

GREAT LESSONS.

FOR

LITTLE PEOPLE.



EDINBURGH:
WILLIAM P. NIMMO



THE LITTLE FISHER.

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GREAT LESSONS FOR LITTLE PEOPLE.



LITTLE JEM ROBERTS.

A TALE OF CONSCIENCE.

A POOR little boy, named Jem Roberts, having been set to weed in a gentleman's garden on a very hot day, observed some very beautiful apples on a tree, and was strongly tempted to pluck one.

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“If it tastes but half as nice as it looks,” thought he, “how delightful it must be!” He stood for an instant gazing on the tree, while his mother’s words, “Touch nothing that does not belong to you,” came vividly to his mind. He withdrew his eyes from the tempting object, and with great diligence pursued his occupation. The fruit was forgotten, and with pleasure he perceived that he had nearly reached the end of the bed which he had been able to clear without having given way to temptation. Collecting in his hands the heap of weeds he had gathered, he returned to deposit them in the wheel-barrow which stood near the apple-tree. Again the glowing fruit met his eye, more beautiful, more tempting than ever; he had great difficulty in restraining himself from taking one, for he was very hot and thirsty with working in the hot sunshine. He stood still; his heart beat; his mother’s command was heard no more; his resolution was gone. He looked around; there was no one but himself in the garden. “They can never miss one out of so many,” said he to himself. He made a step—only one; he reached out his hand to take an apple from the tree, when at the very moment a sparrow from a neighbouring tree, which was calling its companion, seemed, as the little boy imagined, to chirrup “Jem! Jem!” He was so much frightened that he sprang back to the walk, his hand fell to his side, his whole frame shook; and no sooner had he recovered himself, than he ran rapidly from the spot.

In a short time afterward he began to reason

with himself : if a sparrow, thought he, could frighten me so much, I may be sure that what I was going to do was wrong.

He then worked with greater diligence than ever, nor once again trusted himself to gaze on the fruit which had so nearly led him to commit so great a fault. The sparrows chirped again as he was leaving the garden, but he no longer fled away at the sound.

“You may cry ‘Jem, Jem,’” said he, looking steadily at the tree on which several were perched, “as often as you like ; I don’t care for you now ; but this I will say, I will never forget how good one of you has been to me, and I will rob none of your nests again.”

CONSCIENCE.

“Mother, there is a little voice,
I know its sound full well,
For often to my soul it speaks :
What is it, mother, tell ?”

“’Tis conscience, child, that in your heart
Is whisp’ring day by day,
That warns you when you’re doing wrong,
And points to the right way.”

“Who gave it to me, mother dear,
That ‘still, small voice’ within,
That will not let me rest at all
When I’ve committed sin ?”

“’Twas God, my child, that gave it you ;
It was not given for naught ;
And oh, how careful you should be
To mind it as you ought !”

THE BOY HERO.

THERE is a story told of a little boy of Haarlem, a town in Holland. He was returning one night from a village to which he had been sent by his father on an errand, and his way home lay along the side of one of the canals which are so numerous in that country. As he came near one of the large sluices, which are used for regulating the force of the water, he was examining it, and discovered a hole in the wood through which the water was flowing. With the instant perception which every child in Holland has in such matters, he saw in a moment that the water must soon enlarge the hole through which it was now dropping, and that utter and general ruin would be the consequence if the hole was not closed. He knew, for he had often heard his father tell of the sad disasters which happened from such small beginnings, how in a few hours the opening would become bigger and bigger, and let in the mighty mass of waters pressing on the dyke, until the whole defence being washed away, the rolling, dashing, angry waters would sweep on to the next village, destroying life and property, and everything in its way. Should he run home and alarm the vil-

lagers? it would be dark before they could arrive, and the hole might even then be so large as to defy all attempts to close it.

Prompted by these thoughts, he seated himself on the bank of the canal, stopped the opening with his hand, and patiently waited the approach of some villager. But no one came. Hour after hour rolled slowly by, but there sat the heroic boy in cold and darkness, shivering, wet, and tired, but stoutly pressing his hand against the dangerous breach. All night he stayed at his post; at last the morning broke; a clergyman walking by the canal heard a groan, and looked around to see where it came from.

“Why, my boy!” he exclaimed, “what are you doing there?”

“I am keeping the water from running out,” was the answer from the boy, who during that whole night had been evincing such heroic fortitude and undaunted courage, and who was now so benumbed with cold, that he could scarcely move or speak.

The astonished minister relieved the boy. The dyke was closed, and the danger which threatened hundreds of lives was prevented.

“Heroic boy! what a truly noble spirit of self-devotedness he showed!” every one of my little readers will exclaim.

A heroic boy he indeed was; and what was it that sustained him through that lonesome night? Why, when his teeth chattered, his lips trembled, and his heart was wrung with anxiety, did he not fly to his warm home? What thought bound him

to his seat? Was it not the *responsibility* of his position? Did he not forget to brave all the fatigue, the danger, the darkness, and the cold, in thinking what the consequences would be, if he should forsake it? His mind pictured the quiet homes and beautiful farms of the people inundated by the flood of waters, and he determined to stay at his post or die.

Now there is a sense in which every person, every boy and girl, occupies a position of far weightier responsibility than that of the little Hollander on that dark and lonesome night; for, by the good or bad influence which you do and shall exert, you may be the means of turning a tide of wretchedness and eternal ruin, or a pure stream of gladness and goodness, on the world. God has given you somewhere a post of duty to occupy, and you cannot get above or below your obligations to be faithful in it. You are responsible for leaving your work undone, as well as having it badly done. You cannot excuse yourself by saying, "I am nobody—I don't exert any influence," for there is nobody so mean or obscure that he has not some influence, and you have it whether you will or no, and you are responsible for the consequences of that influence, whatever it is. Take your stand before the world, then, with the determination to devote your influence to virtue, to humanity, to God. Dear children, begin life and grow up with these solid principles of action, to fear and to honour God, to be true to your conscience, and to do all the good you can. Then will your path indeed be like that of

the just, which "shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

LITTLE WORDS AND ACTIONS.

Two men were at work together one day in a ship-building yard. They were hewing a stick of timber to put into a ship. It was a small stick, and not worth much. As they cut off the chips, they found a worm, a little worm, about half-an-inch long.

"This stick is wormy," said one; "shall we put it in?"

"I do not know: yes, I think it may go in. It will never be seen, of course."

"Yes, but there may be other worms in it, and these may increase, and injure the ship."

"No, I think not. To be sure, it is not worth much, yet I do not wish to lose it. But come, never mind the worm, we have seen but one; put it in."

The stick was accordingly put in. The ship was finished, and as she was launched off into the waters, all ready for the seas, she looked beautiful as the swan when the breeze ruffles its white-feathered bosom, as it sits upon the waters. She went to sea; and for a number of years did well. But it was found, on a distant voyage, that she grew weak and rotten. Her timbers were much eaten by the worms. But the captain thought he would try and get her home. He had a great

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costly load of goods in the ship, such as silks, crapes, and the like, and a great many people. On their way home, a storm gathered. The ship for a while climbed up the high waves, and then plunged down, creaking and rolling very much. But she then sprung a leak. They had two pumps, and the men worked at them day and night ; but the water came in faster than they could pump it out. She filled with water ; and she went down under the dark blue waves of the ocean, with all the goods and all the people on board. Every one perished. Oh, how many wives, and mothers, and children, mourned over husbands, and sons, and fathers, for whose return they were waiting, and who never returned ! And this, all this, probably, because that little stick of timber with the worm in it was put in when the ship was built ! How much property, and how many lives, may be destroyed by a little worm ! And how much evil may a man do, when he does a small wrong, as that man did, who put the wormy timber into the ship !

On a dark night there was once a ship coming into one of our harbours. She had been to India on a long voyage, and had been gone for several years. She had a very costly cargo on board. The captain and all the crew were hoping and expecting to see their friends and homes soon, and were all in the highest spirits. As they came bounding over the foaming waters, and drew near to the land, the captain told a man to keep a good look-out for the lighthouse, which stood at the entrance of the harbour. Soon the man cried out,

“Light ahead!” Then they all rejoiced, for they thought they were near home.

But, poor men! how were they mistaken!

While they had been gone, this lighthouse had been removed to another place, away from where it was when they sailed.

But the captain was not aware of that. So they kept sailing in the old, and, as they supposed, in the right path.

In a short time the man at the look-out cried out, “Breakers ahead!”—that means, Rocks just before us,—“and the ship is on them!”

In a moment the captain cast his eye out on the dark waters, and saw the white foam on the rocks. In a loud voice he called out, “Starboard the helm!” Now, see how much may hang on one little word. The man at the helm mistook the captain, and thought he said “Larboard the helm.” So he turned it the wrong way! It was done in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; but it was done, and could not be undone; the ship ran headlong on the very rocks they had meant to avoid; and if the man at the helm had understood properly what the captain said, they would have got past them safely; but, instead of that, the noble ship that had stood the storms of years, was, in sight of home, dashed into a thousand pieces. The cargo was lost, and every soul on board, with one or two exceptions, were drowned!

All this hung upon one little word. One single mistake, small as it seemed to be, brought about all this ruin and death. One moment of time

turned the scale, and property and lives all went down into the deep. There the human beings sleep till the great morning of the resurrection day.

Life is made up of little things. He who travels over a continent must go step by step. He who writes a book must do it sentence by sentence. He who learns a science must master it fact by fact, and principle after principle. What is the happiness of our life made up of? Little courtesies, little kindnesses, pleasant words, genial smiles, a friendly letter, good wishes and good deeds. One in a million, once in a lifetime, may do an heroic action; but the little things that make up our life come every day and every hour. If we make the little events of life beautiful and good, then is the whole life full of beauty and goodness.

LITTLE PETER.

A STORY OF THANKFULNESS.

THERE was once in England a poor boy, who was called "Little Peter." He was an orphan, and begged his bread from door to door. He sang very sweetly, and people seldom sent him away empty-handed. It was an idle and sad life which he led, but Peter had no one to care for him, and he did not know what else to do. He had the singular custom of saying on every occasion, "It comes from above." I will now tell you why.

When his father was on his deathbed, he said to Little Peter, "My dear Peter, you will now be left alone, and many troubles you will have in the world. But always remember, that all comes from above; and then you will find it easy to bear everything with patience."

Little Peter understood him, and, in order not to forget the words, he often spoke them aloud. He received every gift with the words, "It comes from above." As he grew up, he used to consider what they meant. He was wise enough to see that, as God rules the world, we may well believe of everything that happens in the way of His providence, "It comes from above."

This faith of Little Peter often turned out for his benefit. Once, as he was passing through the town, a sudden gust of wind blew off a roof-tile, which fell on his shoulder, and struck him to the ground. His first words were, "It comes from above." The bystanders laughed and thought he must be out of his senses, for, of course, it could not fall from below; but they did not understand him. A minute after, the wind bore off an entire roof in the same street, which crushed three men to death. Had Little Peter gone on, he would, probably, have been at that moment just where the roof fell.

Another time, a gentleman employed him to carry a letter to a town, bidding him make all haste. On his way he tried to spring over a ditch, but it was so wide that he fell into it and was nearly drowned. The letter was lost in the mud, and could not be recovered. The gentleman was

angry when Little Peter told him of the loss, and drove him out of doors with his whip. "It comes from above," said Peter, as he stood on the steps. The next day the gentleman sent for him. "See here," said he, "there are two half-crowns for you for tumbling into the ditch. Circumstances have now so changed that it would have been a loss to me had that letter gone safely."

I could tell you much more about Peter. When he had become a great boy he was still called "Little Peter." A rich gentleman who came into the town, having heard his story, sent for him, in order to give him something. When Little Peter entered the room, the gentleman said, "What think you, Peter; why have I sent for you?"

"It comes from above," replied Peter.

This answer greatly pleased the gentleman. After thinking awhile, he said, "You are right; I will take you into my service, and provide well for you. Will you agree to that?"

"It comes from above," still answered Peter; "God is very good to me; I will gladly go with you."

So the gentleman took him away. It was a good thing for the poor boy, who had been taught no trade. Long afterwards, we learned that when his master died, he left him a large sum of money to carry on the business; and that "Little Peter" was then a wealthy man in Birmingham. But he still said of every occurrence, "It comes from above!"

TEMPTATION RESISTED.

A STORY ABOUT HONESTY.

WHEW! how the wind was blowing! Around the street corners, rattling sign-boards, and roaring down chimneys, and bearing upon its unseen wings millions of tiny snow-flakes.

"Wouldn't it be fun, though, to travel about like one of these?" thought Herbert, brushing away the melting, plummy particles of snow from his face and eyes. Right on through the dark night, with its storm and cold, the brave boy went trudging; intent upon an errand with which his father had intrusted him.

The gas lamps winked, and shoot out uncertain flames of light; for there still remained a wide black roofing of sky hiding every star. Now he entered a handsome street, brilliant with gay shop windows, whose various stores were displayed in tempting profusion.

Herbert paused before a book shop, charmed by the array of volumes, edged and lettered with gold.

"Oh, if I had money!" whispered the boy to himself, "such a library as I would collect! I should care more for books and pictures than anything else, I think." And he bent nearer an engraving lying just within the window, a sweet tender face, with that smile of lip and eye which his dead mother's had worn. Several minutes passed as Herbert stood looking.

At length, with a start, he hurried on, nor had he gone far when a sudden gust snatched the cap from his curly head, and sent it spinning down the side walk, Herbert following after in close pursuit.

"Was ever such a plague?" he cried, catching and settling it in its former place. In stooping to regain the cap, a paper parcel lying near attracted his attention.

"Halloo! what's this?"

The boy stepped beneath a lamp to examine his prize; the string confining it had loosened, and the contents were slipping out. Books! new and shining in holiday dress.

"Isn't this a windfall. Of course, in so large a city I shall never find the owner."

The tempter suggested this to Herbert's first thought, but he was not doomed long to remain in suspense as to the rightful claimant; turning it over he read upon the wrapper in plain characters, "William Maylie, Esq." The very merchant whom Herbert knew.

"Well, I have another walk to take this stormy evening," our hero reflected, rather soberly. "I must carry this to Mr Maylie's house in Russell Square; there is no help for it!"

"Stop a moment, Herbert," pleaded a stealthy voice. "*Why* must you be at so much trouble for a bundle of books which Mr Maylie can easily replace!"

"No, no! Herbert, remember your promise!" And now the tones were altered, and the darkness formed a back ground for the shining of a pure,

transparent face, while again the voice seemed to whisper, "Remember!"

Then his thoughts went back to the chamber where she had died, with almost her last breath enjoining upon him a petition which should be his shield from all coming trial: "Lead us not into temptation." With this reflection his strength returned.

* * * * *

"Can I see Mr Maylie?"

A rosy-faced, bright-looking boy stood in the vestibule, as the servant opened the door of a mansion in Russell Square.

"Yes," answered the man, good-naturedly; "though he is very busy just now. Come in!"

Such a change from the outer to that inner world of warmth and luxury! Herbert seated himself in a comfortable hall chair as directed, gazing about him in a bewildered way. Why, this was like the air-castles he had built, hour after hour, lying in his little, low-roofed chamber, where the moon remembered him in her lonely track, and stopped to make even the dingy walls and clumsy furniture beautiful as for a king's palace! Soft carpets upon the floor, and marble statuary looking down from above, and through two or three half open doors a glimpse of long, rich drawing-rooms, occupied by many people.

"This way, my little man," said the tall servant, returning and leading Herbert to another part of the house. It was the library door before which he paused, saying respectfully, as he threw it open,

"This is the lad, sir."

“ Ah, Herbert ! is it you ? ” Mr Maylie extended his hand kindly to the boy, whom he had frequently noticed as being active and industrious. “ What brings you out such a terrible night ? ”

“ This, sir, ” said Herbert, handing the parcel, and exclaiming how he had chanced to discover it.

“ Sure enough ! ” exclaimed the gentleman, glancing at his overcoat thrown hastily upon a couch. “ I was obliged to write some letters directly upon returning, and had not thought of my purchase, though, ” he added, laughing, “ I presume my children would have taken me severely to task, if I had neglected it altogether. ” Then meeting the wishful glance roving over his well-filled book-shelves, he asked—

“ Are you fond of reading, my boy ? ”

“ Oh, sir, I cannot tell you how I like it ! ”

“ And did you not want to keep these handsome volumes ? ” lifting one by one the treasures which had cost Herbert so severe a struggle.

The keen yet kindly eyes were fixed upon his, and the boy answered frankly, “ Yes, sir, very much. ”

“ And what prevented you doing so ? ” inquired Mr Maylie, pleased with his straightforward replies.

“ The thought of my dear mother, ” faltered Herbert, after a pause. “ And my prayer, too, the Lord’s prayer, you know, ‘ Lead us not into temptation. ’ ”

Herbert’s gaze was fixed upon the carpet ; he did not, therefore, perceive the shadow creeping

over the face of the strong man before him, nor, if he had, would he have suspected its source.

Only the day before, a moment of fierce temptation had beset this upright Christian merchant; and he, too, might have fallen but for the restraining power of that petition.

"It is a blessed prayer, Herbert," said Mr Maylie, thoughtfully. "I am glad you have tested it."

In one of the drawing-rooms which Herbert had noticed, a group of children were romping and laughing with a tall young man, whom they called "Uncle Harry."

"Now for a story, please; there's a good fellow!" said one, coaxingly. "You have been all over the world, and must have a tremendous stock on hand."

"Yes, indeed! a story, Uncle Harry," cried many voices.

About his chair the little ones clambered, clinging to his neck and seated upon his lap.

"Let it be a *dood* real story," whispered Fanny—"Little Bunch," as her brothers called her.

"Here comes papa," interrupted one of the audience, as Mr Maylie entered, just in time to tell his story of the boy.

So while our friend Herbert enjoyed his treat in the cosy and quiet room, Mr Maylie repeated to a group of eager listeners the history of that night's struggle and triumph.

"What shall we give to Herbert?" Mr Maylie asked.

"A book," said one.

“And I would give him my dolly, with eyes that open and shut,” put in Fanny, anxiously; “only the wire is broken, and one eye is always open, and the other always shut!”

A general laugh greeted this generous proposal, and then the question was seriously discussed.

“I think,” said the father at last, decisively, “it will be best to give Herbert a book, and I will see what can be done towards securing him a situation where he will be able to attend school.”

And upon that, Mr Maylie returned to the library, and laid before the astonished lad a large and handsome volume, on the fly leaf of which was written,

“UPRIGHTNESS REWARDED.

“HERBERT R——,

“A New Year’s gift from his friend,

“WILLIAM MAYLIE.”

Herbert returned to his home a happy boy, because *when tempted to do wrong he had prayed, and found strength to resist.* “Blessed is he that endureth temptation.”

LEWIS BROWN ; OR, THE POWER OF EXAMPLE.

LEWIS BROWN had kind parents, who set him a good example, and endeavoured to instruct him according to God’s Word. Instead, however, of profiting from the lessons he received, he fre-

quently caused his parents much unhappiness by his naughty conduct. He was idle and disobedient, did not always speak the truth, and on several occasions took what was not his own.

One day, Mrs Brown made a sweet cake, which she put away in the cupboard, the key of which she kept in her work-basket. Lewis saw the cake when it was taken out of the oven. It looked very tempting indeed. He tried very hard to find out where his mother had put it, but all in vain.

By and by, his mother went out to see a neighbour, and Lewis thought he would try the cupboard; so he took the key from his mother's basket, and crept softly into the dining-room, opened the door of the cupboard, and there was the plate of cake. He took two pieces; one of which he ate, and the other he put in his pocket.

He then placed the pieces so as to make the plate look as it did before, very carefully locked the door again, brushed up all the crumbs, and put the key where he found it.

After dinner, Lewis was drinking at the table, and the water fell upon his clothes. He suddenly pulled out his handkerchief to wipe it off, and two or three large crumbs of cake fell upon the carpet. His little sister, about a year and a half old, picked up one of them, and called out, "*cate! cate!*" for she could not speak plain enough to say *cake*. This led Mrs Brown to examine into the matter, and so Lewis was found out. His father and mother were much shocked and grieved. They saw that Lewis was forming very wicked habits, and they prayed that God would teach

them what was best to do with their naughty child. He was, of course, severely punished for taking the cake ; but his father was very anxious to impress on his mind the danger of forming sinful habits, which would grow with his growth, and strengthen with his strength, until they would bind him, as with iron chains, in the service of wickedness. At last he thought of a plan by which he hoped, under the Divine blessing, to teach his little son this important lesson.

In the orchard, not far from Mr Brown's house, there was a young tree ; but it was so crooked, that he had more than once determined to cut it down. Close by were some young pear-trees, which were remarkable for their straight and beautiful appearance. Mr Brown directed his men to take an axe, with some stakes and ropes, and go down into the orchard, to see if they could not straighten that crooked tree. And he told Peter the gardener, to go down at the same time, and put some more fastenings upon the pear-trees. His object, in all this, was to teach Lewis a lesson.

After they had been gone a short time, Mr Brown saw Lewis running from the barn to the house, and he called to him,—“ Come, Lewis, my boy, let us go down to the orchard, and see how Peter and the men get on with their work ; we shall have time enough before school begins.”

When they arrived at the orchard, they first saw Peter tying cords round the pear-trees, and fastening them to the stakes, which were driven into the ground by the side of the trees. It

seems, that when they were little trees, they were fastened in this way near the ground, to keep them straight, and to prevent the wind from blowing them to and fro and loosening the roots. As the trees grew up they were fastened in the same way, higher and higher, till, by and by, they were strong and firm enough to need no such security. Some of them were so much inclined to grow crooked, that they had to put three stakes down, and fasten them on all sides, but by beginning *early*, and keeping a constant watch, even these were kept straight.

"These pear-trees seem to be doing well, Peter. They shoot up very straight and strong," said Mr Brown.

"Yes, they promise very well, sir," replied Peter. "We have had to strain them up pretty close to the stakes; *but it's the only way*, Mr Brown. They must be taken near the ground, when *a bit of twine* will hold them, and be followed up till they get out of reach. It's the only way, sir."

They went on a little farther, and there were the two men at work on the crooked tree. They had a long stake on this side, and a short one on that; here one rope, and there another; but all to no purpose. Indeed, they were surprised to think that Mr Brown should send them to do such a piece of work.

When Lewis and his father came up to the crooked tree, one of the men was just saying to the other, "IT WILL NEVER DO; we *can't* straighten it, and may as well let it alone."

"Ah!" said Mr Brown, "do you give it up? Can't you brace it up on one side, and then on the other, and make it look better?"

"Oh no, sir," said one of the men, "it's too late to ~~make~~ anything of it but firewood. All the rigging of the navy could not make that tree straight."

"I see it," said Mr Brown, "and yet a bit of twine applied in season, and followed up with the growth of the tree, would have made it as straight as those pear-trees yonder. Well, men, you can go to your mowing."

"I did not expect them to do anything with that tree, my son," said Mr Brown, turning to his little boy, "but I wanted to teach you a lesson. You are now a little twig. Your mother and I want you to become a straight, tall, and useful tree. Our commands and prohibitions are the little cords of twine that we tie around you to gird you up.

"Prisons and penitentiaries are the ropes and chains upon crooked trees, which were not guided wisely when they were twigs. We see that you are disposed to grow crooked. If you are not kept straight *now*, you certainly will not be likely to grow straight by and by. If you form evil habits *now*, they will become stronger and stronger, till nothing can break them. If, while you are a green and tender sprout, we cannot guide you, we surely cannot expect to do it when you become a strong and sturdy tree. But if we do all we can to guide you in the right way *now*, we may hope for God's blessing upon our labours, and that He

will, for Christ's sake, keep you from the evil that is in the world, and make you a wise, useful, and happy man."

We trust that Mr Brown's excellent lesson will do good to many of our readers.

GEORGE SINCLAIR.

A STORY ABOUT CRUELTY.

LITTLE George Sinclair was ten years of age. He was a very well disposed boy, obeyed his parents in all things, and had his lessons always ready ; he was attentive to what was said to him, as a boy should be, but he had one great fault—he was cruel, he delighted in tormenting and torturing every animal that came in his way. He would pull the wings and legs off the flies on the window, hurt and stone any poor frog he saw, throw water on the cat, frighten the hens from the farmyard, and beat his little dog Tiny so cruelly that the animal quite lost his spirit.

It was then that the Crimean war was at its height. Georgie was always talking of the soldiers, and playing at being one. He had a tin sword, and a drum, and a funny little helmet with a plume of horse hair, and all day long he would march about the garden pretending to be a British soldier, and cutting at the bushes for Russians.

One day, when he was thus amusing himself, Mr Sinclair came into the garden and called him.

Georgie ran up. His father's face was very grave. "I am sorry that my son is such a coward," he said.

Georgie was quite speechless with astonishment. He a coward, when he wanted to be a soldier, and fight for his country!

"Yes," continued Mr Sinclair, "my son is a coward, for he hurts those that are weak and unable to defend themselves. Here I find Tiny quite lame from a beating you gave him this morning, and the nurse says it is a thing of constant recurrence. And who has killed the toad that was kept in the strawberry beds, to eat the insects; eh, George?"

Now Georgie, with all his faults, never told a lie. He burst into tears, and said, "It was I, papa; but I did not know the toad was useful for anything."

"And this is the little boy who wants to be a brave soldier!" said Mr Sinclair. "George, you have seriously displeased me, and, what is far worse, you have offended your Father in heaven by your cruelty. Give me those playthings; they were meant for a good boy. And go and say good-bye to Tiny. I shall send him away at once to your cousin, for you are not fit to own him any longer."

So Georgie lost his little dog, and could no longer play at soldiers; besides which, he was in sad disgrace all day, and felt very unhappy. In the evening Mr Sinclair called him into his study, and talked to him very seriously. He showed him how wicked it is in the sight of a good God

to hurt any of His creatures ; how little man deserves God's mercy, and how merciful he should be in his turn ; how useful every grade of creation is, and how necessary to the wants of mankind. Then, when Georgie felt how wicked he had been, his father knelt down with him, and asked God to forgive him for his sin. Afterwards they had a long conversation on the nature and habits of the animals that Georgie had tormented. He was told of the sacred toads of Egypt, of their beautiful eyes ; of the habits of dogs ; of the Esquimaux, with their dog-sledges ; the monks of St Bernard, with their hounds trained to rescue travellers ; and many other stories. And for several evenings after, Georgie continued to hear accounts of the birds and beasts, and he got so interested that his father believed he was quite cured of his evil propensity ; but, inasmuch as Mr Sinclair wished the lesson to be a deep one, he would not let Tiny come back, but accepted instead a large Newfoundland dog from a neighbour, and had a new kennel built for him in Tiny's corner of the yard.

“And I caution you, for your own sake, not to ill-use him,” he said to Georgie, “for Rover will not bear it as Tiny did.”

One would have thought, after this, that Georgie would take great care to treat all the animals about him as he ought to do ; and so, for many weeks, he did. Rover, especially, he made great friends with, and grew quite consoled for the loss of poor Tiny. But in a short time the effects of his father's teaching wore away, and his old habit

began again to show itself. One day, when Rover lay blinking lazily in the hot sunshine, Georgie begged a few scraps of meat for him from the cook, and began to throw them, one by one, into the dog's huge mouth, as it opened, with lazy condescension, to receive them. Suddenly the idea struck him to see how Rover liked cayenne pepper. Georgie had himself been burnt by some the day before, and one would have thought his own pain would have prevented his giving it to Rover ; but no. He ran to the dining-room, took the cruets off the sideboard, and completely covered a large piece of meat with mustard and cayenne pepper. Then, coming back to Rover, who, supposing the meat was all done, had composed himself to sleep, "Catch, Rover," he said. So Rover opened his mouth as usual, and away went the mustard and pepper down his throat.

Poor Rover ! he was dreadfully hurt. Big tears rolled out of his eyes ; and he coughed, and wheezed, and rolled over with pain, till Georgie was quite frightened, and would have given a good deal not to have played his cruel joke ; but it was too late now. Their friendship was broken from that moment. Rover would never come near, or follow, or play with him any more. He would not touch a piece of meat from his hand, and stalked away, growling, if Georgie attempted to pat him. Mr Sinclair noticed the alteration, but Georgie said nothing on the matter.

Winter had come on now, and there was a heavy fall of snow for several days together. All the country was covered with it. One morning, hav-

ing got permission, Georgie ran merrily off for a long walk across the fields. Rover would not follow him ; so he went alone. When he had got a mile or two from home, he fell suddenly into a deep hole, which had got filled with snow to the level of the ground. For a moment he was stunned ; and when he recovered he found that one of his ankles was badly hurt. The sides of the pit were too high for him to climb out ; there was no road near ; the air was bitterly cold, and, moreover, he could scarcely stand. He called and shrieked for aid, but none came. He tried to clamber out, but only fell back again, making his ankle so painful that he could scarcely bear it. Hour after hour went on, and he thought of the stories he had read of people being frozen to death ; and then it struck him what a naughty boy he had been, and his cruelty and disobedience came to his mind ; and there, in the cold snow, Georgie prayed God to forgive him and help him, as his parents had taught him to pray ; and God did help him, for there, as he looked up, was Rover's black nose peering down upon him from above. Oh ! how he laughed, and cried, "Dear Rover ! Dear old dog ! O Rover, I am so glad to see you !" And Rover whined and wagged his tail with joy, too. Then Georgie stood up, and tried to reach him ; and when he could not, he threw up his handkerchief, and the sagacious animal caught it with his teeth, and pulled back to see if he could get Georgie up ; but it was too steep, and Rover slipped down into the pit, too. How warm he was, and how soon the blood began to circulate

again in Georgie's frozen veins, as Rover rolled over him with his shaggy coat.

At last Rover made a desperate bound and got out again, and ran away as hard as he could. Georgie knew he had gone home to fetch assistance, and he was not afraid any longer. Soon the faithful dog came back, and with him Mr Sinclair and the men-servants, all very much alarmed; and they lifted Georgie out, and carried him to a warm bed, where he lay several days, from the effects of the cold and his sprained ankle. Then he learnt how Rover, when he saw them searching for him, had gone off of his own accord, and must have tracked him all the way to the place where he fell. And this was the way that the poor dog returned good for evil.

Georgie is now grown up, but he never forgot the lesson he had learnt. He never ill-treated any of God's creatures from that time. Rover is very old, but a great pet; and whenever George sees a little boy tormenting a dumb animal, he calls him to his side, and tells him the tale of *Rover's revenge*.

BY-AND-BY.

A LESSON ABOUT PROCRASTINATION.

A POOR woman was anxious to get her son—a little boy—into the famous free school at E——.

“You must make application soon,” said she to him, one morning.

"Oh yes, mother, by-and-by," answered the boy.

By-and-by he wrote. But by that time the list of applicants was full, and he was too late.

A rich doctor wanted a boy to look after his horse. "Offer your services," said the mother.

"Oh yes, mother, by-and-by," said the boy.

"Go to-night," prayed the mother.

"By-and-by," replied the boy.

The next morning he went, but another boy had been engaged the evening before. He was too late.

A great merchant was fitting out a ship. "You had better apply for a boy's berth," again urged the mother.

"Oh yes," answered the boy, "by-and-by."

"Now, or you may fail," said his mother.

"Time enough by-and-by; the keel is not in the sea yet," replied the boy. When the keel was in the sea the boy applied for a berth. "Hands are all shipped," was the answer. He was too late.

"Ah, child," said the old grandmother in the chimney corner, "remember this, 'By the street of By-and-by, we arrive at the house of Never.'"

Our young readers cannot be too careful in avoiding the bad and dangerous habit of procrastination,—of putting off the performance of little duties from time to time, giving trifling reasons, and very often no reasons at all, for delaying. So long as they are young, the effect of such procrastination may not be very serious, but, "by-and-by," when they grow up to be men and

women, and go out to fight their way through the world, as all must do, such habits, acquired almost unconsciously, may prove stumbling-blocks in their path of progress, which will mar their happiness both in this world and in the next.

To show the great value of the lesson which we are anxious to teach, we will mention an incident in history, which will both show how important it is in life, and also impress on the minds of our young friends, that the best laid plans, the fortunes of individuals, the prosperity of nations, honour, happiness, and even life itself are often sacrificed through this evil habit of procrastination, or being behind time.

A great battle was going on. Column after column of military had been precipitated for eight hours on the enemy, posted on the ridge of a hill. The summer sun was sinking to the west; reinforcements for the obstinate defenders were already in sight. It was necessary to carry the position with one final charge, or everything would be lost. . . . A powerful force had been summoned from across the country, and if it came up by a certain time all would yet be right. The great conqueror, confident in its arrival, formed his reserve into an attacking column, and led them down the hill. . . . The world knows the result. Grouchy failed to appear; the imperial guard was beaten back; Waterloo was lost! Napoleon died a prisoner at St Helena because one of his marshals **WAS BEHIND TIME.**

There's a little mischief-making
Elfin, who is ever nigh,
Thwarting every undertaking,
And his name is "By-and-by."
What we ought to do this minute,
Will be better done, he'll cry,
If to-morrow we begin it—
"Put it off," says "By-and-by."

Those who heed his treacherous wooing
Will his faithless guidance rue ;
What we always put off doing,
Clearly we shall never do.
We shall reach what we endeavour
If on "*Now*" we more rely,
But into the realms of "*NEVER*,"
Leads the pilot "*By-and-by*."

DREAMING AND WORKING.

ARTHUR ARCHER and Luke Linger were cousins, and were both of the same age. They went to the same school, and began to learn arithmetic in the same quarter. Two years passed away, by which time Arthur had finished Practice, while Luke was scarcely able to work a sum in Division.

When the holidays came, and the prizes were given, Arthur Archer received a nicely bound volume of natural history ; while Luke Linger

was so low in good marks as not to be entitled to any reward.

"How vexing it is!" said Luke; "I really *meant* to have got forward, but somehow everything is against me."

"That excuse will not do, Master Linger," said his teacher; "it is quite plain to me that you have not done your best. While others were working, you were idling away your time. You must persevere, Luke, if you intend to be a scholar. Learning will not drop into a dreamer's mouth."

Arthur and Luke had an uncle, Farmer Hodges, who invited them to spend a week at his house in their midsummer holidays. As they lived in a town, they looked forward to the expected visit in the country with great delight.

Uncle Hodges was an old-fashioned farmer. He wore a red waistcoat, always rose with the lark, worked as hard as any labourer in his fields, and never was absent from his pew on Sunday. And then, too, he was a kind-hearted and truly Christian man.

On the first morning of their visit at the farm, their uncle took them into his rick-yard and orchard; showed them his new barn; and pointed out the finest of his horses, cows, and sheep. He then promised that if they could get up early the next morning he would take them to Brook Meadow, where the haymakers were busy at work; and then, perhaps, for a ride to Hightop Hill.

On the morrow Arthur was up and ready before the clock struck six, and was down in the farm-

yard looking at the pigeons as they flew around the old elm-trees, until Uncle Hodges joined him. They waited some time for Luke, but as he did not make his appearance, they set off without him.

Luke lay dreaming in bed till nearly seven, and when he got up he seemed in no hurry to make his way down-stairs. At length he appeared, and went out into the cross road to see if he could find his uncle and Arthur ; but before he walked a hundred yards he saw them on their way home, both mounted on ponies. They had first been to the hay fields, and afterwards had taken a pleasant ride. Luke Linger at once saw that by his delay he had lost a treat, while Arthur Archer had got a good appetite for his breakfast, and a fresh glow of health on his cheek.

“How vexed I am, uncle!” cried Luke ; “I quite *meant* to have gone with you to the hay-fields.”

“It is all very well, Luke,” said Farmer Hodges, “so far as it goes, to intend doing a thing ; but a bushel of good intentions is not worth a penny unless they end in good actions.”

This was not the only time during the visit that the farmer found out the failing and folly of his nephew, in wishing when he should have been acting, and dreaming when he should have been doing.

One afternoon Farmer Hodges found Arthur and Luke on a seat in the garden, talking rather loudly.

“Well, my lads, what is the matter now ?”

"Why, uncle," replied Luke, "I was only saying that I wish I had a large farm of my own, with a garden and orchard, and sheep and horses, and plenty of men to do the work for me."

"Dreaming and wishing again!" said the farmer. "That way won't do, Luke; you must try another. Idle wishes are all like weeds, which sometimes show their heads on my land; but I root them out, for they would soon spoil my profits."

"You see these hay-ricks. Do you think that by wishing, I could ever have got them here? No! the scythe, the rake, and the hay fork were set to work. We were at it early and late, and made hay while the sun shone; and here the ricks are."

"Look at those piles of corn in the barn yonder. They are part of last year's crop. There are no better in the parish: but how did they all come there? It was not by dreaming about it. I ploughed and sowed, and in the proper season set to work with the sickle. God, in His goodness, gave the shower and the sunshine; and the corn is now safe in the barn, and will soon be carried to market."

"Look at those pease at the bottom of the garden. If I had not sown them early in the spring, and seen well to them, they would not have yielded such a supply for our table as they do."

"The path along the lane you see yonder was nothing but mud and mire in wet weather, so that it was not passable. Some of the farmers said that it would be a good thing if a few loads of

stones and gravel were thrown upon it. Others declared that they had been thinking for a long time of proposing to the parish to have it put to rights. And one or two said that they *meant*, some time or other, to attend to the matter themselves, so that it might be no longer a discredit to the village.

“Thus it went for years; yet nothing was done; it even got worse and worse. Then one day I called my men to follow me, and to work we went; and before the week was over, the old lane looked as clean and was as passable as the high road, along which we took our morning ride.

“I think, then, Luke, that it is quite clear, if anything is to be done, it should be done without delay; and we must be diligent, whatever we take in hand, whether we be schoolboys or farmers.”

As Uncle Hodges spoke in his usual kind and cheerful way, the heart of Luke was touched, and he, as well as Arthur, listened with much attention. They now left the garden and went into the house to tea.

That evening, as the farmer opened his large print Bible at family worship, he said, looking the same time at his nephews:—

“If wishing and intending be a bad plan for the things of this world, it is still worse for the great concerns of the world to come. ‘The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing.’ I hope, my dear lads, that you will not only be true Christians, but active ones. The sum of all

I have to tell you is this—Fall not into the habit of being idle, either in earthly or heavenly things. Show that you belong, not to the family of dreamers, but to the noble band of *doers* of good things.”

THE PAINTED SHIELD.

WALTER MURRAY had a long talk one day with his grandfather about the little shields that are painted on carriage-doors, and carved on halls, and set up over monuments in churches. His grandfather told him the names of some of the curious marks upon them, and explained how in olden time warriors had such marks on their dresses, and shields, and banners, so that when their faces were hid by their helmets their friends might still know them. Mr Leslie also told him how these signs had come down from father to son; and how there were rules for arranging the marks, and putting them together. “Most of them,” he said, “are like a picture, which tell of some great deed done by those who first wore them; and the motto, that goes with each of them, generally tells of the character which was sought after by the man who first took those words for his own. The marks are like so many letters in an alphabet; and those who have learned them well, can read off all that a man’s shield tells us about the life of his forefathers.”

Walter thought that all this was very curious,

and that he would one day like to learn these marks. But he thought that first he would make a fancy-shield for himself, as his grandfather proposed. Walter used often to amuse himself by making his own rough toys, and he had a room in which he did what he called his "carpentering." Having asked for some book in which he could find a good pattern, he went off to his tool-room; and after having tried once or twice, he managed to cut a large piece of wood into the right shape. When he had done this, he went to show it to his grandfather.

"Now I must paint it," said Walter; "what colours must I have, I wonder?"

"I don't think you have earned a right yet to any colours at all. The Northern nations used to send out their young soldiers with a white shield, which was called 'the shield of expectation;' and they were not allowed to have any other than plain white, till they had done some noble deed, and gained themselves a good name. Ought not you to paint yours white?"

"But I don't want to have mine only a 'shield of expectation,' as they called it. I want to think what I should like to be, and paint the shield at once with an emblem for just what I *am* to be."

"You must make a good choice, then. Don't be in too great a hurry."

"I'll think about it, and I won't make up my mind till to-morrow."

The next morning he came back to the library. "Grandpapa, I've been talking to several people about what I should paint on my shield. I spoke

first to Hobbs's son, when I came across him in the garden, and I told him (as well as I could) all you had been explaining to me. I showed him my shield. 'What would you put on it, if it were yours?' I asked him. He looked as stupid as usual, but at last he said, 'If I was you, then, I'd put a ship.' Wasn't that like him? He is always dreaming about the sea. But my taste doesn't lie that way!—Dry land for me! I wasn't made for a sailor!—Then I went to Aunt Mary, and asked her whether she didn't think a wool-sack would do, for you know I should like to be Lord Chancellor some day; and the red cushion would come out so well on the white, wouldn't it?"

"What did Aunt Mary say?"

"She thought I had better put a ladder, and a long one too, she said; for I must climb up, before ever I can get so high. But a ladder would look very ugly! I really think the woolsack would be best, don't you?"

"Let me tell you a story first," answered Mr Leslie. "I was reading it in a poem a few days ago. It is about one who, like you, was planning out for himself a coat-of-arms, as it is called. The device he chose was an eagle rising towards the sun; and for his motto he took, 'I follow fame.'"

"Oh! that was glorious! wasn't it!"

"Stop a bit. Listen to what the poet says next;—I have just found the place. I'll read it to you:—

‘—Speaking not, but leaning over him,
I took his brush, and blotted out the bird,
And made a gardener putting in a graff;
With this for motto, “Rather use than Fame.”
You should have seen him blush! but afterwards
He made a stalwart knight!’—

What do you say to that, Walter?”

“Why, I think there’s use as well as fame in being Lord Chancellor. A Lord Chancellor can do a great deal of good!”

“And which were you thinking of, my boy, the use or the fame? can you tell me *that*?”

Walter might well blush as the young knight had done, for Walter’s conscience told him that he had been thinking *only* of the fame. He had never been used to look into his motives. He had often asked himself whether he was doing right or wrong; but he had never stopped to think *why* he did this, or that, or the other.

Mr Leslie did not wish to say more about this. He knew Walter would think over it, for he saw that the boy understood it and felt it; so he cheerfully said, “Well, is it to be the woosack?”

“Can you think of something that would be better, grandpapa?”

“It seems to me, Walter, you’re hardly old enough yet to know which way you may lean when the time comes for you really to choose. All you can do now is to make honey, and store it up. Suppose you were to take a bee for your emblem;—the pattern of industry,”——

“Or the ant? isn't the ant an emblem of industry?”

“It is; but I was going to say, the bee is a pattern of industry *and* fidelity. The ant, you know, ‘has no guide, overseer, or ruler;’ the bee owes allegiance to the queen of the hive. You, my boy, are ‘under tutors and governors;’ which will suit you best, then—the bee or the ant?”

“Oh, the bee, no doubt of it. Can you lend me a book that I may draw it nicely? I should make an odd-looking one, if I hadn't a copy.”

“I think I can find you a book. Will you have only one bee, or more?”

“I hadn't thought of that.”

“What do you say to having three?”

“Why three, grandpapa?”

“I think it would have a meaning.”

“How so?”

“It would remind you that you have yet to make your choice between the three professions.”

“What do you mean by the three professions?”

“The calling of the lawyer, of the physician, and of the preacher.”

“Can't I be anything else?”

“To be sure you may; but the kind of education you are having is such as will most likely make you wish to choose between those three.”

“And that is why you would have me put so many on my shield,—one for each—because I don't yet know which!”

“Exactly so. Be industrious and faithful now; that will help to prepare you for one or

other of the three (or for any other honourable calling) in due time."

"And how shall I put them? all in a row?"

"The usual way is to put them in a double row, two on the top line, and one below."

"Oh, that would look very nice!"

"And, if you like, you can let the shield itself be blue, the colour of hope;—how would that do?"

Walter thanked his grandfather, and hastened away to his work. While he was busy with it, he was thinking of a motto. He could not find a good one at first; but all at once he remembered the lines,

"How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour!"

"*Improve the hour!*" he said to himself; "that will do for my motto!" Mr Leslie thought he had chosen well.

When the paint was dry, Walter took his shield, and showed it to Jack Hobbs, the gardener's son, and told him what it meant. Then he carried it into his little study, and fixed it up over the door, that he might see it when he was learning his lessons.

Walter Murray often looks at his painted shield, and thinks of his motto. He does not yet know what he is to be, for his school days are not over; but he is in the right road to success and usefulness.

THE LIGHT IN THE WINDOW.

"MOTHER, I will be everything to you that I can be ; I promise you that."

A look of high resolve made the young brow man-like in expression. Not yet had ten summers deepened the gold on those fair locks. His earnest blue eye looked fondly in the faded face that bent over him. There was a world of love in his soul—a love that was not only lip-deep, but was proved by acts of self-denial.

They were poor, that mother and son ; oh, how poor they were ! But, in holy heart-love, they possessed untold riches. Yes, out of their bank in heaven, they drew every day, every hour, uncounted treasure.

He had just secured a situation in a shop about five miles from where they lived. It was but a small pittance ; but, of late, the mother had grown so feeble that she could earn nothing.

The boy was to have his meals with his employer, and could, if he chose, sleep there. But he did not choose. For a glad smile from mother ; for a pressure of that feeble hand ; for the tender, Christian words that came from those pale lips, he was willing, after his day's work, to walk home, dark and tedious though the way was. When he earned any trifle extra, he brought home some little delicacy to his mother, and which was sweet to the invalid, because he brought it.

One night the widow looked from her window, and said, as she saw the twilight deepening ear-

lier than its wont, "He will not come to-night." So, quite confident that he would not venture in that storm, she read her Bible till her heart kindled with the holy words, and, putting out her light, went to rest.

She knew not how long she had slept, when a voice awakened her. The voice, so dear to her, was crying, "Mother! mother!" Instantly rising, she groped for a light, unfastened the door, and there stood her son, covered with mire from head to foot. His face was wet, but the honest, happy smile was noways abated.

"My boy! how could you come on such a night?" exclaimed the widow.

"Why, mother, storm couldn't keep me from you! I lost my way, got into a creek, and it must be midnight; but I meant to come, for my master gave me a trifle to-night, and I knew how much you needed it."

"My dear boy!" sprang from the mother's full heart, as the silent tears trickled down her pale cheeks.

"I wonder I haven't thought of it before," she said, musingly. "After this I'll put a light in the window. It won't show far; but it will be pleasant for you to see it, and know that I am watching for you."

For three years the lamp was placed in the window every night; and, "as bright as mother Locke's little window," became a favourite saying.

At the end of that time, the widow's son was offered a place on board of a vessel, and he accepted of it. It cost him none knew what a

struggle, to part from the being he loved, with an almost worshipful affection. But the time had come when he must go forth into the world to do battle for himself and for her, and a sailor's life seemed to open up the way.

"It seems to me," said the fond mother, when, with a deep sigh, she parted from him, "as if I must still put the light in the window. I shall think sometimes I hear the fall of your footsteps, the click of the latch, your pleasant voice. O my son, my son, if I could but light you over the stormy waters!"

"Mother, God will do that," said he, pointing to the glowing heavens. "God will light me through storm and through calm: but, mother, I shall think every night that the lamp is in the window; that you sit near it; that somebody blesses you for the guiding ray; and, above all, that you are praying for me."

The long voyage was nearly ended; but another voyage was to end before that. The widow was taken ill. And, as she lay helplessly upon her bed, and the neighbours came in to care for her, she would say, "Put the lamp in the window; my son will be thinking of it."

Night after night, and even until her eyes grew dim, she would watch the radiance of the flickering light, only saying, sometimes, "Shall I live to hear his footsteps? Will that feeble flame still burn, when my life's light has gone out?"

She lay quietly; a smile upon her lips, her eyes closed, her hands folded.

"I have longed to see him," she said; "I have

prayed earnestly, but I have given it all up now. I shall not meet him in this world."

"Have you put the light in the window?" she asked, suddenly, earnestly, a few moments after. "It is growing dark."

Alas! it was not the light that was growing dark.

Her hands grew cold. Over her countenance came that mysterious shadow that falls but once on any mortal face.

"O my son! my son!" she whispered, "tell him"—they bent lower to catch the failing words—"tell him I will put a light in the window of heaven, to guide his footsteps there."

The thrilling sentence was hardly spoken, when the shadow dropped from the suffering face, and it smiled in the calm majesty of death.

Not many days after, a ship came into the port of a busy city. Among all those who stepped from her decks, none were more hopeful, more joyous, than the widow's son. He had passed through the ordeal of a sea life, so far, unscathed. He had kept himself as spotless as if, at every night-fall, his feet had been turned towards the door of his mother's cottage. How his heart bounded as he thought of her! It did not occur to him that, perhaps, her silver locks were lying under the lid of the coffin. Oh no! he only thought of the pleasant light in the window, that her hands had trimmed for him.

Beautiful was the day on which he travelled again the long-accustomed road. How pleasant now to go home with sufficient to provide for the

comfort of that dear mother! She should never want again. He would take her to a better home, and give her the luxuries he had once longed to see in her possession. Hope on, dreamer! Yonder comes one, who trudges on laggingly—a farmer, in heavy boots and frock, his whip in his hand.

“I see you know me,” said the young sailor, smiling. “Well, how is my mother?”

“Your—mother—”

“Yes; is she well? is she expecting me? Of course she is; we’re late by a month, full.”

“Your mother, James, well”—he strikes his whip on the dusty road. How can he crush that happy heart?

“There, you need not speak!” cried the young man, in a voice of sudden anguish; and he buried his face in his hands.

“My poor lad, your mother is—”

“Don’t! don’t!” cried the other, showing now a face from which all colour had fled. “O my mother! my mother!—she is gone, gone—and I coming home so happy!”

For some moments he sobbed as in agony. How dreary the world had grown! The flowers had lost fragrance, the sun warmth; his heart seemed dead.

“James, she left a message for you,” said the farmer, wiping his eyes with his sleeve.

“A message for me?” It seemed as if the white lips could hardly speak.

“Yes. Says she, ‘Tell my son that I will put a light in the window of heaven, to guide his footsteps there.’”

“Did she, oh, did she say that? God bless you for telling me! All my long voyage, I have thought of the light in her little window. I have seemed to see it streaming along, till it grew brighter and brighter as I drew nearer. A light in the window of heaven? Yes, mother, I will think still you are waiting for me. I could not see you in these long years, but I knew the light was burning. I cannot see you now, but I know the light is burning. I will come, mother!”

Slowly he went to the graveyard, and there he knelt and wept upon her lowly grave. But not there, he thought her. A sweet vision was vouchsafed him. Then he knew that the light was placed in the window of heaven.

Once again he knelt in the room where he had last left her. Nothing was removed; but oh, how much was wanting! There, on the window-sill, stood the lamp—*that* brought the tears afresh. But he took his mother's well-worn Bible, and, kneeling with it in his hand, as if she could hear him, he sought her Saviour, and consecrated himself to a life and work of righteousness. From that cottage he went out into the world, carrying his grief as a sacred memorial; but seeing always wherever his work led him, his waiting mother, and the lamp in the window of heaven.

THERE'S a light in the window for thee, brother,
There's a light in the window for thee;
A dear one has moved to the mansions above,
There's a light in the window for thee.

A mansion in heaven we see,
And a light in the window for thee ;
A mansion in heaven we see,
And a light in the window for thee.

There's a crown, and a robe, and a palm, brother,
When from toil and from care you are free ;
The Saviour has gone to prepare you a home,
With a light in the window for thee.

Oh watch, and be faithful, and pray, brother,
All your journey o'er life's troubled sea ;
Though afflictions assail you and storms beat
severe,
There's a light in the window for thee.

Then on, perseveringly on, brother,
Till from conflict and suffering free ;
Bright angels now beckon you over the stream,
There's a light in the window for thee.

A LESSON FROM A HORSE-SHOE.

A COUNTRYMAN was taking a walk one day with his son Thomas. As they walked along, the father suddenly stopped. "Look!" he said, "There's a bit of iron, a piece of a horse-shoe; pick it up and put it in your pocket."

"Pooh!" answered the child, "it is not worth stooping for." The father, without uttering another word, picked up the iron and put it in his pocket. When they came to a village, he entered

the blacksmith's shop, and sold it for three farthings, and with that sum he bought some cherries. Then the father and son set off again on a ramble. The sun was burning hot, and neither a house, tree, nor fountain of water was in sight. Thomas soon complained of being tired, and had some difficulty in following—his father let fall a cherry, as if by accident. Thomas quickly picked it up and devoured it. A little farther he dropped another, and the boy picked it up as eagerly as ever; and thus they continued, the father dropping the fruit, and the son picking them up. When the last one was eaten, the father stopped, and turning to the boy, said:—

“Look, my son! if you had chosen to stoop once to pick up the horse-shoe, you would not have been obliged to stoop so often to pick up the cherries!” There is a good and pleasant moral in this little anecdote, which may be of benefit to all.

GEORGE STEPHENSON.

A LESSON ON PERSEVERANCE.

IN the little village of Wylam, eight miles from Newcastle, in England, there lived an honest old man by the name of Robert Stephenson. This region is famous for its coal-mines, and Robert was the fireman of an old pumping engine in one of the collieries. He had six children.

The second child was born in June 1781, and was called George. George grew up a very active

boy. He was always on hand to run errands and take care of the younger children, especially to keep them from getting under the wheels of the coal waggons, which passed and repassed his father's cottage, drawn by horses on a rude wooden railway. Schooling he had none. His chief play was to model engines out of clay. At eight, he was cow-boy to a poor widow at twopence a day; a little later, a hoer of potatoes at fourpence a day; then he found jobs at the collieries at sixpence a day. George often helped his father, and at fifteen was promoted to fireman's wages.

The first Saturday of his full wages, he marched out of the foreman's office showing his twelve shillings, and exclaiming, "I am now a made man for life." Not long after, when he had saved his first guinea, "I am now a rich man," he cried, with an honest joy shining in his face. Never did fireman so love his engine. He studied it; he cleaned it; he took it to pieces in order to master all its different parts. It was his pet, and he was never tired of watching and tending it.

At eighteen he could neither read nor write; but when he heard there were books which told all about his engine, and other engines besides, he was determined to learn to read. By resolute perseverance and the expense of three or four pence a week for a year or two on such evening schools as could be had, he acquired as much reading, writing, and arithmetic as served his turn for the time. He was now anxious to rise from the position of engine-man to that of "brakesman." It was a higher kind of colliery labour,

and commanded better pay, from sixteen to twenty shillings a week. With some difficulty, arising from the jealousy of the regular brakesman, he qualified himself for the employment, and got it.

George now married, and had a cottage of his own. Thrifty, sober, and of extraordinary industry, he contrived to eke out his scanty wages by extra work in the evening. He made and mended shoes, cut out the pitmen's clothes, and having once "set to rights" his own clock, soon became widely known as the "best clock doctor in the country."

The industrious husband became a happy father, when his young wife died, leaving one little boy behind. These were sorrowful days for poor George. The little household was broken up; and from this time one of George's chief objects was to save money for the education of his son. For a while fortune seemed to be against him, and he thought of emigrating from this country. Step by step, however, his worth was found out. Though only a brakesman, he had mastered by study the whole round of engineering contrivances in use in the collieries; and one by one opportunities came up for turning his knowledge to account for the benefit of his employers. "Stephenson's skill as an engine doctor," says a friend, "soon became noised abroad, and he was called upon to prescribe remedies for all the old wheezy pumping machines in the neighbourhood."

In 1812 he was appointed engine-wright at Killingworth collieries. Here, during nine years of humble industry, he solved the great problem

of railway locomotion. Every Saturday afternoon, his son Robert used to come over from Newcastle, bringing books from the library of a scientific institution there, and father and son read and studied together. Gradually too he arose from plain "Geordie Steevie," the brakesman and cutter out of pitmen's clothes, to "Mr Stephenson," the colliery engineer.

At Wylam, where he used to live, a rude sort of steam-engine had been contrived to run on the wooden rails before his father's cottage door. The first one which was made flew to pieces before it started ; the next was voted a "perfect plague ;" but Mr Stephenson took every opportunity to go over and see it work, and he very soon thought he could make a much better one. His employers gave him the means, and he built an engine and gave it the name of "Puffing Billy." Puffing Billy did pretty well ; but it was not so much cheaper than horse power, and Stephenson worked incessantly to perfect it.

It took some time, however, to bring the man and the work that waited for him together. Puffing Billy attracted no notice from newspapers or the busy world at large. At length a gentleman from Liverpool, Mr William James, heard of Stephenson's locomotive, and went over to Killingworth to see it. Stephenson was not there ; but the moment Mr James saw it, he exclaimed, "What a revolution in society will that make !"

Now the two English cities, Liverpool and Manchester, have a great deal of business with each other. Manchester is a great manufacturing town,

and receives all its cotton through Liverpool. Cargoes of cotton were brought there in ships, and it cost a great deal of time and money to get it carted to Manchester. Sometimes the workmen had to wait weeks and weeks for it, and a great question was stirring the minds of manufacturers, "What means could be devised to get cotton quicker from Liverpool?"

An answer was now ready : By *railway*. None can now imagine the opposition and sneers which the idea met with. A company, however, was chartered, and Mr Stephenson set to work to put it through. What a battle he had to fight. Dukes and lords set themselves against the horrid iron road with its snorting engines. Science shook her head. "He'll get nothing to run upon it," was the common remark. "Certainly not at twelve miles an hour," said one. "Perfectly impossible," cried a third. "Such speed is gross exaggeration," declared another. In surveying the track for the purpose, the surveyors often had to work in the night with dark lanterns, for fear of the farmers. Stephenson was at the head of the survey, and almost everywhere they were treated as rogues and vagabonds, pelted by stones, barked at by the dogs, chased with pitchforks, mobbed and hooted at. His men were sometimes ready to give up. "What shall we do?" they asked. "*We must persevere,*" was always the calm and steady reply.

The road was built. The locomotive to run on it was built. It was called the Rocket. Mr Stephenson put her on the line, and drove her at

the rate of *thirty miles an hour*. This incredible speed burst upon the world as almost a miracle. The road was opened on the 15th of September, 1830 ; and Mr Stephenson's triumph was complete. Honours were now showered upon him. The city of Liverpool gave him a statue. Kings and queens sat down to hear him talk. Knighthood was offered him, but it was refused. Some one wishing to dedicate a book to him, asked what the "ornamental initials" to his name were. "I have no flourishes to my name, either before or after," replied he ; "merely say, 'George Stephenson.'"

His life teaches with remarkable power one great lesson—the power of perseverance. "Perseverance" was his word ; he was never tired of using it. And at this time, when boys and young men are so anxious to make a short cut to fame, fortune, character, or position, let them know that there is no sure track to success and usefulness, but steadiness of purpose, and faithful labour in the work which God has given them to do.

GOOD FOR NOTHING.

A GENTLEMAN, while addressing some children took out his watch, and asked them if they could tell him what it was for.

"To keep time," the children answered.

"Well, suppose it will not keep time, and a watchmaker cannot repair, and make it mark the time correctly, what is it good for?"

"It is good for nothing," they replied.

He then took out a lead pencil, and asked what it was for.

"It is to write with," was the answer.

"But if there is no lead in it, and it will not write, what is it good for?"

"Good for nothing."

He then took out a small pocket-knife, and asked what was its use.

"To cut things—mend pens," said some.

"To sharpen pencils," said others.

"But suppose it has no blade inside, what is it good for?"

"Good for nothing."

"Then a watch, a pencil, or knife, is good for nothing, unless each can do the thing for which it was made?"

"No, sir," answered the children all together.

"Well, children, what is a boy or girl made for?"

The children hesitated.

"What is the answer to the first question in the Catechism—'What is the chief end of man?'" asked the gentleman.

"'To glorify God, and enjoy him for ever.'"

"Now, then, if a boy or girl does not do what he or she is made for, and glorify God, what is he or she good for?"

And the children all answered, without seeming to think how it would sound—"Good for nothing."

Well, if children are made to glorify God, and they do not do it, are they good for anything?

That is, it is so much more important that they glorify God, and become prepared to enjoy Him for ever, than anything else, that if they fail to do this, it is as though they failed in everything. With love to God, all other things are as nothing. Dear little boys and girls, are you endeavouring to answer the end for which you were made? If not, what are you good for? Think of the children's answer:—" *Good for nothing!* "

THE ROYAL GEORGE.

A BOY took his uncle down to the river side to see a new ship that lay there. His uncle was an old shipmaster, and Harry was at some pains to show him round, partly perhaps to show his own knowledge. There was only one sailor on board, and as the visitors passed and repassed the hatches, "Mind ye, mind ye," he said; "do not fall into the hold, or ye'd never see daylight again." "There is no danger of my uncle," said Harry, proudly; "he knows a ship from stem to stern; and *I* do too." As they came down the ladder and walked away, "I was so provoked with that old salt," said he; "he seemed to think we were know-nothing landsmen, with not sense enough to keep from pitching into the first danger. I wonder you should thank him for his advice, uncle. *I* was provoked."

"I should be very sorry to take offence at well-meant advice," said the uncle. "Did you ever read about the 'Royal George,' Harry?"

“You mean that big ship which foundered one pleasant day in some English harbour, and all on board perished. I know something about it; but tell me more, uncle. How did it happen?”

“It was at Spithead, where the English fleet were at anchor. The ‘Royal George’ was the flag-ship, and Admiral Kempenfelt’s blue flag floated from the mizen. She was a fine ship of a hundred guns. She was about ready for sea, when the first lieutenant discovered that the watercock was out of order. It was not thought necessary to haul her in dock for repairs, but keel her over until the damaged part was above water, and repair her there. Keeling a ship, you know, is making her lean over on one side. A gang of men was sent from the Falmouth dockyards to help the ship’s carpenters. The larboard guns were run out as far as possible, and the starboard guns run in amidships, which made the ship keel to larboard, so that her starboard side was far up out of water. The workmen had got at the mouth of the water-pipe, when a lighter, laden with rum, came alongside, and all hands were piped to clear her. Now the port-sills of the larboard side were nearly even with the water before the lighter came alongside, and when the men went down to take in her casks, the ship keeled more than ever; besides, the sea had grown rougher since morning, washing the water into the lower-deck ports.

“The carpenter saw there was danger. He ran to the second lieutenant, who was officer of the watch, and told him the ship must be

righted. The lieutenant, angry that the carpenter should dare dictate to him, ordered him back to his work. Growing every instant more convinced of the imminent peril of the ship, the man went a second time to the officer, warning him that all would be lost if the vessel was not righted instantly ; but he only got a volley of oaths for his pains. The lieutenant, however, at last, ordered the drummer to beat to quarters ; but before the drummer had time to lay hold of his drum, the ship keeled over a little, and a little more, and the men began to scramble down the hatchways, to put the heavy guns back into their proper places. Alas ! it was too late. Men may begin their duty too late. Already the water was rushing in ; she filled rapidly, settled fast, and almost before help or rescue could be thought of down went the 'Royal George,' carrying her admiral, officers, men, and many nobles and strangers on board, to the number of a thousand souls, down, down to a watery grave, so awfully sudden, that a few only on the upper deck could save themselves. And thus to perish, on a fair day, in sight of land, surrounded by a fleet of ships, all aggravated the terrible disaster. As the poet Cowper has written :—

'It was not in the battle ;
No tempest gave the shock ;
She sprang no fatal leak ;
She ran upon no rock.'"

"Awful!" said Harry, shuddering ; "and to

have it owing to the pride of that foolish lieutenant. Too proud to take the carpenter's advice ; that was the worst of all. I suppose you told it to me on that account. I thank you, uncle. Oh, that poor lieutenant. His own life, and the lives of a thousand others, staked upon his feeling proud. I am sure it makes the Bible account of pride awfully true: 'Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.'"

KANNIETVERSTAAN.

THERE are many places in the world besides Amsterdam in which a man has daily opportunities of meditating upon the instability of all earthly things, and of learning to be satisfied with his own lot, even though there may not be many larks flying about in the air for him, ready roasted. And yet in Amsterdam itself, a German travelling mechanic was once delivered from error, and brought to a knowledge of truth in such a strange and roundabout manner, that the story is worth relating.

When he arrived at this great and rich commercial city, full of splendid houses, of ships, and of busy men, his eyes fell upon a mansion such as he had never seen before in the whole of his wanderings from Tuttlingen to Amsterdam.

He looked for a long time with the greatest astonishment at this costly building, at the six chimneys upon the roof, the beautiful mouldings,

and the high windows—larger than the door of his father's house at home. At last he could not refrain from saying to a passer-by :—

“ My good friend, can you tell me the name of the gentleman who owns this magnificent house, with the windows full of tulips, asters, and stocks ?”

But the man, who very probably had something more important to do, and who understood just as much of German as his interrogator did of Dutch—namely, nothing at all—answered in an abrupt, harsh manner, “ *Kannietverstaan*,” and went grumbling on his way.

This is a Dutch word, or, more properly speaking, three Dutch words, the meaning being, “ I can't understand you.” But the worthy mechanic thought it was the name of the man about whom he had asked.

“ He must be an enormously rich fellow, that *Kannietverstaan* !” thought he, and went on his way.

Passing through street after street, he came at last to the bay *Het Ey* ; or, as it is in German, the *Ypsilon* ; in English, the *Y*. There he saw ship after ship and mast after mast, and could not tell at first how ever he should fight his way through them all with his two eyes only, in order sufficiently to see and consider these curiosities. At last his attention was engrossed by one great ship which had very lately arrived from the East Indies, and was then being unladen. Whole rows of chests and of bales already stood upon and beside one another on the shore. Still more were

being hoisted from the vessel—casks full of sugar, and coffee, and rice, and pepper.

He looked on for a long time, and at last asked a man who had just carried out one of the bales on his shoulder, the name of the fortunate man to whom the sea brought all these treasures.

“Kannietverstaan,” was the answer.

“Ha!” thought he, “is that the state of the case? No wonder, then! For the man to whom the sea brings so many riches has a good right to build such houses in the world, and to put such tulips before his windows in gilded flower-pots.”

And now he wended his way back again, and thought, sorrowfully enough, of what a poor man he was among so many rich ones in the world. Just as he was saying to himself, “If I could but get on so well as this Mr Kannietverstaan has done!” he turned the corner of a street, and came in sight of a large funeral procession. Four black caparisoned horses drew a hearse covered with black, as slowly and sorrowfully as if they knew that they carried the dead to his rest. A long train of the friends and acquaintances of the deceased followed, two by two, silent, and muffled in black cloaks. In the distance a solitary bell was tolling.

A sorrowful feeling took possession of our wanderer. It was one from which no good man is exempt when he sees a funeral; and he remained standing silently, hat in hand, till the procession had all passed by. He then made up to the last of the train—who, in the silence was calculating what he should make by his herrings and cotton,

if the hundredweight rose to ten gilders—pulled gently at his black cloak, and, offering many apologies, said,

“He for whom the bell is tolling, and whom you follow to the grave so sadly and thoughtfully, must have been a very good friend of yours.”

“Kannietverstaan,” was the answer.

Then two great tears rolled down the cheeks of the poor mechanic, and his heart became suddenly heavy, and then light again.

“Poor Kannietverstaan!” he exclaimed, “what is left you now of all your riches? Just what I shall one day have of my poverty—a winding-sheet and a shroud. And of all your beautiful flowers, perhaps a sprig of rosemary or of rue on your cold breast.”

With such thoughts as these he followed the corpse to the churchyard, saw the supposed Kannietverstaan lowered into his grave, and was more touched by the Dutch sermon, of which he did not understand one word, than by many a German one to which he gave no attention.

Finally, he went forth again, light of heart with the others; found an inn where German was spoken, and ate up a piece of Limburg cheese with very good appetite; and if, at any after-time, it seemed hard to him that so many people in the world should be so rich and he so poor, he thought of the great Kannietverstaan in Amsterdam, of his rich ship, and of his narrow grave.

THE SPINNER-BOY.

SEVERAL years ago there was a bright little spinner-boy in one of the mills of Glasgow. He spun all through the summer vacations to earn money to go to school in winter; and very diligent he was, both at school and in the mill. He picked up a great deal of knowledge, and the best of all was the knowledge of God. Then he wanted to become a missionary, and God opened the way when he was of age.

The London Missionary Society sent him to South Africa. There he married a good missionary's daughter, and for a while stayed with his father-in-law. But he longed to explore the heart of Africa. God opened this way also, and he started off alone—no, not alone, for God was with him. On our maps of Southern Africa there are large blank spots, denoting that we do not know what is there—sandy deserts, we suppose. But Dr LIVINGSTON, for that was his name, found them fine countries, watered by large rivers, and peopled by negroes much better off than those living on the sea-coast. They had never seen a white man: of Englishmen they had heard, and called them a “tribe that loved the black man.”

It was dangerous travelling. He was attacked by fever thirty-one times, and once a lion sprang upon him and broke his arm.

Sometimes for months and months no news was

heard of him, and his friends were afraid he was dead. His father-in-law once undertook to forward him a package of letters. The package reached a river, on whose opposite banks lived two tribes at war with each other. "Here is a packet for the good white man, for Dr Livingston," cried the tribe on the south side to those on the north side; "cross over and take it." "You are cheating us," answered the north-siders; "the bundle is witchcraft medicine; we won't come." "We shall leave it here," cried the south-siders; "if it's lost, you shall take the risk." They thought better of it, crossed over, took the package and carried it to a little island in the river, where they built a hut over it, and where, a year afterwards, the doctor found it safe and sound.

In four years he travelled eleven thousand miles where no white man ever went before; and as you may suppose, he brought home a great deal of interesting and important knowledge about the interior of Africa. He was gone from England sixteen years, and scarcely spoke English in all that time. And though not quite forty years old, his face is wrinkled and almost as black as a black man's, from hardship and exposure. The English were very glad to welcome him back. But he would not stop long. Oh no; the Makololos are waiting for him. He wants to lead them to Jesus Christ. God has promised to "give the heathen" to His Son; and Dr Livingston wishes the churches would lay claim to God's promises, and

come out to Africa and labour to bring this beautiful land under the rule of King Jesus.

“How can such a great work ever be done?”

“It is not by grand meetings, fine speeches, and much excitement that *anything great* is done,” answers Dr Livingston. “No, it is by hard working—working in quiet, working under a sense of God’s presence everywhere, and working without expectation of seeing the fruits.”

What an answer is that. Worthy to be written in letters of gold. Let everybody engaged in a great undertaking remember these words. Let the boys take it for a lesson. We are so apt to be discouraged; we seem to get ahead so little day by day. We complain that we don’t see the fruits of our labours. Well, what if we do not? God has given us a work to do, and we must do it; and “it is by hard working—working in quiet, working under a sense of God’s presence everywhere, and working without expectation of seeing the fruits, that *anything great* is done.” That’s it.

A CROWN JEWEL.

“I WISH,” said Cousin John, and then stopped.

“Well, what do you wish for?” asked Taylor, looking up from his book.

“To be rich, to be sure,” answered the lad; “that is what almost everybody is trying arter.

The great talk in father's counting-room is about stocks and per cent., what people are worth, and all that sort of thing."

"It does seem as if rich people must be very happy," said Hannah.

"There is certainly nothing which people play so great a stake for as riches," said Aunt Emily; "but whether they make people happy, is quite another thing. I have just heard an interesting story on this point."

"Oh, tell us a story, aunty," cried Hannah; and the rest of the children echoed, "Do, do, aunty."

"Among the crown jewels of Russia," said Aunt Emily, "there is a magnificent diamond of great value, almost the size and length of one's little finger. This diamond is called the Shah, and it has a curious history. Once it belonged to a Persian king. This king was murdered by his soldiers, who divided his treasures among themselves. The Affghan into whose hands the diamond fell, left his country and came to Turkey, and finally offered it for sale to a rich man in the city of Bes-sora. Shafras, for that was the merchant's name, suspecting the man had not come honestly by it, asked him to call again, and in the meantime he told his two brothers about this splendid jewel. But the Affghan never returned. As a guilty conscience is full of fears, afraid of foul play, he secretly left the city, and could nowhere be found.

Some years afterwards, Shafras met him in Bagdad, and he asked about the diamond. It

had been bought by a Jew. The Jew living in Bagdad, Shafras went to see him, and offered him twice as much for the diamond as he gave for it. But the Jew would not part with it. Still hankering after it, and determined to get it, Shafras and his two brothers laid a plan to murder and rob the poor Jew. This they did; and soon after, quarrelling about the spoils, Shafras poisoned his two brothers and got the whole. He went to Moscow, and sold it to queen Katharine of Russia, for half a million of dollars."

"Did this wicked man live to enjoy his money?"

"He was afterwards murdered by a son-in-law who coveted his share of the property; and the whole was speedily squandered by his heirs, who are now living in beggary in one of the cities of Russia."

"It is true, as the Bible says, 'The love of money is the root of all evil,'" said Hannah. "How many murders it committed here!"

"Therefore Christ teaches us," said Aunt Emily, "to lay up our treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also."

"Half a million of dollars!" exclaimed Cousin John; "was not that a crown jewel worth having?"

"Would you not rather have a *whole crown*?" asked Aunt Emily. "That you can have, my dear child. Christ says, 'To him that overcometh, I will give a *crown of life*.' Yours, to keep and wear for ever. Thieves cannot steal it, time can-

not fade it, death cannot snatch you from it, and you will never be tired of enjoying it." And Aunt Emily prayed in her heart that each of this dear circle of nephews and nieces might have this heavenly reward of every faithful follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. She knew it was a great deal better than a world full of diamonds, and all else besides.

