; and Fanny Dale has been my much loved friend and sister ever since. When Hilda and yourself were very little children, almost before you could speak plainly, you began calling her aunt Fanny, and I think she was pleased, for her life has been a very lonely one, she has no brothers or sisters, nephews or nieces of her own. Indeed I do not think she has any relations, as she was left an orphan when very young, and she has often told me she was an only child."

"Poor aunt Fanny," Hilda said gently, with quite a troubled look clouding for a moment her bright young face ; "how sad it must be to be quite alone in the world, and yet I do not think she is lonely or unhappy."

"No, Hilda, aunt Fanny is not lonely, for a Friend, One whom her heart has learned to trust and love, though her eyes have not seen Him yet, is always by her side. The Lord Jesus is the Friend I



mean, and she finds no time to be unhappy, her hands are too full of happy, busy work for the good Master she serves."

"About what time may we begin to look out for aunt Fanny?" was Wilfrid's next question.

Mrs. Gray took a letter from her pocket and read aloud: "I hope, God willing, to be with you at H——, by the 3.30 train. Please tell Wilfrid and Hilda, with my love, that I have a small present for each of them, something, I think, they will be pleased with."

"Now, children," Mrs. Gray continued, as she replaced the letter, "I want you to be kind and thoughtful; aunt Fanny is not very strong, and will, I am sure, be tired by the time the train gets to H——; do not tease her with questions, or ask her to shew you anything, till she has had some tea, and a rest after her journey."

Both children were quite ready to promise, and, better still, did not forget, even in the pleasure of meeting aunt Fanny, that they had an opportunity of shewing love by waiting patiently till she was at liberty to attend to them.

Tea had been over some time when

aunt Fanny, turning to Wilfrid, asked him if he would like to do an errand for her? His answer was, "Yes, aunt Fanny, you know I should ; I would not mind going all the way to Boneton for anything you wanted."

Aunt Fanny laughed and said, "You are very kind, Wilfrid ; but I am not going to give you a three miles' walk to-night ; my errand is only as far as the hall table, where you will find a parcel wrapped in white paper and tied with pink string."

Wilfrid was off in a moment and soon returned. Aunt Fanny opened it, and taking out a very interesting book, quite full of pretty pictures and true stories, gave it to Hilda, telling her it was her present. Hilda was much pleased, and thanked aunt Fanny warmly ; meanwhile a Scripture Text Roll, printed in red and blue, quite delighted her brother.

"A text for every day for a whole month ! Oh, aunt Fanny, how I do wish you were going to stop with us four weeks instead of two," he exclaimed ; "but if Hilda and I learn a text every day as long as you are here, will you talk to us, and help us to understand the meaning of what we learn ?"

“And please will you come to our play-room?” Hilda added, before aunt Fanny had time to reply to Wilfrid’s question.

“To both questions yes, if the Lord will,” aunt Fanny answered, with a very earnest look and loving kiss for both children, who, hearing their father’s step in the hall, ran away to shew him their new treasures.







## CHAPTER II.

### SAVED BY THE LIFEBOAT.

*"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"* (Heb. ii. 3.)

"**S**UCH an easy text, aunt Fanny ; it did not take us long to learn it. Indeed, I am almost sure Hilda and myself knew it more than a year ago. Shall we say it to you ?" And Wilfrid and Hilda Gray repeated the Bible verse I have already quoted.

"Do you think your verse is quite as easy to understand as to repeat ?" aunt Fanny asked, in her bright pleasant way. There was a moment's silence, then Wilfrid said, "I think I can explain it, or at least the first part of it ; I know what it means to escape, to get away from any danger. Last winter mother used to read to us

almost every evening, and I remember it was about John Wesley, how, when he was quite a little boy only six years old, he had a very narrow escape from being burnt to death, when his father's house caught fire and was burnt down."

"But God took care of John Wesley, and sent somebody to get him out of the burning house; and when he was grown up he used to preach the gospel and tell people about the Lord Jesus," Hilda added, by way of a conclusion to her brother's story.

"Thank you very much for your account of the early days of John Wesley. Now perhaps you would like to hear a true story of an escape from drowning, I really saw when on a visit to Ramsgate, three or four years ago"

"Oh, yes; do tell us about it please, aunt Fanny," cried both the children at once; and Hilda drew her stool nearer to aunt Fanny's chair.

"It was a fine morning in the autumn of 1883. A fresh breeze was blowing towards the land, so that the sea was rough, but the sun shone brightly. The season was almost over, and nearly all the visitors had left Ramsgate. Only a few children

were building castles and digging trenches on the yellow sands, and the number of grown-up people taking a walk on the parade was not large. I had been a little way out to see a sick person; on going down to the sea front, everybody seemed interested, and a few almost excited. What had happened?

"Very quickly the news passed from one to another, 'The lifeboat has been called out for active service.' I had often seen her when her crew took her out for practice, riding over the waves almost like a thing of life. Now the call for real work had come. But where did the call come from? Who on that bright morning was to be saved by the lifeboat? No flash of rockets or sullen booming of guns had told of any ship run aground on the Goodwin Sands.

"I joined a group who had gathered round a coastguard, and soon learnt all he was able to tell.

"A youth who was on his way along the sands from Broadstairs to Ramsgate, had been overtaken by the tide at a point where it comes in very quickly, and the cliffs are too high and steep for any one to escape by climbing. 'Do you think the



A ROPE WAS LET DOWN.





lifeboat can reach him in time? where is he now?' we asked.

"The coastguard looked for some moments through his glass, then answered: 'He has got a little way up the cliff, just above high-water mark. There is no foothold, but he is holding on with both hands to a ledge of rock. If he can hold on a little longer, he may be saved.'

"Poor boy, that quarter of an hour, during which his danger was so very real, must have been a terrible, never-to-be-forgotten time to him. I could only pray that in that solemn moment the voice of God might be heard in his soul.

"The lifeboat was on her way, and soon reached the one by whom her help was so sorely needed. But at that moment a new difficulty seemed to stand in the way. It was found impossible to get her near enough to the foot of the cliffs, to take the boy off. A life-line or rope was thrown to him, and the captain of the lifeboat called loudly to him to loose his hold of the unsafe, crumbling rock, and grasp the life line by which he might be drawn safely into the boat.

"But as he looked at the white-crested waves I think he felt afraid, for he still

clung to the rock ledge. It could not bear his weight till the turn of the tide, and every moment's delay only added to his danger.

"Must he perish in that sea? Lost, and yet with help so very near. Would the crew of the lifeboat give up trying to rescue him and go sorrowfully away?"

"No; for men, carrying poles and long ropes, were seen at the top of the cliff. Cautiously and trying every foot of the unsafe edge with their poles till they found standing room, a rope was let down over the face of the cliff; but the boy could not grasp it, and this attempt would have failed if two of the crew of the lifeboat had not swum out to him, and, after a good deal of trouble, succeeded in making the rope fast under his arms. The men at the top then drew him up, and I think he must have been very glad and thankful when he found his danger was a thing of the past, and he was safe, quite safe."

"Yes, aunt Fanny, and how grateful he must have felt to those brave men who had taken so much trouble to save him," Wilfrid said very earnestly. After a moment's pause, he continued, "I am sure he would always like to read or hear



something about lifeboats and their crews. Do you know when I was at Deal I saw a lifeboat very often, and one day an old sailor who was sitting on the beach, making a fishing net, told me why the lifeboat is different from other boats, and so able to go out when the sea is very rough. I cannot remember all he said, but he tried to explain to me how it is built with a false bottom, under which a hollow space is left, and lined with cork, which being lighter than water always floats, and even if the lifeboat should upset, is a great help in getting her righted again. I was so interested that, when Mr. Cooper said we might choose our own subjects for composition, I wrote mine on 'The Lifeboat,' and got thirty marks for it."

"But you have not talked to us about our text yet, aunt Fanny," Hilda, who had been listening very quietly, said.

"I am quite ready now, darling," aunt Fanny answered. "While we have not really spoken of our text, I think our little talk about the lifeboat has helped you to understand the meaning of it. You know when the apostle Peter wrote a letter to Christians, one of the things he told them was: 'Forasmuch as ye know

that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.' (1 Pet. i. 18, 19.)

"The Lord Jesus loved us so much that He bought us for His own. He paid the price, by giving His life that we might be saved. But if we neglect this great salvation, there is no way of escape for us. But what does it mean to neglect?"

"Why it is just to take no notice. If you heard mother's voice calling, 'Wilfrid and Hilda, come to me, I want you,' and you were to go on with your play, and never even run to see what she wanted—how do you think she would feel about it?"

Tears stood in Hilda's eyes as she answered, "I am sure mother would be very grieved and very surprised, too, to find we were such rude and disobedient children."

"But we would not do it, aunt Fanny," Wilfrid added stoutly.

"No, Wilfrid, I do not for a moment think you would treat your gentle, loving mother so unkindly. But how are you treating the far greater love of the Lord

Jesus Christ? Are you neglecting or accepting the salvation He came to bring?

"I am not going to ask you to tell me just now, but I want you very much to answer the solemn question of your text to Him who loved you and gave Himself for you."





## CHAPTER III.

### THE BROKEN VASE.

*"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whose confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." (Prov. xxviii. 13.)*



ILDA GRAY was not quite well. Only a slight cold, but as she was far from being strong, her mother decided it would be wise for her to remain indoors for a day or two. Wilfrid, who loved his little sister dearly, gave up most of his playtime brightly and willingly, to stay with and amuse her. A cheerful fire burnt in the playroom; a large window overlooked the garden; the bookshelves were well filled with interesting books; while toys and pictures told how much love and care had done to make home a very bright and pleasant

place to Wilfrid and Hilda Gray. At the time of which I write, both children were sitting with heads bent low over Wilfrid's Text Roll. Wilfrid was the first to speak.

"We know our text now, Hilda ; so we are quite ready for aunt Fanny."

"Yes, Wilfrid, I thought it was a little difficult the first time I read it ; but I can repeat it now without missing a word. And here comes aunt Fanny. I always know her step."

Aunt Fanny entered as Hilda spoke. After hearing the text, with which my story begins, repeated by both children she said : "I cannot help noticing very often how busy Satan is in helping boys and girls, as well as older people, to cover up, instead of confessing, their sins. But perhaps a story will help you to understand my meaning.

"Olive Clark was a bright, clever girl, about eight years old. She was very fond of being what she called mother's help, but, as she liked to do things in her own way, and sometimes was disobedient, you will not be surprised to hear that she hindered quite as often as she helped her mother.

"Please, mother, may I dust the

sitting-room? Sarah has gone for her holiday, you know; so I am going to play at being your servant, and to do all the work.'

"Mrs. Clark smiled as she answered, 'I shall be really glad of your help, Olive, if you are going to be steady and careful, and do as you are told. If you will take baby into the garden, and amuse him, whilst I am busy in the kitchen, it would be a real comfort; he is not well to-day, and rather fretful and restless, poor little fellow.'

"The bright look all died out of Olive's face in a moment, she began to frown and pout till she really looked a very unloveable little girl, then said, with a pettish shake of her shoulders, 'Oh, mother, how tiresome. I do not want to play with baby now, I want to do some real work. Do let me dust, it will be such fun to put on Sarah's large apron; and make believe I am a real servant.'

"Mrs. Clark looked grieved, but she only said, 'I shall not insist upon your doing as I wish, Olive, for I should not feel happy in trusting poor baby with such an unwilling nurse. You may dust the parlour, all but the sideboard; you are

not to touch that, it is too high for you to reach, and I am afraid of having some of the china ornaments on it broken. Be sure you do not forget, Olive,' Mrs. Clark added, as, taking up the baby, she turned to leave the room, after telling Olive where she would find an apron and some dusters.

"Olive set about her self chosen work in anything but a right spirit. If she had really wanted to help her mother, she would have been willing to give up her own wishes; but she thought only of pleasing herself. After dusting a table and two or three chairs, she began to get tired, and twisted her duster into the shape of a rabbit. The sun shone brightly into the room, and as its beams rested on a china vase that stood in the middle of the sideboard, Olive thought she had never seen it look so pretty. 'How I wish mother would let me dust it,' she said half aloud; 'I know she values that vase very much, because she says it was given to her by a very dear friend just before going to India, and they have not seen each other for a very long time. I am sure I should not break it. Mother forgets how tall I am getting. I will be very, very

careful, and then she will see how useful I am.'

"And so the naughty little girl took the things one by one off the sideboard, she found that by standing on a stool she was able to reach it quite well. Now I have dusted it, I must put them back just as they were before, Olive thought. Cups, saucers, and flower glasses were safely in their places, all but the china vase. Olive took it in both her hands, as she was getting on the stool some noise made her look round, her foot slipped, and in trying to save herself from falling, she dropped the vase, breaking it into two parts. At the same moment, Olive's white cat, Floss, frightened by the noise, ran from under the sofa, and out of the room.

"Olive knew quite well what she ought to do, for she had been properly taught both at home and at school: go at once to her mother and confess her disobedience. But as she stood crying and trembling, the temptation came to *cover* her sin, and Olive did not even try to resist it.

"Taking up the broken vase, she placed it on the sideboard in such a way as to hide the injury it had received, then stole very quietly out of the room. She went



upstairs, and sat down in her own little bedroom. She was very unhappy, what should she do? Would her mother ever find out how naughty she had been?

“She had not very long to wait and wonder. Soon she heard her mother’s step crossing the sitting-room. A few moments more, and Mrs. Clark was on her way upstairs. Poor Olive, how she longed to hide herself; should she creep under the bed or into the wardrobe? How she wished she could run away! But it was too late to think of making her escape. Her mother’s hand was on her shoulder, and very sad and low her voice sounded to Olive as she said.

‘My china vase is broken; tell me all you know about it, Olive.

Would Olive confess or seek to cover her sin of disobedience? Satan whispered, ‘You need not say you did it, perhaps your mother will never find it out.’ Olive listened to the voice of the tempter, and faltered out, Oh mother, I do not know; I saw Floss run out of the room, indeed I did.’ Mrs. Clark’s face grew very sad and grave as she said, ‘Olive, you are only adding to your fault by making an attempt to deny it.

If Floss had broken the vase, he could not have replaced it on the sideboard. I cannot tell you, Olive, how very sorry I am to find my little girl guilty of deception. Remember you cannot hide from the all-seeing eye of God.'

Olive burst into tears, and sobbed out, 'Oh mother, I broke your vase; but I did not mean to do so. Will you please forgive me, I am really very sorry.'

"After a few moments' silence, Mrs. Clark said: 'I can forgive the accident, Olive; but I should be doing wrong were I to overlook the disobedience that caused it. I shall not allow you to pay your long-looked-for visit to your cousin Lily next week, and, of course, I must write and tell aunt Jane my reason for keeping you at home. But I want you to understand and remember that you are punished not because you broke a vase I valued very highly; but for doing what you had been told *not* to do.'

"Olive was very much disappointed at finding she was not to go to her cousin's. but she knew she had brought her punishment on herself, and I am glad to be able to tell you that not very long after, she really came to Jesus, asking Him, in faith, to be



OLIVE BURST INTO TEARS.



her Saviour, and by the Holy Spirit to make her humble, gentle, and obedient; and though she was often tempted to wish to do things in her own way, she generally remembered the broken vase, and believed her mother knew best."

"Poor Olive, how unhappy she must have been, I really felt quite sorry for her," Hilda said, with a pitying look.

"Yes, darling; we read in the Bible that 'the way of transgressors is hard.' (Prov. xiii. 15.) And I am sure Olive never knew what it meant to be really and truly happy till, instead of trying to hide her sin, she owned it before the Lord, believing that the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from *all* sin. (1 John i. 7.)

"But, Wilfrid and Hilda," aunt Fanny continued, "our time is quite gone now, and I must go, or your mother will be waiting for me."







## CHAPTER IV.

JOHN FALK.

*"In his favour is life : weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." (Ps. xxx. 5.)*

**W**ERE you going to tell us another story, aunt Fanny?" Wilfrid Gray asked, as aunt Fanny entered the playroom. "Hilda and I think it is such an interesting way to learn the meaning of Bible verses."

"Yes, Wilfrid," was the ready answer. "As your text this morning was a great help and comfort to John Falk for many years of his useful life, I think Hilda and yourself would like to hear how God raised him up to be a friend and father to a number of orphan children. But before I tell you his story, I want you to look for a moment at the marginal reading in my reference Bible. Will you read it for us please, Wilfrid?"

"Is this what you mean, aunt Fanny? The word singing is printed in small writing letters, almost opposite our verse?"

"Yes, Wilfrid, how good it is of God to comfort His often sad and weary children by telling them of a time when they shall have songs instead of sighing. We all know what it is to weep, but there are many causes for tears being shed. I should like you to tell me some of the reasons for crying."

"Eva Day cried very much when her little brother Willie died, and I cried one day when I had the toothache," Wilfrid added, looking as if he hardly liked making the confession.

"Yes, Wilfrid, and don't you remember how mother cried when uncle James sent a letter to tell her how very ill grandmamma was, last winter, and I cry sometimes when I am naughty," the little girl owned with flushed cheeks and tear-filled eyes.

"I think," said aunt Fanny, "you have told me why most tears are shed. Death, pain, sorrow, and sin, are always causing tears to flow. The children of God know what it is to suffer and weep like others. But they know too that a day is coming when 'God shall wipe away all tears from

their eyes.' (Rev. vii. 17.) So they know their sorrow will only last for a little while."

"Now are you quite ready to hear the story of John Falk?"

"Oh, yes, aunt Fanny, but please will you begin at the beginning and tell us about him when he was a little boy? I always like to hear about the school-days of good or great men," Wilfrid said eagerly.

"I wish I could shew you a picture of the strange-looking old house with its many small windows, and its gabled roof, where, in the year 1768, John Falk was born. It stood near the Fishgate in the busy German town of Dantzic. His father, whose trade of a wig maker was carried on at home, was a man who feared God, but was so grave and silent in his ways, that his children never felt free to laugh or talk much in his presence.

"His mother, a woman of a meek and quiet spirit, was a good housekeeper, and though all through the day her hands were full, often in the evening hours, as she sat at her spinning-wheel, she would amuze and instruct her children by telling them stories. I think the one John liked best



was how, when she herself was a little girl, she was in danger of being eaten by a pack of wolves, but, through the mercy of God, escaped.

“ ‘ John was not a bit like his father,’ his mother would say sometimes, with a sigh and a shake of the head ; but, perhaps, she loved her bright merry boy none the less on that account.

“ John was very fond of play, he was good at tops and marbles ; but he loved books too, and few things pleased him more than to borrow from some friend or neighbour books of voyage or travel. Then he would go down to the harbour, and watch the sailors busy at their work, and long for the time to come when he should be old enough to sail over the deep blue sea, and visit the foreign countries about which he loved to read.

“ He was only ten years of age when his father decided to take him from school and set him to work at his own trade. John said with many tears he did not wish to be a wig-maker, he would much rather be a sailor, and his mother begged hard that he might have another year's schooling. But all in vain, Mr. Falk only shook his head, and said, ‘ No, John is too fond of reading

already, he must begin work at once, he will never make a good workman if he does not learn his trade while he is young.'

"So John left school and became his father's apprentice. The next few years of the boy's life were far from being happy ones. Perhaps he did not put his heart into his duties, and often vexed his father by spoiling his work, or loitering when sent on an errand. His father often punished him severely, but all the scoldings and beatings the boy got, only seemed to make him more determined if it were possible to get an education.

"Once he left home, having made up his mind to run away. But he had not gone far before he stopped to listen to the playing of an organ. John Falk was very fond of music. The tune he heard was that of a hymn which his mother often sang with her children on Sunday evenings. And with the thought of his mother came the memory of Bible words she had taught him : 'Honour thy father and thy mother.' (Exod. xx. 12.) God, he felt sure, would not bless his leaving home if he went in self-will and disobedience, so he gave up thinking about it, and made haste back to his father's workshop.

“ After a time some of his father’s best customers began to take notice of the bright-looking boy who was always so civil and pleasant in his manners.

“ One of them, an English gentleman, to John’s great delight was able to persuade his father to let him attend a class held twice a week at his house, where a few sons of well-to do families were taught English. But his fellow-pupils were not very kind to him. John could not afford to buy all the books he needed, and they would not lend or even allow him to learn a lesson out of theirs.

“ But his teacher kindly gave him one or two old books, and John made such good use of his time, that, at the end of a year, he took the first prize.

“ Brighter days followed. Some of the chief men in Dantzic said John should be sent to college at their expense.

“ We may be sure that he was much pleased. When the day came on which he was to leave home, he got a message telling him to go to the room where a meeting of the town council was being held. John, when he entered, felt shy and nervous, but he was received kindly, and an aged man, laying his hand on the

boy's head, said, 'Go, my son, and may the blessing of God rest upon you. One thing only, if a pcor child should ever knock at your door, think it is we, the old grey-headed burgomasters of Dantzic, and do not send us away.'

"I cannot stay to tell you much about the student life of John Falk, only one thing that happened to him, he became a Christian, and very really and truly longed to please and honour the good Master whom he served.

"Years passed away, John Falk was a middle-aged man, much looked up to and respected by the people of the town in which he lived. God had blessed him in all things. He had a happy home; six merry children called him father, and many widows and orphans could tell how in times of need he had given them food and clothing.

"But God, whose ways are not as our ways, was about to lead His servant through sorrow, to the great work of his life.

"A fever broke out near his house, and many died. Four out of the six children of Mr. and Mrs. Falk, in less than a month were carried to their graves. As the

parents returned from the funeral of the fourth—a darling child whose love had been very precious to those sorrowing hearts—they were met by some little children who were begging. They looked cold and hungry; the mourners began to talk to them, and found that they were orphans. John Falk looked up and, smiling through his tears, said to his wife, ‘Joy cometh in the morning.’ God who has taken our darlings to Himself, now sends us these poor orphans. Shall not we receive them in His name, and for the love of Christ our Lord and Saviour?

“Mrs. Falk was quite willing, and from that day their house became a house where many orphans—some of them boys who had been in prison—were fed, clothed, and taught trades by which to earn an honest living; but better still, numbers of them were led to a saving knowledge of Christ.

“But we must not stay to talk any more now, for hark, the dinner bell is ringing!”

“Oh, aunt Fanny, we did not think it was so late,” said both children at once, and then they ran off to take their places at the table for the mid-day meal.





## CHAPTER V.

### NELLIE'S REWARD.

*"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." (Eph. vi. 1.)*

"PLEASE, aunt Fanny, I am going to tell you a secret, a real secret, you know. Hilda says she likes stories about girls best, so I am going to ask you to tell us about some of the girls you have known."

"No, it is not a secret at all, Wilfrid," put in Hilda, laughing. "I like all aunt Fanny's stories, but perhaps those about girls do interest me most, though it was very kind of you to think of it, Wilfrid. But we have not said our text yet."

Aunt Fanny smiled, and a very real thanksgiving to the Lord went up from her heart that the two children so dear to her were being taught of Him to love one another.

The text having been repeated, aunt Fanny began the conversation by telling a story.

“ ‘I wish you to make haste home from school this afternoon, girls,’ Mrs. James said one morning, as her two daughters, Bella and Nellie, lunch baskets in hand, and quite ready for their walk to school, entered the kitchen where she was busy, to give mother her good-morning kiss.

“ Nellie, the younger of the two, said cheerfully, ‘Yes, mother, we will be sure to remember.’ But the elder sister, Bella, did not look at all pleased, and answered crossly, ‘Oh, mother, how tiresome! Charlotte Wills wants us to go to her house after school; her mother said we might go if we liked, and Charlotte wants to shew us all her birthday presents. She had so many, and some are such beauties. Why must we make haste home? Is any one coming to-day? Have you had a letter from uncle Harold?’

“ Mrs. James looked troubled; it was not the first time the wilful spirit of her eldest daughter had given her pain. But she only said gently, ‘Because your mother wishes it, Bella, will, I think, be a sufficient reason for the obedience of an affectionate

child. You may tell Charlotte Wills that, if convenient to her mother, I can spare Nellie and you to-morrow evening, but I shall expect you home early to-day. Run away now, or you will be late for school.'

"The two girls were soon on their way to school. Bella seemed out of temper, and did not care to talk much. At last she said, in a fretful, complaining tone, 'I think mother might just as well have let us go home with Charlotte to-day as to-morrow. It can't make any difference to her, or she might have told us why we are to make haste home. I say it is a shame we can never do as we like.'

"Tears were in Nellie's eyes as she answered in a low, grieved voice, 'Oh, Bella, how can you say such dreadful things about our own darling mother? you know she is always good and kind to us. Don't you remember when you were so ill last winter, how she was always nursing and caring for you, and how she used to sit up at nights and never even say she was tired? And I don't think we should make a trouble of doing any little thing that will please mother, even if we don't know exactly why she wishes it.'

"Bella knew her sister was right, but as



she still wanted to have her own way she replied, 'I have no doubt you find it easy to do as you are told, but then you are not clever, I heard Miss Ayres say so, and you know you never get any of the best prizes. I took the French prize last year, and am almost sure of getting one for English history this year.'

"Nellie's answer was a gentle, 'Yes, Bella, I know sometimes I find it very hard to learn my lessons, but when we were at school last Sunday, and Miss Cooper was speaking to us about that verse in our scripture lesson, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (Eph. vi. 1), and telling us that if we love the Lord Jesus we are to shew it by being obedient and gentle at home, I felt quite pleased to know there was just one thing not at all hard for me to understand or remember. Perhaps God had it written in His word to help and comfort all the dull girls like me, who can seldom learn more than one or two easy verses.'

"But as the sisters were within sight of the schoolhouse, and the ringing of the bell warned them it was time to enter, they stopped talking and quickened their steps.

“Nellie was not in the same class as her sister, and did not see much of her during the morning, but at lunch time noticed that Bella did not look happy, and that instead of joining the other girls she spent most of her recess in a corner of the playground, talking in low tones to Charlotte Wills. Afternoon school was over, and most of the girls set out for their homes, though a few still lingered for just one more game at ball. Nellie waited almost impatiently for Bella. She came at last, but not alone ; Charlotte Wills, who seemed to have made up her mind not to lose sight of her for a moment, was by her side and said, ‘Run home, little Nellie, but don’t run too fast. Bella is going round my way ; she will be at home nearly as soon as you are, and if mother should ask any questions, all you need say is that Bella’s coming.’

“‘But I must make haste home,’ Nellie answered bravely. ‘And oh, Bella, dear Bella, do come too ; you remember what mother said, don’t you ?’

“‘Yes, I remember, and I am coming, only I don’t want you to wait for me ; there now, don’t be silly and begin to cry about it like a baby,’ Bella continued, as

the light from a street lamp fell on poor Nellie's tearful face.

"Without another word Nellie turned homewards, feeling very anxious and unhappy. She could not believe that Bella really intended to disobey her mother, and yet why did she not hasten home?

"So thinking, Nellie reached home; as she opened the door the sight that met her eyes was enough, for the time at least, to make her forget even Bella, as with a cry of joy she sprang forward in her father's arms.

"Yes, the husband and father who had been many months absent at sea had returned to his home some weeks earlier than had been expected, and very loving and joyous was the welcome he received.

" 'And so my little Nellie is the first to welcome father home,' he said, kissing her tenderly. 'Mother had a letter this morning telling her it was just possible I might see you all to-day, but as I knew that many things might come in to hinder, I wrote, 'Please don't say a word to the girls, for I know how disappointed they will be; I may not be able to get leave, and I should not like to think that my little daughters had cried themselves to sleep because

father could not come home." But where is Bella?' Mr. James asked.

" 'She is coming, father,' Nellie answered almost in a whisper, but as at that moment her mother called them to tea, no more was said.

"The meal was almost over when Bella arrived, looking very much ashamed of herself. Her mother, who would not cast a shadow over the joy of her husband's return, forebore asking Bella any questions, or reproving her for conduct she felt so undutiful.

"Tea had been cleared away, and the family gathered round the fire to enjoy a quiet talk, when Mr. James, taking a small Bible neatly bound in purple velvet from its paper wrappings, held it up, saying, 'I am not going to ask which of my little daughters is most clever, or who has got most prizes to shew father; my reward is for the one of whom mother can say, she is dutiful and obedient.'

"There was a moment's silence, broken by Bella saying, 'Please, father, give it to Nellie; she deserves it, but I don't. I have been a very naughty girl to-day, and disobeyed mother. But indeed, mother,' she continued, after a pause, 'I did not go

home with Charlotte Wills. I only went with her as far as West Street, just to look at a muff her uncle Edward has promised to buy for her.'

" 'Bella is right, and the reward of obedience is fairly Nellie's,' Mrs. James said in answer to a look from her husband.

" So the Bible, on the fly-leaf of which Mr. James wrote under his little daughter's name the words, 'Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure and whether it be right' (Prov. xx. 11), was placed in Nellie's hands, while her father added a few wise, loving words of encouragement and counsel.

" 'I am not a bit jealous, Nellie dear,' Bella said with a kiss, when the two girls were alone in their room that night. 'But I want you to help me to obey mother, even when I can't quite see the reason for what I am told to do or not to do.'

" 'Shall we read in my new Bible about how when the Lord Jesus was twelve years old He obeyed His mother?' was Nellie's answer as she placed the precious volume in her sister's hand."

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## CHAPTER VI.

BERNARD PALISSY.

*"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." (Eccl. ix. 10.)*

**I** THINK I understand our text to-day, aunt Fanny. Shall I tell you what I think it means?"

"Yes, Wilfrid, I am sure both Hilda and myself will be pleased to hear any thought you have about it. But don't forget, Wilfrid dear," aunt Fanny added in a gentle tone, "it is only by the teaching of the Holy Spirit we can really understand the word of God. But I cannot tell you how thankful I am," she continued with a smile, "to know that Wilfrid and Hilda Gray love the scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation

through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (2 Tim. iii. 15.) But I must not talk any more just now, as we want to hear what Wilfrid has to say."

"Oh, it won't take long to say all I have thought about our text, aunt Fanny. It was only this, it made me think of something we sing sometimes at day school—

‘Whether employ’d at books or play,  
Work away, boys, work away.’

Was it wrong, aunt Fanny?" Wilfrid asked, somewhat doubtfully.

"No indeed, Wilfrid, it is always right to work well and cheerfully. There is no blessing promised to idleness, and I am sure we cannot be too careful to do even what we call little things in a way that will please and glorify the Saviour, ‘Whom having not seen we love.’ But I have been reading not very long ago of a man who shewed, I think, by his life that he had learned the lesson of our text. Shall I tell you his story?"

"Oh yes, if you please, aunt Fanny," was the delighted answer of both children, so aunt Fanny began at once by saying—

"Bernard Palissy was the name of the remarkable man whose story you are so

anxious to hear. I cannot stop to tell you much about the quaint little village of Saintes, in France, where rather more than three hundred years ago Bernard Palissy, the potter, lived in a poor cottage. Most of the people who lived in that part of France were very poor, so I don't think any of Palissy's neighbours would have taken much notice of his poverty if there had been no other reason for the notice they took of him.

"Sometimes a woman would say as he passed her on her way to market, 'Look at his coat, it is so ragged I really don't see how he will be able to wear it much longer. He looks more like a beggar than anything else, and his wife too. I am quite sorry for the poor woman, she is so thin, and there is always a sad look on her face as if she had known some great trouble.'

" 'And his children,' Babette replied, the neighbour to whom the peasant woman had been talking, 'I do not think there is another family in Saintes so ill-fed and poorly-clad as those unhappy little ones. My son's wife, who lives near them, has told me how last winter, when the younger children would often cry with cold and hunger, the eldest daughter would comfort



them by telling them they must be brave and patient for a little while, till their father had finished his work, and then they should all have new frocks and shoes, and good soup for dinner every day.'

" 'Poor little things,' was the answer of the first speaker, 'I am afraid they will have to wait a very long time before any good comes to them from his work. Why, the poor fellow is mad. Yes, he is quite gone out of his mind. Who knows what dreadful things may happen if a mad man is allowed to wander about our village!' she continued with a slight shudder.

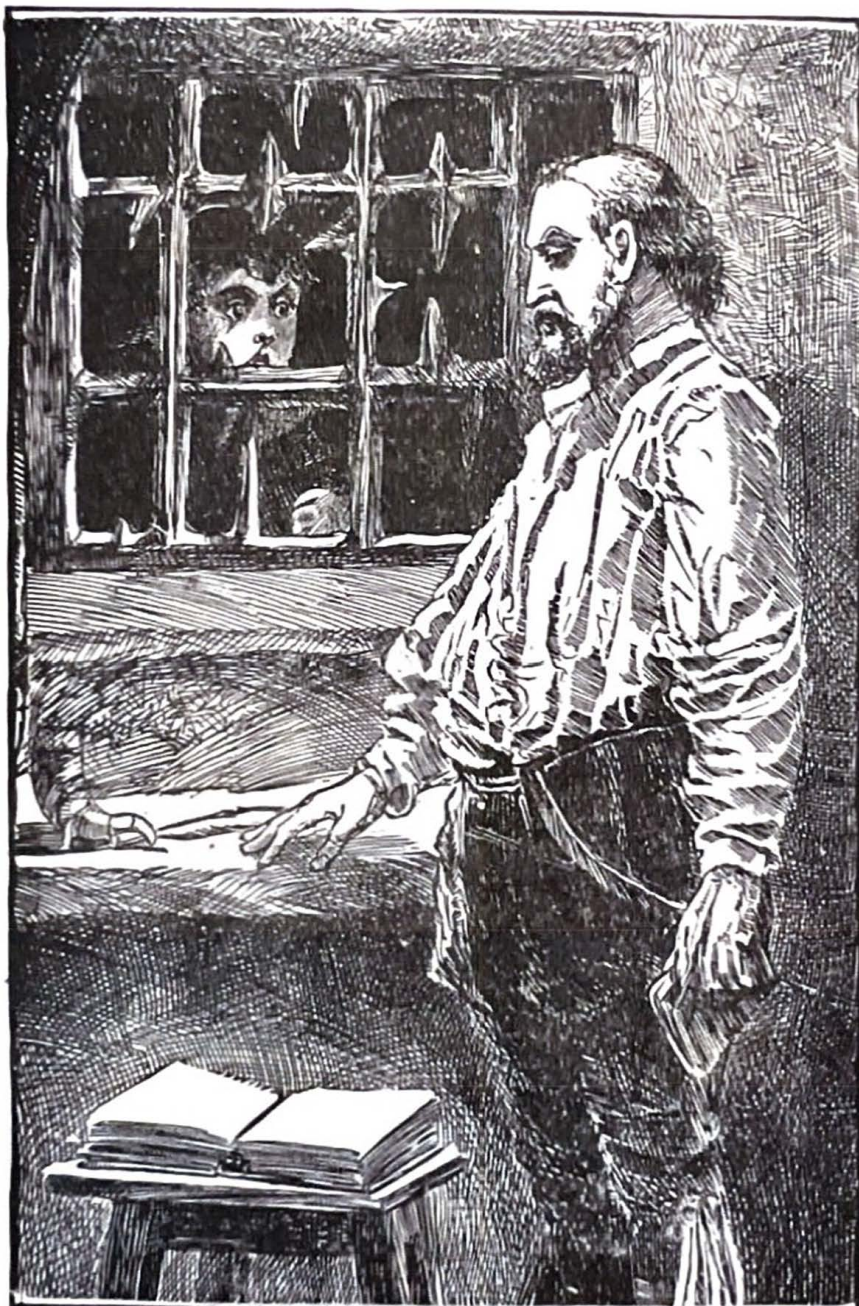
" 'I do not think Bernard Palissy is mad,' her companion replied, 'I fear it is even worse than that. All our neighbours say he is a very wicked man, and has sold himself to Satan. Do not you know that some time ago he built a furnace in his garden? Now I have been told that often long after midnight flames have been seen coming out of his chimney, while Palissy himself, instead of being in his bed like a good Christian, was busy near his furnace. It is not for me to say what he does, but I fear it is no good, or he would not choose to work by night rather than day.'

" We will not follow the market women

and their conversation any further, but return to the hero of our story.

“ Bernard Palissy had received an education far above that of his peasant neighbours. He understood the art of painting on glass, and knew a good deal about chemistry. Now I am going to tell you the secret of the furnace. At the time at which my story opens, the French people did not know how to make paint, and glaze china. All the cups and plates of home manufacture were rough and coarse. It is true that a few rich people had very beautiful cups and vases which had been brought at a great cost from Italy, but the workmen who were employed in the china factory at Sèvres were very careful not to allow any one to find out the way in which they were made.

“ One of these cups had in some way become the property of Palissy. The more he looked at it the more he admired it. If he could only find out the secret, then instead of one he could have as many cups and vases as he wished, some even more beautiful than the original. He felt quite sure they would sell well, and then—ah, then a smile would play round his mouth, and a glad light come into his face



PALISSY PUT IN PRISON.



as he thought of the good times he hoped were not very far off, when instead of the faded cotton gown his wife wore he should be able to buy her a dress of rich Lyons silk, and his children should never know again what it was to go to bed cold and hungry. Marie should have a new coif, or cap, and Jacques should go to a new school.

"I must not forget to tell you that Palissy was a simple happy Christian. Almost all the people who lived in France at that time were Roman Catholics, but here and there, just like bright lights in dark places, were a few poor people who would not give up their Bibles, and who had learned from the pure teaching of that blessed book that it was wrong to pray to images of Peter or Paul, or to worship a piece of wood as part of the cross on which the Lord Jesus was crucified.

"These Christians, of whom Palissy was one, were called Huguenots, or Protestants, by their neighbours, and were often called upon to suffer for the sake of Christ. Some day, perhaps, I may tell you more about them, but now I know you are wanting to hear about Palissy and his furnace.

"It was quite true that early and late

the potter was busy at his work : but weeks and even months passed away, and the secret Palissy longed so much to know still remained a secret. He felt sure, quite sure, he should find it out some day, and meant to try again as long as he could keep the fire that heated his furnace burning.

“ But very soon the little money he had saved was all spent in wood, there were not many things that could be sold in his little cottage, but one by one they all went for more wood. At last a day came when he felt almost sure the secret would reward his toil. He knew after many experiments what kind of chemicals to use, but in order to melt them a large fire must be kept burning for many hours.

“ With a sad heart Palissy threw his last stick of wood on the flames. Should he give up trying? It seemed hard when he felt so certain success was near. His eye rested on some palings near his cottage door. Yes, they would serve for firewood, and soon torn from their places they fed the fire. But more fuel was soon needed, and with almost the strength of a madman Palissy tore the doors from their hinges, the window-

shutters from their frames. Only one thing that could be burnt remained in the cottage—the wooden floor. The chemicals were not melted, so board by board Palissy tore up the flooring.

“Once more with a quickly beating heart Palissy opened the door of his furnace and looked anxiously at the result of his work. Yes, the secret was his. The prize was won, and forgetting in that moment of delight how tired he was, he called his wife and children to rejoice with him.

“Better days followed, Palissy was appointed potter to the king of France, and might have become a rich man if he had not chosen to suffer for Christ rather than deny Him.

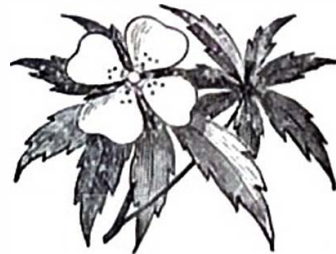
“When Palissy was quite an old man he was put, along with many other Protestants, into a prison called the Bastille. While there he received a visit from the king, who asked him to give up his Bible and become a Catholic. Respectfully but firmly Palissy told the king that to obey him in this would be to disobey God.

“‘Then I shall be compelled to leave you in prison,’ the king replied.

“‘Sire,’ was the answer of the brave

old man, ' I am surprised to hear the great King Henry III. of France say, I am compelled. All the power of France can only take my life, and that I am ready to lay down for Christ's sake. It cannot compel a simple believer in the Lord Jesus to bow the knee to images which are little better than idols.'

" And so the last ten years of Palissy's life were spent in prison. When he was almost eighty years of age the Lord gently took him to be with Himself."







## CHAPTER VII.

### AUNT FANNY'S FRIENDS.

*"He hath done all things well, he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak." (Mark vii. 37.)*

**F**OUR little heads were close together as Wilfrid and Hilda Gray studied their morning text. Four very bright eyes turned to aunt Fanny with a smile of welcome as she entered the children's playroom; then Hilda said, "Oh, aunt Fanny, we were wishing you would come, for as soon as we read our text Wilfrid said, Shall we ask aunt Fanny to tell us about her friends, I mean some of the poor deaf and dumb people she is so fond of going to see? And please will you, Auntie dear, we should both enjoy it very much? We can say our text, so are quite ready."

Aunt Fanny smiled as she answered, "I think I may as well begin by telling you about a friend of mine who is deaf, dumb, and blind. Her name is Carrie, and I think her story will interest you very much."

Hilda's bright young face wore quite a troubled look as she repeated slowly, "Deaf, dumb, and blind. How dreadful it must be! Poor Carrie, I am so sorry for her! As she cannot see, you cannot even tell her on your fingers that God loves us, can you?"

"Yes, darling, I am thankful to be able to tell you that dear Carrie is one of the Lord's hidden ones, and we have had some precious times together, talking in her silent language of that Saviour of whom each of us through grace can say, 'Who loved me, and gave himself for me.' (Gal. ii. 20.)

"But I see you don't quite understand me, Hilda."

"No, indeed, aunt Fanny, I can't really understand how Carrie and you can talk on your fingers when you tell us she is blind. But, perhaps, she can see a little."

"No, Hilda, Carrie is quite blind; but have a little patience, dear, and I think





CARRIE WAS A CHILD OF GOD.



I shall be able to make what seems now so hard to understand quite plain to you. Now Wilfrid and yourself are to shut your eyes while I place something in your hands, then without looking you are to tell me what you are holding.

"Now are you both ready?" "Yes, aunt Fanny, it was your pencil you put into my hand. I am quite sure, though of course I did not look," Wilfrid said, almost as soon as the object was fairly in his hand; and as Hilda was just as sure she was holding a thimble, Aunt Fanny went on by asking—

"How did you know what I placed in your hands? You could not see, could you?"

"Oh no, aunt Fanny," said both children laughing. Then Wilfrid continued, "I knew it was a pencil, because I could feel it was round and long, one end was pointed and the other flat; and I expect Hilda made up her mind about the thimble much in the same way."

"Yes, it was by the sense of touch that you were enabled to decide the form of the objects without looking. This sense is very quick in those who have lost or never had the precious gift of eyesight. When

I talk to Carrie I take her hand in mine, and make the different letters of the alphabet on it. Long practice has enabled her to understand so quickly that she can converse with those who have learnt the manual and sign language with great ease. But I have not told you much about my friend yet, so I must begin at once.

"Carrie was not born a deaf mute. When quite a little girl her eyes could see the loved faces of her father, mother, brothers and sisters, and she could hear as quickly as any child.

"But a severe attack of scarlet fever, when she was only a little girl, left her quite deaf, and soon after her sight began to fail. How often the poor child must have felt sad and lonely is known only to God. Perhaps what seemed hardest of all to Carrie was the decision, that she should be sent away from her own home to a school for deaf and dumb children at Brighton.

"But Carrie's school days were far from being unhappy ones. Her cheerful, affectionate disposition made her a favourite both with teachers and scholars.

"She soon learned to read and converse on her fingers, and even after she became



quite blind was taught to read her Bible in Dr. Moon's type for the blind, by passing her fingers over its raised or embossed letters.

"Her knitting, too, was so well and evenly done as to be often admired by ladies who visited the school.

"But I am sure all this would not have been enough to make dear Carrie happy if the Lord had not attracted her heart to Himself. At first she did not see God's way of peace very clearly. But as soon as she took her place as a sinner before God, and trusted simply in the finished work of the Lord Jesus, joy and peace in believing filled her soul, and she wanted, oh so much, to do something to please the Saviour.

"But you are wondering, I see, Hilda, how one who was herself deaf, dumb, and blind, could find anything to do in the way of service for the Lord.

"She took her desire to Him in prayer, and He opened the way for her to take a Sunday evening Bible class of deaf mutes. One of the class taking Carrie's hand in hers would read a few verses, then the eyes of all would be fixed on their blind teacher, while with rapid finger movements she told them of the love of God in the gift of His

Son. Carrie is still living, and still an inmate of the Institution where she received her education. If you visit Brighton next summer, do not forget to ask your mamma to take you to see her. But I must not talk about Carrie any more now, as I am sure you would like to hear about at least one more of my silent friends.

“Such a bright little baby, with laughing eyes, and coaxing, winning ways. So quick to notice, too, holding out her tiny arms to welcome father, or smiling as if in answer to all the love lavished on her, that till she was almost a year old not one of the dear home circle ever even guessed that their darling little Kate was deaf. At first it seemed as if it could hardly be true, but as time went on and the baby, though she grew fast and seemed well and happy, did not even try to say words, a clever doctor was called in. After a careful examination his opinion was given, ‘Quite deaf, and with no hope of cure.’

“It must have been a sorrowful moment for her parents and sisters, but I think Kate's affliction only made her dearer to them. None of the family loved her with deeper tenderness than her elder sister Mary, who was at once the playfellow,



friend, companion, and teacher of her childhood.

“ Kate was not sent to school at a very early age, but it was really wonderful how much she was able to learn, and how well she understood much of what was going on around her.

“ Her leaving home for school was, perhaps, her first real sorrow, but she soon became very fond of her teachers, and happy in the society of friends of her own age.

“ The school to which she was sent was the well-known Institution for the education of Deaf and Dumb Children, Old Kent Road, London. Kate was one of the first of its pupils selected for instruction on the Oral or Lip-reading system. She made good progress, and took several prizes. After her death her teacher said of her, ‘ I remember Kate so well, she was one of my best scholars, always so willing and anxious to please.’

“ About the same time those who loved her were cheered by the hope that their dear Kate was really a child of God. She seemed so to enjoy reading her Bible, her favourite chapter being the tenth of the Gospel by John, in which the Lord

Jesus speaks of Himself as the Good Shepherd.

"But I must tell you just a little about her illness and falling asleep. Kate had never been strong, and having taken a severe cold became so ill it was thought best to send her home for care and nursing.

"From that time till her death her sister Mary became her devoted nurse, giving up almost her whole time to her. It was thought sea air might do the invalid good, so the sisters went for a few weeks to Margate. But day by day, Kate grew weaker in body, though it was very blessed to watch how her faith in and love to Christ grew deeper and stronger.

"Only a day or two before the Lord took her to be with Himself, her sister, who very seldom left her sick room, asked her if she wanted to see any of her friends. Clearly and distinctly the dear girl said, 'Yes, Jesus, Jesus,' and He gave her the desire of her heart, for after a little more pain and weakness, very peacefully and gently she fell asleep in Him."





## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE COTTAGE HOSPITAL.

*"It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."*  
(Matt. xviii. 14.)

**W**HAT nice talks we are having, Aunt Fanny, and you help us to understand our texts so well, we shall be sure to remember what you tell us."

Aunt Fanny kissed Hilda's bright face as she answered, "I think, dear, I enjoy our half-hours in the play-room as much as yourself, or Wilfrid ; but remember, Hilda, we must not forget our need of the teaching of God's Holy Spirit, that we may rightly understand the word of God."

"I wonder what you are going to tell us about our text to-day, aunt Fanny," Wilfrid

said, after a short silence ; “ I do not think I quite understand it, but I think it means God loves and takes care of little children — am I right, aunt Fanny ? ”

“ Yes, Wilfrid ; that is, at least, part of its meaning, and one way in which He puts the desire to feed the Saviour's lambs into the hearts of His people.

“ I think you and Hilda will be pleased to hear about a visit I once paid to a Cottage Hospital, in which all the patients were small boys and girls.”

“ Oh, do tell us all you can remember about the dear little children who were there when you went,” Hilda said, as she nestled closely up to aunt Fanny.

“ It is several years since I was a visitor at the Cottage Hospital for Sick Children, Hilda, and any of the little patients I chatted with on that pleasant summer's day who are living now must be almost young men and women. I think I had better begin by telling you something about the building.

“ It was only an old-fashioned house with low white-washed walls, and a pleasant garden in front. Its windows were not very large, but they had neat white curtains, and there was a bright, cheerful look

about the whole place that seemed in itself almost a welcome.

“But I have not told you where the Cottage Hospital was. Far away from the noise and smoke of great cities, among the green fields and pretty lanes of Kent. It must have seemed almost like a new world to some of the poor children whose homes were in crowded streets, to find themselves among so many beautiful flowers, or to listen to the calls of the cuckoo or the cawing of the rooks among the high trees of the grand old park very near the hospital.

“A friend went with me on my visit. As we crossed the garden, we noticed the front door stood open, so we entered, and found ourselves in a small hall, bright with flowers and rich in wall texts.

“A pleasant-looking nurse, whose white cap and apron seemed the very perfection of neatness, came forward to meet us, saying with a smile, ‘The afternoon is so fine and warm that most of our little patients are hay-making in farmer Day’s field just at the end of the garden. You will only find a few who are very sick indoors to-day. But perhaps you would like to see the wards, then we can go to the hay-field.’

“So we thanked our new friend for permission to view the hospital, and followed her upstairs into such a cheerful, pretty room—the boys’ ward. Eight tiny white beds were ranged round its walls. We felt it must have been the hand of a friend that had arranged text cards and scripture prints just in the right places to be seen and remembered by the boys who slept in those little beds.

“The recess near each window was almost filled by a wire stand bright with roses, geraniums, and other flowering plants that grow well in pots; while at the far end of the room a cupboard with glass doors displayed quite a collection of toys. A model farm-yard was very pretty to look at, but the nurse told us that a small chest of carpenter’s tools and a printing press that could be set up on the ward table, were far greater favourites with her young charges.

“But were all the boys enjoying a good time in the hay-field?

“No, one bed was occupied, and we soon saw two large dark eyes were fixed on our movements, and that a very wistful look on the poor thin face out of which those strange deep set eyes looked, said as

plainly as words could have spoken, 'Do come here and talk to me, I am just a little dull all alone.'

"So we crossed over to the corner where he lay, and soon made friends with Archie Parsons. He was not at all shy, and quite willing to tell us his story. He said he could only just remember his father, as he had died when Archie was only three years old, leaving his widowed mother to provide for five children, of whom only one was old enough to go to work.

"Poor Mrs. Parsons must have found it very hard at first to earn money enough to pay her rent, and buy food for her little family. But she kept on trying, and the secret of her strength was told in Archie's simple words, 'Mother used to get us all to kneel down with her, and then she would ask the Lord to send her some work, and He always did.'

"And so things went on in that humble home till Archie was taken ill. His mother, who lived in London, took him to a hospital there. After a few weeks, one of the doctors who himself loved the Lord Jesus Christ, and had taken a great interest in the sick boy, offered to send him to the Cottage Hospital at S., as good food

and country air were, he thought, much needed in Archie's case.

" 'Do you think you will soon get better?' we asked.

" 'I don't know,' was his reply, but a glad light broke over his thin pale face as he added, 'God knows, so you see I don't need to trouble. If I get well I shall soon be old enough to go to work, and I should like to help mother; but if I die, I shall go to heaven, and be with Jesus, for I know He died for me.'

" But as the nurse was waiting to shew us the girls' and babies' ward, after giving Archie a little book of true stories and pretty pictures, we said good-bye to him and passed on. Two little girls, each propped up by pillows in their cot, seemed quite pleased when asked to shew us their work. Annie, the elder of the two, was making a ball out of odds and ends of bright-coloured wool, which, when finished, she told me she was going to give to a very little girl, like herself, an in-patient.

" But what was Jessie so busy about?"

" 'It is a secret, a real secret,' Jessie said almost in a whisper; 'but Annie knows, and you will not tell, will you?' the sick child asked eagerly.



“Quite satisfied by an assurance we might be trusted, Jessie took us into her confidence, and explained she was working a bookmark, with a Bible verse on it, and hoped to get it done in time to make a little present to nurse Kate, whose birthday was only a day or two later.

“Annie and Jessie were both fond of singing, and Annie took a small hymn book from under the pillow and shewed us her favourite hymn. It began with

“ ‘ I will sing for Jesus,  
With His blood He bought me,  
And all along my pilgrim way,  
His loving hand has brought me.’

“Then we followed the nurse into the babies’ ward, and heard from her how much suffering some of even the very tiny ones had known, heard too how much had been done by God’s blessing on care and kindness, to bring back health to some of the little sufferers.

“But I expect Wilfrid thinks we were a long time in getting to the hay-field.

“It was a pretty sight that met our eyes in the field ; twelve happy children, each one forgetting (for a time at least) his or her pain and weariness, while they

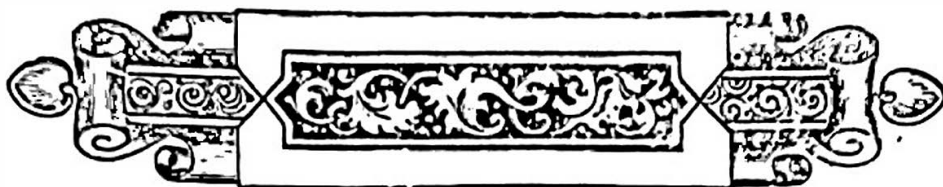
enjoyed a romp among the new-mown hay.

"Though more than one of the boys walked with crutches, and some of the girls had very white, thin faces, all seemed happy, and several voices asked us to tell them a story, so we sat down on a heap of sweet-smelling hay, and the children gathered round us to hear that 'sweet story of old' — how the Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus, once took up young children in His arms and blessed them.

"And very glad and thankful we were to find that some of our listeners knew and loved Him as their own precious Saviour.

"But as the ringing of a bell summoned the children indoors to their tea, we gave each a text card and said good-bye to the Cottage Hospital and its inmates."

"Thank you, aunt Fanny, we have been so interested. How I wish I was grown up; how delightful it must be to nurse poor sick children," Hilda said, as she kissed aunt Fanny, who only smiled and said, "Have a little patience, dear, and don't forget how many deeds of kindness even a little girl may do."



## CHAPTER IX.

MARGARET WILSON.

*"But without faith it is impossible to please him : for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* (Heb. xi. 6.)

"**Q**UITE a long text, aunt Fanny, but Wilfrid and myself can say it now ; but it was hard to learn, and I don't think we understand it at all, at least, I am sure I don't," and a very troubled look came over the usually bright face of Hilda Gray.

"Poor child," aunt Fanny said gently ; "sometimes I find some Bible verse too difficult for me, so I just have to take it to the Lord in prayer, and ask Him to make it plain to me, and sooner or later the light for which I ask is sure to be given me. But now. I should like to be

told what you found so hard to understand in this morning's text?"

"It says, 'Without faith it is impossible to please him.' Now we thought everybody believed the Bible was true, but we are sure everybody does not love the Lord Jesus. Do they?" Wilfrid asked.

"I am glad you have told me what was passing in your mind, dear Wilfrid. It is one thing to believe the Bible is true, or even to believe that Christ died for sinners, but quite another really and truly to trust in Him as your own precious Saviour. I heard only yesterday of a poor man who had lived to be more than eighty years of age before he knew his sins were forgiven. He was taken ill, and a friend of mine was asked to go to see him, and tell him about Christ. At first, the mind of the old man seemed very dark, but as he listened to the story of the love of God in the gift of His Son, the Holy Spirit taught him to accept salvation through the finished work of Christ, and only a few hours before his death, he called a christian woman to his bedside and said, 'It is all right now, I have told God all about it, that I am a poor lost sinner, and I am trusting in Jesus.'

“Shall I tell you a true story of how, more than two hundred years ago, faith in a loving, living Saviour made a young Scotch girl strong and brave, to suffer, and even to die rather than say or do what she thought would grieve or dishonour her Saviour?

“Margaret Wilson was, as they say in Scotland, a ‘bonny lassie,’ a real mother’s girl, always ready and willing to take her full share of work on churning, washing, or baking days, and shewed in many ways, by her gentle, kindly spirit, that she was learning of Him who had said, ‘Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.’ (Matt. xi. 29.) Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, the father and mother of Margaret, were simple and godly people, who loved their Bible, and took great pains to instruct their three children, of whom Margaret was, I think, the eldest, in its truths. And their labour was not in vain, for at a very early age all of them gave proof of saving faith in Christ.

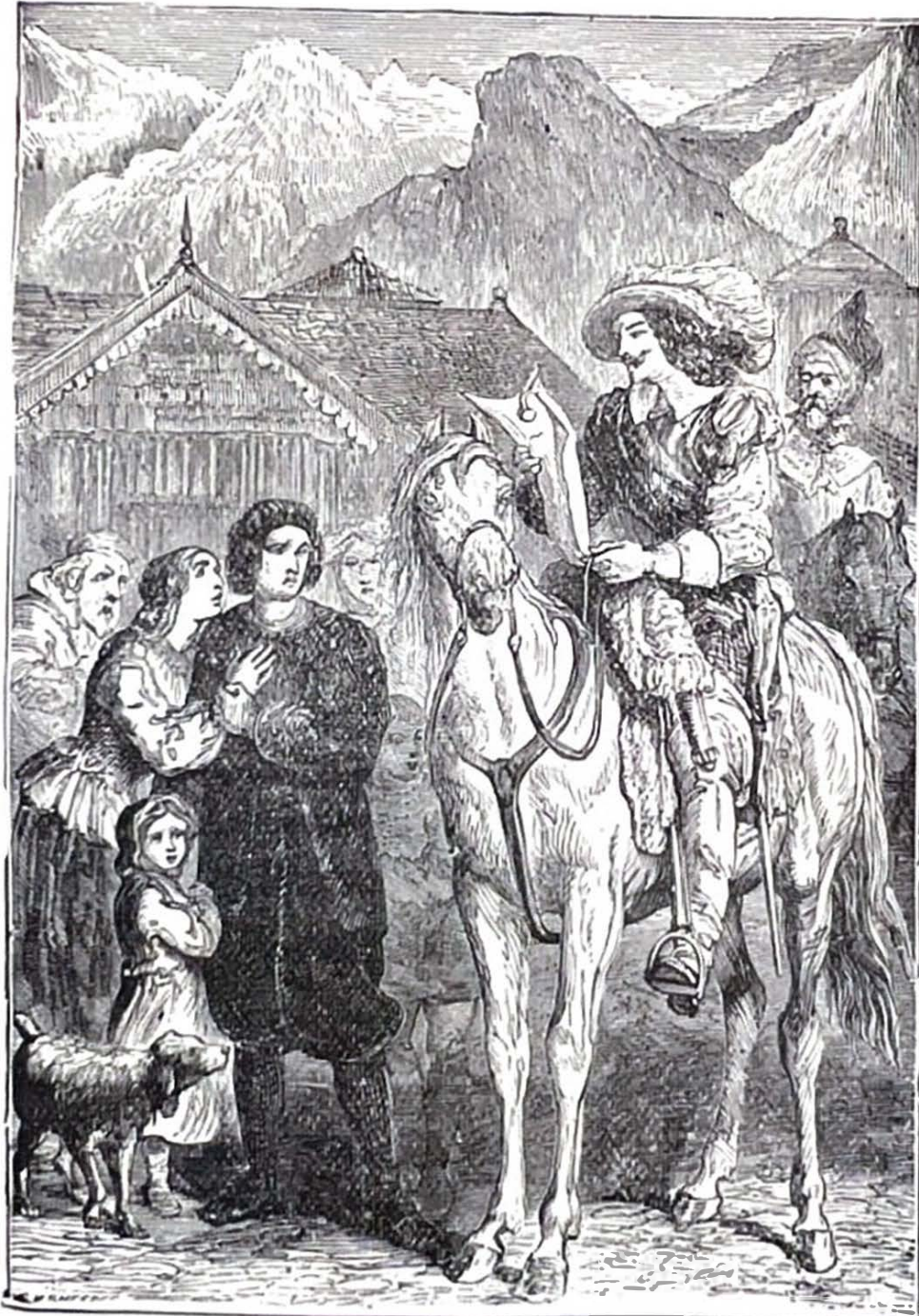
“But I must tell you a little about the times in which Margaret lived, or you will not be able to understand the nature of her trials. What we call *freedom of conscience*

or the liberty to read the word of God, and follow its teachings according to the light He has given us, was almost unknown in Scotland, and unjust men were trying, by cruel laws, to take away the liberty of Scotch Christians, even to meet for Bible reading and prayer, in the simple way so dear to the hearts of many.

“And who refused obedience did so at great risk. Sometimes they were driven away from their peaceful homes, and obliged to hide themselves in the woods or in caves, living as best they could on roots and berries. Even there they were not safe, for bands of soldiers were often sent to hunt for these poor people. If any of them were found, they were dragged away to prison, or put to death.

“The trial of faith proved too great for some, among whom was Gilbert Wilson. He escaped persecution by taking what was called the Oath; making a solemn promise to obey the king in all things.

“But when Margaret, then a girl of sixteen, and her younger sister Agnes were told what their father had done, they begged with many tears that he would not compel them to take the Oath, saying they were willing to suffer, and if needs be, to



GILBERT WILSON TAKING THE OATH.





die for Christ's cause, and could not give up the precious Bible truths their father had himself taught them.

“ So, after many tears, and a good deal of talking, it was arranged that the two girls should leave home, at least for a time, and try to hide themselves in the cottage of a poor widow, who, like Margaret and Agnes, stood firmly for Christ.

“ Seven anxious, weary months followed, during which the two poor girls more than once narrowly escaped being taken prisoners. Then sorrowful news came to the farmhouse where the Wilsons lived. Their two daughters and their aged friend were prisoners, and were about to be tried before a judge who was known to be a bitter enemy to the Covenanters.

“ The unhappy parents lost no time in going to the spot where the trial was to take place. When there, the father learnt that as Agnes was thought too young to understand what she was doing, he could ransom her by a payment of money. This he did gladly, though every penny he could get together was needed.

“ But gold, even if Gilbert Wilson had been a rich man, would not have set Margaret free. Her captors would listen

to no terms for her release, expecting one so young would take the required oath, and so save herself from a cruel death.

“But as, in spite alike of threats or promises, Margaret and her old friend stood firm, sentence of death was passed on both, and they were led back to prison. From the prison cell Margaret wrote a long letter to her father, telling him she was happy in her Saviour's love, and counted it an honour to be called upon to suffer for Christ's sake.

“A few days later, and the time fixed upon for the sentence of death to be carried out had arrived. A spot almost within sight of Margaret's home had been chosen, and on the sea-shore, at a point where the tide came in quickly, two stakes had been driven deep into the sand. To one of these very near the waves that were rolling in, the onlookers who stood in little knots on the hillside could see the aged martyr fastened. They saw her bow her head beneath the waters and die, just as the first cold wave touched the feet of Margaret.

“‘What think you, maiden, of yon sight?’ said a soldier to the gentle girl as he pointed to her fellow-sufferer.

“ ‘ I think I ’ see Christ yonder, suffering in one of His members, ’ was her answer. ‘ Think not it is we who suffer. He sends no one to warfare at his own charge. ’

“ Slowly but surely the tide flowed in, already the waters were above her knees, but no cry of pain or fear broke from the pale lips of Margaret.

“ Only a few lines of a psalm she had often joined in singing at evening prayer in the happy home of her childhood.

“ Let not the errors of my youth,  
Nor sins remember'd be ;  
In mercy for Thy goodness' sake,  
Dear Lord, remember me.

“ Oh, do Thou keep my soul, my God,  
Do Thou deliver me ;  
Let me not be ashamed, since I,  
Do put my trust in Thee.”

“ The waves rose higher, and a deep, almost breathless silence fell upon the crowd, broken at last by a pleading piteous cry, ‘ My child, my child, oh, save my child, ’ and a man who had forced his passage through the guards, threw himself at the feet of the officer in command. It was Gilbert Wilson, and though the one to whom he spoke was but little used to pity, something like compassion for the

almost broken-hearted father seemed to move him for an instant, and he gave orders that Margaret should again be asked to take the required oath.

“Two young men who were good swimmers reached the stake to which she had been fastened, just as the waves were closing over her head. When rescued she was unconscious, and at first they thought her dead. When her eyes unclosed, a clear, calm light of faith and love shone in them, and in a feeble voice she whispered her Saviour's name.

“But when asked if she would give up her principles and take the oath, Margaret replied, ‘I cannot, I may not, and will not, I am Christ's, let me go.’

“‘Margaret, Margaret,’ cried her father, ‘say God save the king.’

“‘Yes, God save him,’ she replied, ‘for his salvation I desire.’

“‘She has said it, she has said it,’ cried Wilson, ‘my precious bairn.’

“Still, an officer present required her to take the oath, which her conscience forbade her doing. So with the words of her dying Saviour on her lips, ‘Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,’ Margaret Wilson was thrust back into the sea.

“ Her body was found by her friends, and laid in a quiet grave, in a corner of Wigton churchyard, there to wait the morning when the sleeping saints shall rise to meet the Lord in the air.

“ But in many a Scottish home her name is still a loved and honoured one. As children listen to her story in the deepening twilight, the liberty to read God’s word seems to them what it really is, a grand and glorious privilege, as they hear of how some in martyr times were called to suffer for its truths.”





## CHAPTER X.

ELIZABETH FRY.

*"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."* (Luke xix. 10.)

"**A**NOTHER easy text, Hilda ; I only read it twice over, and now I can say it quite well," and Wilfrid Gray, who was not very good at committing verses of scripture to memory, gave a little sigh of relief.

His sister said thoughtfully, "Yes, Wilfrid, our text was easy to learn, not a hard word in it, but I was thinking about its meaning, and I am not sure that I really understand it. You know we sometimes sing—

'Jesus came from heaven  
Many years ago,  
Left His Father's glory  
For this world of woe.'

And I think the hymn means almost the same as our text. But aunt Fanny is coming, I hear her steps, and she will explain it to us."

Wilfrid ran to open the door, and Hilda drew up a chair for aunt Fanny. The text was soon repeated by both children. Then Hilda asked, "Please, aunt Fanny, was everybody lost when the Lord Jesus came from heaven to die upon the cross for sinners—for us, you know?"

"Yes, Hilda. All were lost, for the Bible tells us that 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.' (Rom. iii. 23.) But I should like you to turn to the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and read the sixth verse. Yes, that is right. 'All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way ; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.'

"Now there is nothing more easy than for a sheep to get lost, it has only to wander away from the flock, but it cannot find its way back. The shepherd must go to look for it. So you see the sheep is a picture of ourselves : we are lost. But the Lord Jesus, the great Good Shepherd, came Himself to seek and to save us.

"I have been reading a very interesting book, called 'Memorials of Mrs. Fry,' and I think you would like to hear of some of the strange dark places into which she carried the sweet message of a Saviour's love."

"Oh yes, aunt Fanny, I know we shall like to hear about her, but please tell us something that happened when Mrs. Fry was a little girl. What sort of a house did she live in? Had she any brothers and sisters?"

"Her home, when a very little girl, was in a pleasant Norfolk village. Her father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Gurney, lived in a large old-fashioned house overlooking a common, and Elizabeth, their third daughter, was one of quite a large family of boys and girls.

"She was born in the year 1780, and one of the first things she remembered about her own childhood was how her gentle and Bible-loving mother used to gather her little ones round her and tell them Bible stories. And as Elizabeth, who was a thoughtful child, listened to the story of Adam and Eve, she often wondered if the garden of Eden was anything like the sunny garden behind her father's



house, where in fine weather her sisters and herself spent most of their playtime.

“ Elizabeth could learn her lessons very quickly when she was steady and attentive, but her love of play sometimes made her careless, and so brought her into trouble. Still she loved, and generally tried to please her parents and teachers, most of all her own dear mother, of whom she was so fond that she would often lie awake at nights and cry, because she thought that during the day she had been looking pale or ill, and she feared her mother was going to die.

“ When Elizabeth Gurney was about twelve years old the sorrow she had so feared came, and for a time she seemed almost broken-hearted. Her father, a man of great talent, and, better still, a decided Christian, tried every means in his power to comfort his sorrowing little daughter, and devoted himself to the care and education of his eleven children ; and after a time Elizabeth, though she still grieved for the loss of her mother, regained her spirits and sought to repay her father's love by obedience and affection.

“ When Elizabeth was about seventeen, one who knew her well, wrote of her, She

is tall and graceful in person, her mind too is well stored, she is clever at music and drawing, while her disposition is so affectionate that it seems almost impossible to know her without loving her.'

"Still she was not really happy; for while she knew herself to be a sinner she did not see God's way of peace.

"Mr. Gurney was a Quaker, as the 'Friends' are often called, and Elizabeth and her six sisters were in the habit of attending the Friends' meeting-house at Norwich.

"One Lord's Day in 1798, a stranger, who was on a visit to Norwich, preached the gospel in the old meeting-house. Elizabeth, who was present, listened with great attention, and seemed anxious and unhappy. Her sister noticed that she cried almost all the way home, and refused to be comforted.

"The next morning the preacher breakfasted at her father's house, and presented Christ to the weeping girl as a Saviour who was able to meet her need.

"After this conversation Elizabeth went to her own room, where she remained alone for some time. She did not say much to any one of what had passed

between the Lord and her soul, but from that day the change in her was very marked. She had become a real Christian, and her great desire was to follow Christ.

“Two years later she became the wife of Mr. Joseph Fry, and went with her husband to live in London. At first she missed the poor people whose cottages she had been in the habit of visiting very much, but she soon found among the hard-working, toil-worn men and women of the great city some who were willing to listen to the sweet story of a Saviour's love from her lips ; and when, six years after, the family removed to Essex, Mrs. Fry, finding there was no school near where the children of the poor could be taught to read the Bible, opened one in her own house. Seventy children were soon in attendance, and though Mrs. Fry engaged a teacher, she almost always gave the scripture lessons herself, and spent much time in the school.

“ Sometimes Mrs. Fry went to the City with her husband, and on almost every visit they passed Newgate Prison, and as her eye rested on its dark walls her heart was moved with pity for the unhappy creatures within, many of whom

she was told were women, and some, it was said, had little children with them in that gloomy place.

"Mrs. Fry had a great wish to be allowed to visit the female prisoners and speak to them of Jesus, but there were at that time many difficulties in the way, and it was not till the year 1813 that the Lord gave her the desire of her heart.

"When the governor of the prison gave permission to Mrs. Fry and one friend, who had offered to go with her to visit Newgate, he told them to leave their watches at his house, as he said they were almost sure to have them stolen if they took them into the prison with them.

"But Mrs Fry answered, 'We are going among these poor creatures in the name of the Lord, they will not injure us or our property.'

"When they were admitted the scene they beheld was one never to be forgotten. Almost three hundred women, with quite a number of children, were crowded into four dark, dirty rooms. All were idle, and some were playing with a pack of greasy cards and gambling for the ragged clothes they wore.

“ Mrs. Fry and her friend went among them, speaking kindly to them, and offered to read a few words from the Bible. All listened quietly and many were in tears, and begged Mrs. Fry to visit and read to them again.

“ On her next visit Mrs. Fry got all the women who had children with them in prison together, and asked if they did not think it would be a good plan to open a school in which their little ones could be taught to read and sew? The poor mothers were much pleased, and said they should be thankful, and some of them asked if they might attend the school when it was opened, as they had a great desire to learn to read.”

But I cannot stay now to tell you more of the work of this good woman, so must draw my chapter to a close.





## CHAPTER XI.

### THE BOY PHILOSOPHER.

*"Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks: for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare." (Psalm lxxv. 1.)*

"**E** have been to the post office for mother, aunt Fanny, but we made all the haste we could, for we knew you would be ready for us, and we should not like to keep you waiting." And as she spoke, Hilda Gray looked lovingly up into aunt Fanny's face, while Wilfrid added, "We learnt our text before breakfast, so please will you talk to us about its meaning?"

There was a moment's silence, then aunt Fanny said, "I think we often lose blessing because we do not take

notice of the wonderful works of God. We are all too much like a boy I once heard of, who, having to go some distance from his home one cold winter's day, returned looking very cross and ill-tempered, and full of complaints of the hardship of being obliged to go out in what he called such miserable weather. He said there had been nothing to see or to admire, as the trees were leafless, and the ground covered with snow.

“ Shortly after, his brother Henry, who had been exactly the same road, returned, his face glowing with the healthy exercise he had taken, and eager to tell how much he had enjoyed his walk. It was quite true, he said, ‘ The trees were leafless, and not even a pale snowdrop peeped out from the hard frozen ground. But he had been much interested in watching the curious ways of a flock of starlings who were seeking food in a field close by, while a robin redbreast, perched on a holly bush only a few feet from him, poured out one of his sweetest songs, and he had had a real good time.’

“ Then their father told them the difference had been in themselves. While Henry had eyes to see and a heart to

be thankful for all that was bright and beautiful around him, his brother was the slave of a discontented, unthankful spirit, and might almost as well have been blind, as he did not make a right use of the wonderful and precious gift of sight.

“But as I know Wilfrid is interested in hearing about the school-days of great men, I am going to tell you of one, who from quite a boy, took a great interest in observing the wonderful works of God.

“Sir Isaac Newton was born in an old manor house near Grantham in Lincolnshire, in the year 1642. His mother's tears must often have fallen on the face of her little son as she wept over her own great sorrow, the loss of her husband, who had died three months before the birth of Isaac, who received his father's christian name.

“‘What a tiny baby! nothing but dolls' clothes will be of any use to dress him in,’ friends and neighbours said, as they saw the wee stranger for the first time, and an old nurse who had been in the Newton family for many years shook her head and said, ‘She did not think the baby would live, it was so small and sickly.’

“But God, ‘whose ways are not as our



ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts,' knew how much useful work would have to be done, how many of life's lessons learnt by that weak one before, at the ripe age of eighty-four, he should be called from the service of earth to the rest of heaven.

"His mother was his first teacher, and though Mrs. Newton was not rich, she determined to give her son a good education; so when quite young, he became a scholar in the Grantham Grammar School.

"He must have been quite a puzzle to his schoolfellows. A pale, delicate little fellow, who did not like cricket, and who did not want to learn how to play at football. He did not care for the noisy sports of his stronger companions but seemed to prefer being left alone in a corner of the playground poring over the pages of a book.

"Was Isaac a dull or stupid boy? No his diligence and love of study soon made him a favourite with his masters, and when his clever fingers, with the aid of a pocket knife and some pieces of wood, cardboard, &c., had constructed several model toys, among which was a wooden clock, with

real works, a model of a windmill he had seen put up at Grantham, a water clock, worked by the dropping of water, and a very curious sun-dial, in which the course of the sun was marked by a number of wooden pegs, the boys all agreed that after all there was something in Isaac, and left off teasing him.

“He was fond of drawing, too, and his ready pencil often supplied his friends with sketches of birds, flowers, ships, &c., many of which gave proof of decided talent. He also made a wooden cart, large enough for him to sit in, and in it, by a very simple mechanical contrivance, he could cross the room.

“His mother wished him, on leaving school, to become a gentleman farmer, but when she found that her son's love of books was not a mere passing fancy, she consented to his going to college.

“I cannot tell you much about his student life, except that it was one of untiring industry. Isaac Newton really seemed to enjoy hard work, and was seldom more happy than when engaged in his Greek and Latin studies. He passed all his examinations with credit alike to his tutors and himself, took



SIR ISAAC NEWTON DISCOVERING THE REFRACTION OF LIGHT.



honours, and became, in little more than four years, a Fellow of his college.

“About the same time, he made some of the discoveries that have made his name so famous. One of these is what was called the refraction of light. He found that by passing a ray of light through a piece of cut glass called a prism, into a dark room, it became separated into seven parts or bright bands of colour, but always in the same order—violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, red.

“He is said to have discovered the law of gravitation, while on a visit to Lincolnshire. He was walking, book in hand, through an orchard, when his attention was attracted by the falling of an apple. He began to ask himself, Why did that apple fall? If you had been there, Wilfrid, I wonder how you would have answered his question?”

“Oh, aunt Fanny, I would soon have told him the apple could not help it. I should have thought a learned man like Sir Isaac Newton would have known that.”

“But why could not the apple help falling, Wilfrid?”

“I don't know, aunt Fanny, except,

because, you know, things always do fall if you don't hold them fast."

Aunt Fanny smiled and continued. "But Sir Isaac Newton was not content to say, I don't know; he thought and studied a great deal, till he found out one of those wonderful secrets which God has hidden away, as if on purpose to reward those who by patient, reverent search, are willing to take the trouble of finding them out.

"He found there was a property in the earth on which we live, called the law of attraction, by which it attracts or draws all solid bodies to itself. But I see Hilda does not quite understand, and I must not stop to explain it to you now.

"Sir Isaac Newton was a Christian, one who saw and adored the wisdom and goodness of God in all His works. His great learning did not make him vain. His Bible was his constant companion, and in many ways he proved himself a sincere, humble follower of Christ.

"He was fond of and kind to animals. It is said that, on returning one evening to his study, after a short absence, he found his favourite dog Diamond had, by overturning a candle, set light to some valuable papers, and so destroyed the work of many



days. But he did not scold or beat the dog ; only said, with a sad smile, 'Ah, Diamond, Diamond, how little you understand the mischief you have done.'

" During his last illness, he said to one who was much with him, ' I do not know or care what the world thinks about me, but to myself, I seem only like a boy playing on the sea-shore, and now and then finding out a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst all the time the great ocean of truth lies all undiscovered before me.'

" Many of the ablest writers and thinkers of the years during which Sir Isaac Newton lived and worked, were among his personal friends, and his monument stands side by side with those of poets, warriors, and statesmen in Westminster Abbey. But it is of one who was a patient, diligent student of the works of God, that we love and honour his memory.

" And now, darlings, I must not stay to talk about our verse any longer, for as I expect to say good-bye to you all to-morrow, I am anxious to go and see a poor sick girl at C., but your mother bade me tell you that if one, or both of you would like to go with me, you may do so."

"How delightful! Oh, yes, aunt Fanny, we will run and get ready at once. But please," Hilda added, "do you mind waiting just till we gather a few ripe gooseberries off my own bush? Perhaps the poor girl would enjoy them."

Aunt Fanny gave a smiling consent, and the two children were soon in the garden busy in their labour of love.







## CHAPTER XII.

### A FOLDED LAMB.

*"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth ; but the word of our God shall stand for ever." (Isa. xl. 8.)*

**E**VERY grave were the little faces of Wilfrid and Hilda Gray, for they knew that the last day of aunt Fanny's pleasant visit had really come—all too soon, the children thought. Both were busy, Hilda tying up a small parcel in several wrappings of white paper, while Wilfrid, who had just laid down his paint brushes, gave a few finishing touches to a text on cardboard, the painting of which had taken up most of his playtime for nearly a week, and had only been finished just in time, as a parting gift to aunt Fanny.

"It looks nice," he said, after a pause,

"but not so well as I wanted it to look. Some of the letters are too large, and that capital F was really hard to print, I can tell you; but I wanted to give something to aunt Fanny, and this is all I've got. Do you think she will care to have it, Hilda?"

"It's beautiful, Wilfrid. How could aunt Fanny help liking it?"

"How, indeed!" said a well-known voice near them, and as Wilfrid and Hilda turned their heads, they saw aunt Fanny, who had entered unobserved while they were talking, and was looking at Wilfrid's work. Hilda ran to get her parcel, saying, as she brought it, "A pen-wiper for you, aunt Fanny, I made it myself. I wanted to buy you one with my pocket-money when we were at H., but mother said she thought you would like to have one that was really my own making, even if not quite so pretty as those we see in the shops."

"Mother was right, dear Hilda," aunt Fanny answered warmly; "I shall value your gift and Wilfrid's text very, very much. You have both tried to give me pleasure, and I cannot tell you what a cheer and comfort your love is to me.

But I think we had better talk about our text now."

"Yes, aunt Fanny, you won't be here to-morrow, but we are not going to give up learning our texts. Hilda and I will learn them as usual, and repeat them to mother."

"I am pleased to hear that, Wilfrid. Your verse has often been a comfort to me when parting even for a short time with loved ones. Shall I tell you why? Because it is so blessed to know, that amid all the changes here, we have just one thing that will not, cannot change, or pass away—the word of God. A sure guide through life, and a Light when treading the valley of the shadow of death, to those who through faith in the Saviour, of whom that word speaks, have been made wise unto salvation.

"Perhaps you would like to hear of the joy and peace that word gave to a dear young girl who used to attend my Bible class, but who has now gone 'to be with Christ, which is far better.'

"I think it is about ten years since Clara Field first came to the class. She was, at that time, about fourteen years of age, though she did not look nearly so old.

Clara was regular in her attendance, quiet, and attentive; but I must own that for some time my new scholar was rather a puzzle to me. I felt I did not understand her; she was so shy and reserved. I could not get her to talk to me, and I did not feel sure that she had taken her true place as a sinner before God. Still, as I noticed how interested in our Bible lessons she always appeared, I often thought she was one of the Lord's little ones; but I wanted to know that she had really accepted Christ. Her birthday gave me an opportunity of writing to her, and in my letter I pressed home the question,

Was she really trusting in the finished work of the Lord Jesus?' I think you would like to know how she answered my question, so will read you the letter she wrote. It was a very simple, yet blessed, confession of faith in Christ:—

“ ‘ Bow,

“ ‘ *March*, 1883.

“ ‘ MY VERY DEAR TEACHER,

“ ‘ Many thanks for your love in thinking of me on my birthday. I know the Lord never forgets me; but it is a comfort to have a kind friend.

“ ‘ Dear Teacher, I can truly say that I am trusting in the Lord Jesus as my own loved and loving Saviour.

He knows the secrets of all hearts, so He would know if I were not speaking the truth. Nothing is hid from Him ; but I know I can trust Him now, for He died for sinners.

“ ‘I am only poorly, but hope, Lord willing, to see you soon.

“ ‘From your loving and affectionate scholar,

“ ‘CLARA.’

“ Clara was not able to get very often to the class during the year that followed, as a severe attack of inflammation of the lungs kept her almost entirely confined to the house for some months. I saw her often, and generally found her bright and happy. Her reserve, too, had given way, and she was always willing to speak of what the Lord had done for her soul. She would say, ‘ Oh, how much Jesus must have loved us, to be willing to die upon the cross to save us.’

“ After a time she seemed to regain some degree of strength, and her place in the class was seldom vacant. Clara was an orphan ; but an uncle and aunt, who had adopted her when she was quite a little girl, were very kind to her, and could hardly have shewn her more affection if she had been their own daughter.

“ One afternoon, at the close of school, Clara told me, with a sorrowful face, she

should have to say good-bye, as her uncle and aunt were going to remove to some distance. We both felt the parting much ; but it was a comfort to me to be sure that Clara had passed from death to life ; that she was safe, for she belonged to the Lord Jesus, that great, good Shepherd, who had said, ' My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.' (John x. 27, 28.)

" I did not see much of my old scholar for about two years, though we wrote to each other sometimes. There had been quite a long silence on her part, when I received a note from her aunt, saying Clara was very ill, and wished to see me.

" I found her, on my visit, very weak in body. She did not seem so bright in soul as I had hoped to find her, and owned that, owing to her affection for one who did not love her Saviour, a sense of distance had come in between her soul and the Lord. She said, ' I know Christ died for me, but I think Satan is trying very hard to take me away from Him.'

" She was reminded of the love and power of the One who had loved her and

had given Himself for her ; and after we had prayed together, Clara seemed comforted. On my next visit, I found her very, very ill ; but the doubts and fears that had so distressed her were gone, all gone, and with a full heart she was praising the Lord, who had done great things for her.

“Only a day or two before she fell asleep in Jesus, her aunt told me she seemed so very happy that for a time pain and weakness were almost forgotten, and she shouted the praises of the Lord, who had loved her and washed her from her sins in His own blood.

“To a friend who asked her if she wished to get better, she replied, ‘No, I would much rather go and be with Christ, my own precious Saviour.’

“I did not see her during the last week of her life ; but as I looked on her sweet, peaceful face, so calm and still in death, I felt for her the sting had been taken away, and that dear Clara was asleep in Christ, and I could only thank the Lord who had taken her to be with Himself.

“And now, dear Wilfrid and Hilda, aunt Fanny has a parting gift for each of you—a reference Bible and a lead pencil. You will wonder how you are to use the

pencils, but I will tell you. I hope you will read a few verses, at least, every day. When you have finished reading, look over the verses you have read, mark one, and ask the Lord to make its meaning plain to you; then you may close your Bibles. But don't forget your marked verses. Think about them, and you will find, in more ways than I can tell you, that you will get help and comfort from them."

"Oh, thank you, dear aunt Fanny, how kind of you to give us such beautiful Bibles for our very own. Please may we begin to-day, by marking the verse you are so fond of, 'The Father himself loveth you'—the one Wilfrid printed, I mean? I am almost sure it is marked in your Bible. May we look?"

"Yes, Hilda, the verse is marked in my Bible, and often seems to me just like a light shining in a dark place."

But I must now say good-bye to you both. I shall not soon forget our happy chats together, and I trust you will remember them too.

Wilfrid and Hilda were sure they would not, and were sorry to have to say farewell to their aunt.