West India Boys.—Frontispiece.

"Any thing the matter, my lad," said the friendly officer.

p. 20.

THE

WEST INDIA BOYS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"MISS KATY'S LITTLE MAID."

Cornelia Tudbury Pierson

"Receive the kingdom of God as a little child."

PHILADELPHIA:
AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,
No. 1122 CHESTNUT STREET.

NEW YORK: 599 BROADWAY.

God has unconscious ministers:
  The lily crown'd with dew,
The lamb, the vine, the morning mist,
  Have all their message true.
The little child's unstudied ways
  May lift our thoughts above,
And prompt the Christian's heart to faith,
  Simplicity and love.

But lily, lamb, or little child
  No holiness can claim;
The earth is cursed, the soul is lost,
  But for our Saviour's name.
And yet we welcome all the aids
  Which round our path abide,
To turn our thoughts to Scripture truth
  And point to Christ our Guide.

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THE

WEST INDIA BOYS.

CHAPTER I.

ON BOARD SHIP.

ALONE on the wide sea, a good ship was speeding its way. Above, the sky was all glowing with the glory of the setting sun; below, the waves were shining like molten gold. The hardy sailors had seen this beautiful sight too often to care to look upon it now. Hither and thither they went, all about the rolling ship, as composedly and steadily as if they were at work in the narrow street of some dusty city.

A party of passengers, too, were busy in idle chat, utterly unmindful of the grandeur of the scene, and of the real though invisible presence of the Great Creator, in the midst of his handiwork.

Leaning over the side of the vessel were two persons, who were lost in admiration of the glories of sea and sky. One was a lad, who would gladly have been thought sixteen years of age, though he was at least two years younger. Raynor Thall's dark eye was very bright with pleasure, as he glanced now at the glistening waters, now at the teacher by his side.

This teacher was neither gray-haired, nor imposing in stature. He wore neither a long, sweeping coat, nor wise-looking spectacles. He spoke English with tolerable correctness, but with an accent that had about it a sweet charm,

which it is impossible to describe. To appreciate it, one must hear it. He was dressed in a suit of light-blue cloth, made with a kilt, somewhat in Scotch fashion. Over his shoulders fell a shower of golden curls, which floated and fluttered in the evening breeze. His blue eyes were large and gentle, and his flexible mouth seemed fitted to speak words of love. Now we have a full description of Benny Thall, one of the little teachers whom God scatters through the world, to give his older children lessons in faith, simplicity and love.

We all remember how our Saviour took a little child, and, placing him in the midst of his disciples, said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven." Every day he is

doing the same thing now, if we will but hear his voice, and learn the wisdom so pleasantly taught us.

Already Raynor Thall had "passed from death unto life." Already it was his chief desire to do the will of God, and to love and lean upon that Saviour, for whose sake he trusted his name was written in Heaven. The "little leaven" was working within him, but not yet had it penetrated and purified every part of his character. It might be that long years of sorrow and conflict were in store for him, ere his proud and wilful spirit would have the loving gentleness of a little child.

Raynor had left his home in the West Indies with indignation burning in his heart. After being for two years a widower, Mr. Thall was about to take unto himself a young and pretty wife,

a proceeding of which Raynor had openly expressed his disapprobation. Under these circumstances, the father had consented to Raynor's making a long promised visit to his uncle,—his mother's only brother. Raynor insisted upon having Benny for the companion of his journey, and Mr. Thall reluctantly consented.

Raynor was cut off from the wise counsel of his father, but he had with him a teacher from whom he might well learn the very lessons he needed most. Would he prove a willing pupil, gathering much wisdom from his unconscious guide?

The golden glory faded from the sky, and night and stillness enwrapped the good ship. On, on it went, no eye but the All-seeing to track its steady course. On it went, nearing the haven. Soon,

very soon, the sailor would set his foot on his native shore.

Each human soul is like that lone ship on the silent sea. Some haven we are nearing. Will glad greetings await us on "the Shining Shore?" Are we "Homeward Bound?" Will our dying lips breathe this glad song?

"Into the harbour of Heaven we now glide,
We're home at last;
Softly we drift on its bright silver tide,
We're home at last;
Glory to God! all our dangers are o'er,
We stand secure on the glorified shore.
Glory to God! we will shout evermore,
We're home at last."

CHAPTER II.

UNCLE DEVINE.

Our West India boys had been safely landed on the dock of an Atlantic city. The party of travellers, who had had them in charge, saw them safely at a hotel, and then were whirled away in the swift cars, towards a distant inland town.

As the ship made port in the evening, Raynor thought it best to pass the night at the hotel, and seek his uncle in the morning. He stated his views with such dignity and decision, that his escort supposed his plan was probably the best, under circumstances of which they were ignorant.

A good night's rest on land, after the tossing of the restless ocean! There is a world of comfort in that single sentence! Say what you will about being "rocked in the cradle of the deep," it is delightful to have a motionless floor under you, and a nice, wide bed of your own, after even three or four nights on board ship.

Raynor and Benny had enjoyed some of this sound, refreshing sleep, and now were making ready for breakfast. Raynor had been dressing his little brother. This was a new business for Raynor, and yet he had fairly coaxed every button through its appropriate buttonhole, and dexterously pinned on a clean collar. Benny had not uttered a word of complaint, though he had been handled more as if he were a wooden

image, than a creature of flesh and blood, capable of feeling and suffering.

"What shall I do with your hair?" said Raynor, in despair. As he spoke, he strove to twine round his unskilful finger the long, light lock he held in his hand.

Benny's small, round face seemed in a cloud of golden glory, for Raynor's thorough combing had set every hair at variance with its neighbour. Truly, it was a puzzling question, but Benny did not find it hard to answer.

"Cut it off! Cut it off! That will be the best way," said Benny.

"What! All your pretty curls?" was the doubting reply, while Raynor still held the single tress he had reduced to comparative order.

"Yes! All! Every one! I'm going to be a great boy, now. I shan't want

them," said Benny, valorously handing his brother the scissors.

Snip! Snip! went the scissors, now close to Benny's white skin, now some inches away. Raynor was not the most skilful of barbers, and yet he seemed well pleased with his work. On he went, turning the little fellow's head round, from time to time, to see how its two sides were likely to correspond. "Mated, not matched," they certainly were.

There lay the heap of golden curls, and there stood Benny, a wonderful monument of the youthful barber's art. Raynor had not used a "pumpkin to cut by, and keep all even," as they did in the olden times in New England, but the boys were satisfied, and there was no one at hand to differ from them.

A few strokes of a wet brush com-

pleted Benny's toilet, and then the brothers went down stairs together.

It was a pleasure to Raynor to be in the large dining-room of the hotel—quite his own master. The waiters in his neighbourhood had no reason to complain of want of exercise, that morning.

Breakfast over, Raynor left his trunk at the hotel, as the most gentlemanly course, and, taking his brother by the hand, he set off in search of his uncle. Raynor had no doubt of a cordial reception, for the frequent letters which had passed between his mother and this pet only brother, had been of a particularly free and affectionate character. He had doubtless received Mr. Thall's announcement of the intended visit of his nephews, though sufficient time had not elapsed for them to receive an assurance of welcome before starting.

The house of Mr. Devine was in a handsome, well-known street, and the boys had no difficulty in finding it at once. The brown-stone front looked dreary enough. Every shutter was closed, and a convincing "to let," on the door, assured the children that here, at least, they should not find the friend they sought.

As the boys stood irresolutely on the door-step, a policeman happened to pass. "Anything the matter, my lad?" said the friendly officer.

"We came to see our uncle, Mr. Peter Devine, but this paper says the house is to let, and we don't know where to look for him, as we are strangers in the city," said Raynor, in his own manly, direct way.

"Mr. Peter Devine, child! Why, he has been dead these four weeks! An

old bachelor;—walked with a cane. Mr. Peter Devine. Rich, he was. He left his money to the Societies, I've heard say. Did you expect to stop with him? Where's your baggage?" The officer did not forget his usual way of making sure that he heard the truth.

"Our trunk is at the hotel. We got in from the West Indies, last evening, and so thought we would wait to see our uncle in the morning," said Raynor.

"You can't see him in *this* world, my boy. Have you any other friends in the city?" said the policeman.

"I have a letter to Mr. Joshua Penfold, a business acquaintance of my father's." As Raynor spoke, he was trying to subdue the choking in his throat, which threatened to overthrow the manliness which was his especial pride.

"Got it with you?" persevered the policeman, intent upon convincing himself that the boy was truthful.

Raynor drew out his pocket-book, and produced the letter.

"All right. Joshua Penfold. All right. I'll put you into an omnibus, that will take you straight to his office."

Before Raynor had time to think what he was to say to this stranger, he found himself in an omnibus, rolling rapidly towards Mr. Penfold's place of business.

Benny had kept tight hold of Raynor's hand, but continued silent. He had no uneasiness as to their future, but was wholly taken up with the idea that his uncle was dead, and he would not be able to put his arm round his neck, as he had planned, and tell him he meant to love him like his own dear father.

"How glad mother will be to see her brother!" thought Benny. This consoling reflection so far dispersed the sad thoughts of the child, that he was soon ready to be amused by the strange sights and sounds of the busy city. His little head was in perpetual motion, bobbing now this way, now that way, as he was borne past alluring shop windows, and foot-passengers in every possible costume. Of course, Raynor was called upon to share all this curious delight, and was so implored to "look here!" and "look there!" that he had but just made up his mind what to say to Mr. Penfold, when the omnibus came to a halt, on the very spot which the policeman had indicated.

CHAPTER III.

MR. PENFOLD.

Mr. Penfold's office was by no means the centre of importance in the great building where it was located. Up three pairs of stairs Raynor climbed, finding, at every landing, a hand still pointing him onward, if he would see Joshua Penfold. The glass door of Mr. Penfold's quarters was reached at last. There was no such thing as catching a glimpse of the gentleman, before facing him fairly. The faded, green baize curtain, veiled him from curious eyes.

Raynor knocked decidedly, as much to give himself courage, as to inspire

Benny with the notion that he felt quite at home in that dark, dirty entry.

"Come in!" said a gruff voice.

Mr. Penfold was sitting at his desk. He did not get up to give the boys the benefit of a full view of his person, but, peering above the sheet of paper he held in his hand, they saw a small, round, red face, brightened by a pair of spectacles, through which looked as keen gray eyes as ever scrutinized a new-comer.

"Mr. Penfold, I suppose," said Raynor, going forward, in a gentlemanly way. "My name is Raynor Thall. You have had some business dealings with my father, I believe. Here is a letter for you, from him."

Raynor presented his letter, and Mr. Penfold opened and read it, without another word.

It would have been a useless courtesy to ask the boys to sit down, as Mr. Penfold's stool was the only seat in the room.

The letter was very short; Raynor could see that, from where he stood; yet Mr. Penfold read it over and over, as if to be sure to master the contents.

"Well, boy! you want to find your uncle," said Mr. Penfold, at last.

"He is dead, and they have put up 'to let' on his house. We have been there," said Raynor, in a voice more tremulous than he could have wished.

"Then I don't see what good I can do you. I can't look up your dead uncle," said Mr. Penfold, rather sharply.

Raynor hushed his wounded pride, and asked: "My father's letter, what does it say?"

MR. PENFOLD:

Dear Sir:—The bearer, my son Raynor, is a stranger in your city; if he should have any difficulty in finding his uncle, Mr. Peter Devine, I have given him this note, asking your assistance in pointing out the residence of Mr. Devine, who is a well-known citizen of your metropolis. Excuse my presuming on our slight acquaintance to ask this favour. Yours, truly,

S. D. THALL.

Mr. Penfold read the letter aloud, then carefully folded it, and put it back into the envelope.

"I never knew Mr. Devine. I could not help you as much as the directory could. But, since the man is dead, I don't see that I, or it, can do you any good. Were you going to stay with this Mr. Devine?"

"We came from the West Indies, expecting to spend some time with him," said Raynor.

"Why didn't you stay at home?" said Mr. Penfold.

Raynor blushed up to his eyes, as he answered, "My father is going to be married, and we came to stay awhile with Mr. Devine, who was my mother's brother."

"Did he know you were coming?" said the questioner.

"My father wrote to him, but we did not wait to hear from him. We did not think about his dying," said Raynor, with some embarrassment.

"Not a runaway! The letter proves that. Turned adrift, more likely," said Mr. Penfold to himself, while he inwardly entertained thoughts not particularly favourable to Mr. Thall.

"You had better write at once to your father, and tell him how matters stand here; or, perhaps it would be as

well to take ship and go right back where you came from." As Mr. Penfold spoke, he looked into Raynor's face more penetratingly than before.

Go back just in time for the marriage! Go back, when he was sure that his father thought his absence, for awhile, at least, would be desirable! Raynor could not for a moment think of such a step. He would at least write, and ask what course he had better take. "I will write to my father as soon as I get back to the —— House," said Raynor, trying to be manly. "If I had known the contents of that letter, I should not have brought it here, as I see you can be of no service to me."

"So! So! Maybe you've not wasted your time," said Mr. Penfold. "You are staying at a hotel, then. I suppose you have plenty of money. That's a

dear way of living. No half-price for children, if they go to the table. Four dollars a day, at least, for the two; that runs up fast."

"Do they charge as much as that?" said Raynor, anxiously.

"That they do, and strangers, boys especially, won't be likely to have long credit. How much have you with you?"

There was something in Mr. Penfold's way half friendly and half impertinent, but Raynor could not choose but answer his questions.

"Only twenty-five dollars," said Raynor, opening his pocket-book, and showing his funds, all in gold.

"You'd better leave the hotel, at once," said Mr. Penfold, decidedly.

"I shouldn't know where to go," said Raynor, looking very young and inexperienced, as he spoke.

"I'll find you suitable lodgings. It is as well you came to me, though you don't see it in that light," said Mr. Penfold. "Now you had better go and write to your father. Or stop, you may write here, at my desk, if you want to, and I'll see that the letter gets into the office. They are apt to be careless at those hotels."

Raynor mounted the high stool. He was not ashamed of his hand-writing, nor had he reason to be; yet he hesitated to put his pen to the paper. How should he tell his father that he was friendless in the great city, so far from his home?

Raynor's letter was short and cold, simply stating the fact of his uncle's death, and asking what he was to do, under the circumstances.

Raynor was folding the letter, when

Benny, for the first time, spoke. "Give my best love to dear father, and tell him this is a beautiful place, but uncle is dead, and we could not love him as our dear father, as we meant to. Tell him about this kind gentleman, too."

As Benny spoke, he walked straight up to Mr. Penfold, and laid his little, soft hand in that of the keen-eyed stranger.

Benny had been studying Mr. Penfold's face, in his own quiet, unconscious way, and this was the result.

Mr. Penfold's fingers did not grasp Benny's, but another great, red hand came down upon his. "Now I've caught you!" said Mr. Penfold. "I've shut your little hand up in my box."

"You'll let me out," said Benny, looking up, trustfully.

"How do you know I will? Maybe

I am a dreadful man, and eat up little boys," said Mr. Penfold, showing his teeth alarmingly.

"You won't eat *me*," said Benny, drawing near to the man with the teeth, and laying fearlessly hold of his full trowsers.

"Well, I believe I won't eat you," said Mr. Penfold, with a kindly look at Benny. "But Raynor had better behave himself, or I can't promise about him."

"He always behaves himself," said Benny, confidently.

"Well, we'll see what kind of a letter he has been writing." Mr. Penfold put out his hand for the letter, as if his reading it were a matter of course, though it had by no means been the intention of the writer that he should.

Raynor silently gave the letter to

Mr. Penfold; then, taking Benny by the hand, he said: "You will see that it is safely put in the office, sir. I shall be much obliged to you for that, as I am a stranger."

"About the lodgings?" said Mr. Penfold, without looking at the letter. "I'll see you in the morning. —— House, you say? Well, I'll find you there."

Raynor only bowed as he took leave, but Benny put out his hand. This time it had a hearty shake, and Benny's "good-bye" was cordially returned.

CHAPTER IV.

LODGINGS.

RAYNOR had no fears lest Mr. Penfold should not be true to his appointment. In spite of his bluntness and curiosity, he was evidently interested in the boys, and inclined to take them under his protection.

Raynor had been for an hour at the window, watching for the carriage which was to bear him to his new quarters. Carriage after carriage had driven up to the hotel, but no Mr. Penfold had alighted from any of them.

A knock at Raynor's door called him from his post of observation, and sent

Benny on a "hop-skip-and-jump" to see who the new-comer could be.

"Mr. Penfold! I'm so glad!" said Benny, seizing the great, red hand, which was hanging at Mr. Penfold's side. The hand was not withdrawn, and Benny led the stranger up to Raynor, as triumphantly as if he had been the captive of his own bow and spear.

"All packed! That's right!" said Mr. Penfold, seeing the trunk, ready strapped, and placed near the door. "Here, Max!"

Mr. Penfold put his head into the entry, as he spoke the last words.

Thus summoned, a clumsy German appeared, and took up the trunk.

"You puts it in the vagin;" said Mr. Penfold, trying to adapt his language to the person addressed.

The German gave an appreciative

grunt, and then disappeared, with the trunk on his shoulders.

"Now, boys! Hats on! Forward, march!" said Mr. Penfold, obeying his own orders with great promptness. Raynor and Benny followed his example, but, midway down the entry, the captain ordered a halt, and suddenly asked Raynor whether he had "settled up,—paid his bill, and left all clear?"

"Certainly, sir," said Raynor, in his most dignified style.

"I'll look at the bill, and see that it is all right." Mr. Penfold put out his hand as he spoke.

Raynor was forced to produce his pocket-book, and give up the receipt for inspection.

"Correct! Ehem! Dear living for boys!" were Mr. Penfold's comments, as he returned the slip of paper to Raynor.

Mr. Penfold seemed inclined to lead his procession along the street single-file, and with strict military regulations, so far as conversation was concerned. Benny, however, had too much to say, and too many questions to ask about all he saw, for any such plan to be carried out, unless by special orders. Mr. Penfold had kept silence many a time amid the attacks of the most talkative people, but he was not proof against Benny's winning ways, and the two were soon walking side by side, chatting most confidentially. Raynor, meanwhile, silently brought up the rear.

Out of the noisy thoroughfare, along quiet streets they passed, Raynor wondering whether he was to find his new home in each fresh row of pleasant dwellings.

Straight on went Mr. Penfold, looking neither to the right nor the left.

The blocks of stately buildings were all left behind, and the boys found themselves in a wide street, bordered by innumerable little shops, where more thread and needles and small fancy articles seemed to be on sale than could be wanted in all the city. Yet, somebody must buy, or those patient shopkeepers would not be, day after day, behind those counters. They must be kept alive by bread and butter, earned just where these people were always to be found.

At the window of one of these shops, Benny made a decided stand. "Oh, Mr. Penfold, just stop a moment!" he exclaimed. "There's such a beautiful dog in here—a dog with a squeak to him. I wish I could make it go!"

Mr. Penfold was not a judge of toys. He could not share in Benny's delight at the black and white mastiff, who was ready to "squeak," as Benny had said, if but some skilful thumbs and fingers could get hold of him. Yet, in front of the shop Mr. Penfold stopped, and looked round as if to be sure that Raynor was close at hand.

In the door-way stood Max, evidently on the look-out for the party, but, as soon as they came in sight, he mysteriously disappeared into the back shop, and was not seen again that morning.

"May I just go in and look at the doggy?" said Benny, emboldened by the decided halt.

"Yes! We'll all go in. Here's our place," said Mr. Penfold. "Come, Raynor, I suppose you'll be glad to go right up stairs, and get settled, at once."

Raynor was in the midst of his overwhelming astonishment, when a woman came out of the door through which Max had disappeared.

She, too, was German. Her broad, flat face, bright blue eyes, and fair hair, told their own story. She had none of the shyness of Max, however, to keep her from making use of what English she knew.

"Mr. Penfold! Goot morget! Glad dese boys to see. I will up stairs, show you. All is ready. Come!"

The woman put out her hand to Benny as she spoke, and smiled so pleasantly upon him that he was sure he had found a friend. Raynor surveyed the great braids of yellow hair that were coiled on the back of her head. He scanned her neat plaid, stuff dress, and her white, gatherless apron,

of stout linen, with as much dissatisfaction as if there were really any fault to be found with them. Benny, meanwhile, walked as contentedly at her side as if she had been a duchess.

Mr. Penfold did not trouble himself to look at the boys. He was making his own observations on the neatness of the little sitting-room, back of the shop, and sniffing approvingly the steam of some savoury stew that was cooking in the kitchen adjoining. An onion stew; Raynor was sure it was, and it was plain, from his expression, that his taste and Mr. Penfold's did not coincide in this, better than in some other matters.

Raynor could hardly believe it possible that these were the lodgings Mr. Penfold had selected for him, Raynor Thall! Yet, so it must be. Up the

narrow staircase he was led, and then ushered into a small bed-room, the very picture of homeliness and neatness combined. There stood his trunk, the straps unfastened, as if *it* were at home, though its owner did not feel himself so.

"Here, Raynor. Here's your room. I was lucky to get you in here. It popped into my head after you went out, yesterday. Mrs. Waller and I are old friends. I knew her before she knew Max," said Mr. Penfold.

Raynor made no reply. He remembered the elegance of his father's house, and was inclined to say that this was no suitable place for him. Mr. Penfold did not appear to see Raynor's look of dissatisfaction, but Mrs. Waller's pleasant face was suddenly overclouded. She glanced round the room, as if to find out the offending item. Then pat-

ting the soft bed, she said, "You like fedders—not?"

"I never tried a feather bed. I dare say I shall like it very well," said Raynor, endeavouring to be polite

Benny looked questioningly at Raynor. He saw something was amiss, but could not think what it could be. Jumping on to the bed, he sank deep into its centre, and, looking out from his valley, he exclaimed: "It's so nice, Raynor! I am sure you will like *fedders!*" Raynor could not help smiling.

"I dare say Raynor will be pleased with everything," said Mr. Penfold, "and Benny will find a warm nest anywhere."

"Yes, Mr. Penfold actually stooped down and kissed Benny as he spoke! Then, as if half ashamed of what he had done, he nodded to Raynor and

left the room. Mrs. Waller followed, and the brothers were alone.

Benny at once discovered that the trunk, with its long straps, was a capital horse, and was soon off on some imaginary journey, while Raynor was left to his own thoughts. Those thoughts were far from pleasant. Raynor felt angry with Mr. Penfold for choosing such lodgings for him; angry with his father for allowing him to leave home, and half angry with Benny for being so contented with his new quarters and new friends.

"It will be only for a little while," Raynor at length said to himself. "When my father's letter comes, he will provide a suitable place for us, or we shall go home."

Go home! That was a cheering thought to Raynor. He was already

weary of independence, and would gladly have been a child again, in his father's house. At that moment he would have sat down to table much more readily with the new Mrs. Thall, than with Mrs. Waller and Max.

CHAPTER V.

ANXIOUS WAITING.

RAYNOR THALL had been accustomed, from childhood, to have negro servants about him, and had never been in any way thrown into the society of white people who lacked education and refinement. On Max Waller and his wife he looked with secret disdain, fancying that he was made of a material far superior to any employed in their composition. The idea of associating with them, from day to day, on terms of anything like equality, was terrible to him. He made up his mind at once, that go down to dinner he could not. He would certainly rather go without a

meal, than take it in such company. When, therefore, Mrs. Waller knocked at his door, to say that dinner was ready, he gave Benny's hair a hasty brushing, and sent him off with the German woman, while he remained to unpack the trunk, not feeling like eating, just then, he said.

Raynor's absence did not seem to destroy either the appetites or the cheerfulness of the party below, for he could hear the rattling of dishes, as in frequent circulation, mingled with the constant sound of voices in pleasant chat.

Presently Benny's little feet were heard coming up the stairs. "Do come, Raynor," he said. "There is such a nice pudding. I am sure you would like it."

Raynor had felt symptoms of a gnaw-

ing faintness coming over him for the last quarter of an hour, and so had his own reasons for letting Benny lead him down to the "sitting-room," where the family were gathered.

"Mr. Raynor, you sits here," said Mrs. Waller, politely giving him a seat. "You know Max. This Pierre is, who has the room by you."

Raynor silently took the offered chair, and bowed to the person to whom he was introduced.

Pierre was a little, thin, dark man, with a few black curls bordering on the bald centre of his round head. He had but to speak to show that he was a Frenchman, as yet imperfectly acquainted with our language. His hands were small, and kept with care, though too deeply stained in several places to be cleansed by the faithful washing

they had lately undergone. His eyes were black and full of intelligence, and he looked from Raynor to Benny, as if somewhat puzzled to know how they came to be in his company.

Benny was seated at Mrs. Waller's side, his face perfectly beaming with satisfaction, as she bent over him with kind, motherly care, providing for his wants, and giving him hints as to his behaviour. "How can Benny be so at home, here!" thought Raynor. "He is a child,—he don't mind what I do."

Raynor had not been without instruction in Holy Scripture. His mind had been imbued with its leading truths. The text—"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven," flashed through Raynor's mind. Would not a right feeling make him forget all

distinctions, and feel warm and kind to those around him? Had not God made every member of this humble family? Were they not all dear to Him? At the last great day of account, what difference would there be betwixt Raynor Thall and Max Waller? He would try to be like Benny, forgetful of all difference of worldly circumstances, and be loving and kind in heart and manner.

While these thoughts passed through Raynor's mind, the saucer of pudding was standing untouched before him.

"You will eat—not?" said Mrs. Waller, her face all full of anxious inquiry.

"I am going to begin, now," said Raynor, "and you shall see I have not lost my appetite."

Mrs. Waller's face was in a moment bright with smiles. Raynor's changed

manner was like the publication of a truce after war.

The little Frenchman scrutinized Raynor more narrowly than before; then shook his head, as if quite uncertain what to think of his new fellow-lodger.

This uncertainty continued in the minds of the whole family for many days. At times Raynor was cold and haughty in his whole deportment, then he would break out into a genial, kind way, like sunshine after storm. Pierre and the Wallers little understood that this was the struggle between the boy's own proud nature, and his desire to be the follower of the meek and lowly Jesus.

Apart from this conflict, it was not strange that Raynor was variable, and by no means a pleasant companion.

Long before it was possible for him to receive an answer to the letter which he had written to his father, he began to visit the Post Office, daily, in quest of a reply. Disappointment succeeded disappointment, until Raynor fairly dreaded to hear the unvarying "nothing for you!" which followed his eager inquiries. Benny, meanwhile, having no anxiety for the future, was full of joy. Max suffered him to fumble among his stores of buttons, and to make the black and white dog "squeak," to his heart's content. Mrs. Waller watched over the child as tenderly as if he had been her own, and, save the occasional pain at seeing Raynor so worried, Benny was in continual glee.

"Why can't I enjoy myself, too? There is enough in the city for me to see, to make every day pass pleasantly

while I am waiting for my letter." So Raynor would say to himself. Yet he had not the child-like confidence in God, which would have made him leave all his future in the hands of his Heavenly Father, while he cheerfully accepted the little joys of the present hour. So the anxious days and weeks crept by.

The money in Raynor's pocket-book grew less and less. He denied himself every unnecessary indulgence, and, indeed, hardly spent a cent, from the time he paid Mrs. Waller, on one Saturday night, until the next came round.

The twenty-five dollars were all gone, at last, and no letter had yet arrived. Mr. Penfold had not been seen at the Wallers since the day he had placed the children there.

What was to be done? Raynor re-

solved to put on the best possible face, under his difficulties. He met Mrs. Waller on the landing, as he went up to bed, on Saturday night.

"I am expecting a letter from my father, containing money. It has not come, so I shall not be able to pay you now," said Raynor, in as calm a manner as he could command.

"We can wait. We want it not, yet," said Mrs. Waller, kindly.

As Raynor entered his door, he saw Pierre coming up stairs. He must have heard the conversation. This was an annoyance to Raynor, and he slammed the door of his room most impatiently.

To and fro in the small bed-chamber walked Raynor, biting his lips and clenching his hands, as if to bid defiance to some invisible enemy.

A pair of wide-open blue eyes were looking at him from the bed. "What is the matter, Raynor? Are you sick?" said Benny.

"Sick! No!" said Raynor. "But there's matter enough. Father has forgotten all about us. He don't write to us, and my money is all gone, and I don't see what to do! There! I've told you all, and now I'm sorry. Don't feel bad, Benny."

"I don't feel bad," said Benny, cheerily. "I know father hasn't forgotten about us. Why, we are his boys and he loves us! And then, if you want money, why don't you ask God for it?"

Raynor was silent a moment. He would have given much for the trust that made Benny so sure that his

earthly father still loved them, and even more for that faith which had prompted the question of the child.

"Well, well. Go to sleep, Benny. I dare say you are right," was Raynor's reply.

Benny put his head down on the pillow, and sank into as sweet a sleep as if there were no such thing in the world as care.

That night Raynor sat up late, writing another letter to his father. The first might have miscarried; he would trust yet a little longer. When Raynor knelt for his evening prayer, he had many sins to confess. He had been so impatient, so unreasonable of late, so anxious for the future, so little remembering the sure Protector who was ever watching over him. He did not

ask for the money he needed; he had yet to learn much of that faith which takes God even at his word, and seeks from him not only daily bread, but whatsoever is needed "as well for the body as the soul."

CHAPTER VI.

ADRIFT.

FOUR more weeks had passed away, and as yet there had been no letter for Raynor. Saturday night had come again.

"I am very sorry I cannot pay you, Mrs. Waller," said Raynor, holding himself very stiffly, while an unbidden tear glistened in his young eyes.

"We have the money. Mr. Penfold has us paid. He said 'make comfortable the boys, and all would be recht,'" said Mrs. Waller, with more than her usual kindness of manner. "Dear little Benny! It seem anybody must to

love him! Mr. Raynor, will you have little fire in your room, in morgen?"

The good woman evidently pitied her lodger, and was anxious to do something special to show her sympathy.

"Mr. Penfold paid you!" said Raynor, without answering her question. "I'll see him on Monday."

On Monday morning Raynor was early at Mr. Penfold's office. The little man was there, bending over his papers as busily as ever. He put up his spectacles when he saw that Raynor was his visitor, and really met the boy with unmistakable cordiality.

"You paid our board for us!" said Raynor, bluntly. "I did not think you would be so kind. I hope I shall be able to pay you. My father has not written. I don't like to think so—but

I can't think why he don't write. He wouldn't forsake us!

"Shame on him! Shame on him! He has just set you adrift! I thought so, from the first!" said Mr. Penfold, warmly. "Marrying makes men inhuman. I never married! I never mean to! How's the little boy? Does he know about it? How does he take it?"

"He will not believe that father has given us up. He loves them all at Mrs. Waller's, and is very happy."

"That's what it is to be a child! Pity more of us were not children!" said Mr. Penfold.

Raynor thought of the Christian spirit which gives to the character all that is beautiful in childhood, but he felt he was far, far from that genuine temper of love and trust. Even now he was filled with burning indignation against

his father, and of shame that strangers should know how he was cast off.

"What shall I do, Mr. Penfold? Things can't go on so! I shall have to earn my living, some way," said Raynor, speaking very rapidly.

"That's right! That sounds manly!" said Mr. Penfold, warmly. "You've got your home, for the present. I've nobody to claim what I earn, so I can see after you till you can do for yourself. Mind you don't let the little fellow want for anything. The weather is getting cold. I must tell Mrs. Waller to see that he is dressed warm enough."

"She has been working for him for several days, and has a warm suit done for him," said Raynor, blushing. "I knew what she was doing, but I could not say a word to her about it. It made me feel, oh! so ashamed!" Raynor

leaned on the desk, and covered his face with his hands.

"She is none the worse off for what she has done. Why, I make no doubt she has been using up something out of that great chest she brought from Germany. Why, those Germans seem to think, when they come here, they are coming to a wilderness, where you could not buy a yard of stout cloth for love or money. Such stores of homespun as they load up their chests with! You like Mrs. Waller, don't you?"

Raynor remembered his pride, that had so set him against the good woman, and he answered, "Not half as well as I ought. She is as kind to Benny as if she had nursed him all her life. But—Mr. Penfold, what can I do?"

"You must look about and find something to do."

The door opened at this moment, and three strangers came in. "There, Raynor, you will have to go now," said Mr. Penfold. "Keep a bright look-out, and you'll find what you are to do, before long."

CHAPTER VII.

"WANTED."

THE free Reading-room in —— street was open, as usual, one dull November morning. Comfortable men of business had stopped in to learn the news before getting into the hurry and turmoil of "down-town." Young men, out of a place, were whiling away their spare hours, looking over the late magazines. Here and there a clumsy fellow, in his working dress, was passing his finger slowly up and down the columns, on which were fixed his puzzled, anxious eyes.

Securely fastened in their places were the morning papers. Round them gath-

ered eager groups, looking over each other's shoulders, and quietly elbowing nearer and nearer to the open sheets. In one of these groups stood a slender lad, about fourteen years of age. Close to the reading-stand he had secured a position, while others were able to see over his head. Not on the news from the seat of war, not on stocks or exchanges, not on stinging editorials, did he fix his eyes. No item, however interesting, could win from him a moment's attention, unless he could see the significant word "Wanted," over it. Coachmen and teachers, agents for quack-medicines, and incomparable books,—seamstresses and cooks,—five hundred saddlers and four hundred ship-carpenters, might all hope to find pay and employment, by promptly answering the various advertisements.

Of this there could be no doubt, but no one made known his need of a boy, quite unaccustomed to work of all kind, and who could boast no other stock in trade than such an English education as could be acquired by very irregular attendance at a moderately good school, for the last five years.

From stand to stand went Raynor, slowly making his round, until he had fairly mastered the "wanteds" in every daily journal. On a slip of paper he had made a minute of such advertisements as might in any way suit his purpose.

The first, and most promising on the list, was an advertisement for "a young clerk, of good character, anxious to learn the wholesale shoe and leather business."

After much difficulty, Raynor found

the great building where he was told to apply. The very air of the long room into which he stepped, on opening the door, seemed to stifle him, but that was not half as bad as the contemptuous manner in which his application was treated. His whole story was forced out of him, by way of a "character," and then he was advised to take himself off, as soon as possible, as it was not likely that a boy whose father did not care for him would be of much use to anybody else.

In spite of this discouraging beginning, Raynor went regularly through his whole list. His perseverance did not insure success. Just such a boy as he was, nobody seemed to want.

Thoroughly disheartened, Raynor went home at evening, having con-

sumed the whole day in his fruitless search.

Max Waller could not bear to speak English. He never uttered a word of it, when signs would answer the same purpose, and it was astonishing how seldom he was obliged to open his mouth. His customers soon learned to understand his peculiarity, and were often amused at his ready ways of avoiding making himself heard in broken English. Raynor and Max had gotten on very slowly in their acquaintance. Our young friend was therefore much surprised, when Max met him at the door, on his return from his day of annoyances.

"Goot! Goot!" said the honest German, taking him by the hand, and delivering him up to Mrs. Waller, much as if he had been a led horse. The

"sitting-room" was lighted, and the supper-table laid with its usual neatness. Pierre was "drawing pictures" for Benny, on the slate, while Mrs. Waller had been sitting near them, with her sewing.

Pierre might have been a Michael Angelo or Raphael, for all Benny cared, at that moment. The most celebrated painter in the world could not have kept his attention, when Raynor's face appeared at the door. Benny sprang into his brother's arms, saying, "You didn't come home! You didn't have any dinner! I saved some of mine for you, but Mrs. Waller made me eat it. She has yours, all nice and warm, for you, and we wouldn't have tea till you came home. Pierre has made me beautiful pictures. He draws almost as well as you do. Come and see."

Raynor looked with much indifference at the cows and horses on the slate, though they were admirably done. He felt too weary and disappointed to interest himself in the little fellow's pleasure.

Benny's hand passed over the slate, in a minute, and horses and cows vanished. "You don't like them, but you would like Pierre's ship. Please make another ship, Pierre. La Gloire, with the banners all flying, just as you made it for me."

"Not yets, Benny. Not yets," said Mrs. Waller. "We must tea have. Raynor must to eat, recht soon."

On Raynor's plate was not an *assorted dinner*, each little mess of meat or vegetables dried into a separate, tasteless crustiness, by standing for hours in a stove-oven. Before him was

a freshly-broiled bird, and Mrs. Waller's kind eyes sparkled as she saw how keenly the boy enjoyed it.

After supper, Pierre brought down a set of prettily-carved chess-men, and proposed to teach Raynor the game. Raynor shook his head. He did not feel like playing games.

"Take pinch tabac?" said Pierre, offering to Raynor the snuff-box, which was his own peculiar consolation. Raynor could not help smiling, as he refused the well-meant courtesy. The little Frenchman was evidently doing his best, by way of a comforter.

Mrs. Waller was keeping her work carefully in her lap. Raynor could see that she was putting in a new bosom to one of his shirts, and strove to hide her labour of love. The boy's proud heart was touched. The very people

upon whom he had looked down, in his fancied superiority, were full of delicate kindness to him in his misfortunes. God had sent him friends, where he had the least right or reason to expect them. How he longed to tell them all the annoyances and disappointments of his weary day. His burden would seem lighter, if he could but share it.

"Where have you been to-day?" said Benny, as if reading his brother's thoughts.

Mrs. Waller looked up inquiringly, and Pierre laid down the boat he was whittling for Benny.

"It will worry you to hear," said Raynor, gazing doubtfully into the little face, turned up to his.

"Nothing worries me. Somebody always takes care of good little boys.

We don't have to worry. Do we, Mrs. Waller?" said Benny.

Mrs. Waller could not trust herself on such a subject in English. She tenderly drew Benny to her side, and nodded her agreement with him, while she sang one of her simple German hymns, of which we give a translation.

God's little lambs may skip and play,
  Without one anxious care,
Their gentle Shepherd leads the way
  To pastures green and fair.
Nor wolf, nor cold, nor scorching heat
  Shall do these lambs despite,
By day He guides their willing feet,
  And watches them by night.

"You tell! You tell! We all want to hear, don't we?" said Benny, looking first at Raynor, then at Mrs. Waller and Pierre.

"If Mr. Raynor likes, we would like.

Pierre is good to boys," said Mrs. Waller.

Thus encouraged, Raynor gave a full account of the mischances of the day.

Benny drew closer and closer to his side as he went on. Raynor did not see his eyes filling with tears, and was utterly surprised when a sudden sob on the part of the child closed up the account of his anxious interviews.

"Why, Benny! I ought not to have told all this before you!" said Raynor, catching up his brother in his arms.

Sob after sob came from Benny, and Raynor was puzzled how to comfort him.

"God loves Benny. God will take care!" said Mrs. Waller, wiping her own eyes.

"I don't cry for Benny!" said the little fellow, lifting his head. "God will take care of Benny, and Raynor

too. But—but—people were cross to Raynor—and—and—" Here the child began to cry again. After a moment he lifted his head and said, "Why don't you write more letters to father, Raynor? He never got the ones you sent."

"I shall write no more letters to father!" said Raynor, with bitter decision.

"Poor father! Benny must write to tell him how his boys do," said the child, with unshaken trust. "You shall read my letter, when I get it; that will be nice, won't it?"

Raynor could not bear to cloud the momentary sunshine which had come over Benny's face, so he answered, evasively, "I should like to read a nice long letter to you; but come, I'll go up to bed with you, now."

Benny kissed Pierre and Mrs. Waller "good-night," as affectionately as if they

were the dear friends of his infancy, and then suffered himself to be led up stairs.

"I am sorry I made you feel badly," said Raynor, after Benny was in bed. "I didn't mind anything much. That is, I don't mind it now. Everybody is very kind to us, here. God has given us good friends, and I am sure he will take care of us, Benny; but you know I am a big boy, and I want to work. I shall try, until I find something to do, but you must not ask me every day where I have been. You are too little to understand about such things. When you are older, you will know. You will see that what I say is best."

"Yes. I won't ask," said Benny. "I am sure God will take care of us."

Raynor held the soft little hand that lay in his, until Benny was fast asleep.

Then the elder brother knelt at the bedside, and poured out his full heart in prayer. He had taken home the lesson he had been giving the child. He could not now tell *why* these troubles had come upon him. God had sent them for some wise purpose, which perhaps he should one day know. He would not ask, but bear them patiently, comforting himself with the assurance that God was certainly his friend. Never had Raynor Thall drawn so near to God, as that night when he knelt so long in his silent, solitary room.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHINA.

RAYNOR'S long days out in search of employment made the more welcome the kind reception he ever met on his return. He soon learned to have a smile for Benny, and a tale of some wonderful dogs and horses he had seen in his walks, to turn off the child's attention from the real subject of his brother's thoughts. After Benny was fast asleep, Raynor relieved his mind by telling Mrs. Waller and Pierre of his vain efforts, and various rebuffs.

After one particularly trying day, Pierre said, quickly, "You go out no

more. I will teach you. In the evening. You see. Go no more."

That night found Pierre with one of Mrs. Waller's white saucers laid on the table before him, while in front of Raynor was another. Each had a small brush in his hand. Patiently, very patiently, Pierre was teaching Raynor to trace with a steady movement a simple pattern on the dish before him. Again and again the red lines were rubbed out, before Pierre was at all satisfied with his pupil's success. At length the teacher clapped his hands, and fairly frisked round the room, in default of English to express his hearty approval.

Raynor went no more out to seek employment. All day long he was busy with his brush and saucer, tracing new designs, to be subjected to Pierre's criticism, in the evening.

Several weeks passed in this way, before Pierre ventured to take Raynor with him to his place of daily labour. Raynor was silent, as he walked through the busy streets. He was too anxious to care to talk. Pierre's eyes sparkled, and there was a sprightliness about his movements that was extraordinary in a man of his age. He actually skipped along the road, in his glee, while Raynor strode on demurely at his side.

At a large and splendid China store they stopped. Passing through a glass door, they were at once in the midst of a splendid display of vases, and dishes of the most beautiful forms and exquisite colouring. At another time, Raynor would have been glad to linger and admire, but now he passed on with a palpitating heart. Pierre led the way to a stair-case, at the other end of the

store. Up many flights of stairs they climbed, until they came to a light, upper room, where a number of men were busily engaged at a long shelf or table. Raynor silently took a seat at the table, beside Pierre, and was soon as busy as the rest.

On the long table in front of the windows were placed various drawings and models, while each workman held in his hand some dish, on which he was copying the design from the pattern before him. One man was renewing the colouring of a landscape on the side of a beautiful vase. Another was carefully executing a coat of arms in the centre of a porcelain plate. Raynor was surprised to see several of the men painting fine China in lines of a dark, reddish brown. He remarked to Pierre, in a low voice, that he wondered that was

such a favourite colour, as it did not strike him as pretty.

"Dat comes out of de oven bright gold," said Pierre, smiling. "Dark when he goes in, he shines when he been baked."

"Gold!" said Raynor, to himself. "Gold!" Was Raynor reminded of the humble friends whom he had despised, who had been to him the true gold when his troubles were thick around him? Would he ever learn that the best treasures are sometimes hidden under the most homely exterior?

Raynor's work was simple, but he bestowed upon it as much pains as if it were the most difficult of patterns. Pierre watched him, from time to time, with satisfaction, and when the dish was done at last, the Frenchman rose

from his seat, and disappeared with it in his hand.

Raynor was very anxious during Pierre's absence. He knew that Pierre had taken it to the person who had the charge of this part of the establishment, and that in a few moments he should know whether he would be likely to find employment here.

A young man near Raynor hummed a few notes of a tune, as he surveyed for the moment his own completed work. The tune at once suggested to Raynor the words of a familiar hymn, which had been a favourite with his mother.

"When troubles assail, and dangers affright,
Though friends should all fail, and foes all unite,
Yet one thing secures us, whatever betide,
The Scripture assures us, the Lord will provide!"

The Lord will provide! This thought

calmed Raynor's anxiety at once. He could not tell whether he was to be successful in this attempt, but he would lean trustfully on his Heavenly Father, and calmly await the result.

Raynor's neighbour had no idea that he was doing either good or harm. He but suffered to pass his lips a few notes of a sacred melody, and lo! the tiny seed had already sprung up and borne its blessed fruit, in the stirring of a cheerful faith in Raynor's heart. The songs we idly sing, the words we carelessly speak, may be like the Devil's whispers, promptings to evil; or they may be even as angel voices, encouraging some human soul in its upward path.

Pierre's face was perfectly beaming on his return. The little, dark man, in his worn-out coat, looked almost beau-

tiful in Raynor's eyes, for he was a friend, bearing good tidings.

Yes, Raynor Thall had the promise of daily employment at Pierre's side, employment for which he was to receive good and regular wages. The boy was not only delighted, he was deeply grateful, not only to his Heavenly Friend, but to the humble man who had shown such a hearty interest in his welfare.

CHAPTER IX.

A LETTER.

BENNY missed his brother sadly, after having had him so long for a constant companion. He, however, hit upon a new source of amusement. He became the author of numerous letters. Not that Benny knew how to write. He could not even print letters, as many children can, but that did not interfere with his enjoyment. He would sit for hours, with a pencil in his hand, tracing irregular lines on a piece of paper, while he spoke aloud what he supposed himself to be writing. Many a time he laughed heartily at some of his communications, and often Mrs. Waller, from

the other side of the room, echoed his merriment.

It was to his "father" that Benny was always writing, giving him the most faithful pictures of his daily life, telling him of all his little joys, and sometimes of the little trials which crept into even his sunny lot. These letters were duly delivered to Raynor, every evening, to be put into an envelope on which Raynor assured him was written his father's exact address, in his very best hand. Every morning Benny's precious letter was scattered to the winds, on Raynor's way to his work, and every evening another tiny billet was thrust into the ever-ready envelope.

"How can you keep on writing, when you get no answers to your letters?" said Raynor to Benny, as the little fingers were putting perhaps the thir-

tieth letter into the unfaithful place of deposit.

"He will answer by-and-by. He is a good father," answered Benny, with a kind of sober decision, which seemed to say, "I have made up my mind, and you can't shake me."

Raynor thought of his own doubtful, wavering prayers to our merciful Father in Heaven, and silently yearned for the child-like trust which could so wait and persevere, without a single misgiving.

Mrs. Waller had been making Raynor a warm, winter suit. His old clothes were left on a chair, in the boys' room. Benny had been enjoying himself by thrusting his hands into the deep pocket on one side of the pantaloons, when it suddenly struck him to try the other. This pocket was not empty. Raynor had accidentally left something in it.

It was a piece of paper. Benny looked carefully at it. He could not be mistaken. Raynor had forgotten that day to take his letter to his father! Benny was inclined for a moment to be much displeased at this breach of trust, but was comforted by the thought that he could write letters and *play* put them in the Post Office, all day.

Pierre had not gone out with Raynor. He did not feel well, he said, and should take a holiday. A queer holiday, Benny thought it.

Pierre had bound up his head in flannel, and then wrapping a comforter round him, he sat down by a hot little box-stove, to enjoy himself, in his own room. Sundry pains in the muffled head threatened to spoil Pierre's holiday. The little Frenchman made light of these symptoms, and tried to per-

suade Benny that he had hit upon a very nice way for a grown-up man, who did not care to run about and play, to spend a day at home.

"Pierre, you shall be the Postmaster," said Benny, who was privileged to go about the house, wherever he pleased. "I will come and drop my letter into your pocket. You mustn't catch my hand, now, Pierre, as you do sometimes."

Benny demurely dropped his letter in the pocket, and took it out several times, and then, growing tired of the fun, he said, "Come, let us write some letters,—you and I. I'll tell what to say, and you put down. I'll get my pencil."

While Benny had gone to seek his treasure in Mrs. Waller's work-basket, Pierre looked at the envelope he idly

held in his hand. It bore the full address of Raynor's father.

"I wouldn't mind putting in a letter of my own, giving that father a talk about his boys," thought Pierre.

"Now you write," said Benny, putting his pencil and a bit of paper into Pierre's hands.

"No, I'll give you whole leaf," said Pierre. Pierre got up as he spoke, and, rummaging among his odd collection of valuables, found the queer little portfolio in which his writing materials were all put away together. His tiny bottle of ink was produced, and then, on the thinnest of French paper, Pierre commenced his letter, Benny dictating.

"Say—

"DEAR PAPA:

"I forgot to tell you yesterday Mrs. Waller had done Raynor's new clothes. He'll wear an apron

while he paints, to keep them clean. I wear a blue apron now, made out of one of Mrs. Waller's. Pierre is writing for me. Pierre says he has a holiday, but he looks very queer. His head is done up in a red shirt. Max sold a great many pins yesterday. He can't think what made people want so many pins. We had fried fish for breakfast. It was very good. I like onions, don't you? Max does, and so does Pierre, and so does Mrs. Waller, but Raynor don't. Raynor is teaching me to sing 'the Lord will provide.' I guess you'll answer this letter."

"He will. He will," said Pierre, with a sly twinkle in his eyes. "There, now, run away, and come see me by by."

Benny went out obediently, and was soon busy playing horse with the chair on which Mrs. Waller was contentedly rocking.

Pierre seemed in the mood for letter writing. He had a good deal to add to Benny's composition, and in a some-

what different strain. A strange mixture it was, of French and English, but he did not see anything funny about it. It came right from his queer, kind heart.

In his own small, foreign hand, he carefully copied the address on Benny's envelope. This done, Pierre sealed up the letter with evident satisfaction.

Another sheet of thin paper had to be scribbled over, and placed in the worn envelope, before Pierre was ready to admit the little fellow, whose fat fist had more than once knocked for admission.

"Pierre wrote my letter to-day. You forgot it this morning," was Benny's evening salutation to Raynor. There was triumph as well as reproach in his tone.

Raynor was a little flurried as he

took out the thin sheet. It might be dangerous for Benny to have such a way of writing his letters. But the scrawls reassured Raynor, and he put the envelope in his pocket, without a suspicion that Pierre had done anything more than make that senseless scribbling for Benny's diversion.

Pierre was in a particularly merry mood that evening. He said, after all, he had had a good holiday. In truth, he seemed much better than in the morning, though he adhered strictly to his costume for such festal occasions. Herb-tea had been abundantly furnished to Pierre, during the day, and at every sip he had chuckled at the thought of the document he held in his pocket.

Pierre had not been trained in any

very definite ideas of right and wrong. According to his creed, a little deceit was quite excusable, when it was to bring about a good end. Poor Pierre had never been taught that the slightest deceit is great loss to the soul, and great gain to the "father of lies," even Satan, our terrible enemy. It was a wonder that Pierre was as good as he was, with the few advantages he had enjoyed. Raynor might have given him many a hint about the better path, but Raynor had never thought that he might return Pierre's kindness by trying to do him good. Yet, Raynor was, after all, very useful to Pierre. The Frenchman could see that the lad was striving to subdue his proud and hasty temper, and endeavouring faithfully to fulfil the humble duties of his lot.

Every true Christian *must* let his light shine, whether he knows it or not.

Raynor's light was dim and flickering, but it was still alive, and might yet increase more and more, unto the perfect day.

CHAPTER X.

THE KNIFE.

Mr. Penfold thought himself a very shrewd man of business. He quite prided himself on the bargains he had made, and the difficulties he had overcome, during forty years of active life. Among his various transactions, none had pleased him better than establishing the Thalls, as lodgers, in good Mrs. Waller's humble home. Mr. Penfold had actually made a minute on paper of the advantages thus gained. His memorandum was as follows:

I. Good care for the little fellow. II. Take down big boy's notions. III. Keep both safe from bad company. IV. Have them under my

own eye, without their knowing it. V. Cheap place, in case I have to pay their board myself. VI. Kind folks, if nobody should ever claim the boys; wouldn't turn them out if anything should happen to me. VII. Help Max and his wife on a little, as long as boys or I can pay board. N. B. Good transaction. Took place Sept. 16. J. P.

Mr. Penfold seemed to have business very often, of late, in the neighbourhood of Max Waller's shop, and not unfrequently he had various purchases to make of the German himself. Whenever he was near, or at Mrs. Waller's, he must always have a chat with Benny. A pleasant chat to both parties, it generally proved, and ended now and then by Benny's thrusting some new treasure deep into his pocket, while his face was beaming with thanks to the giver.

Benny had such a visit from Mr. Penfold, one morning, and was left the

happy possessor of a real knife, to be all his own. There were two sharp blades, for Benny reassured himself of the fact, every few minutes, during the day. Before evening, two of his fingers had gone into a state of retirement, one in the depths of a cotton bandage, and the other was somehow enabled to fill the thumb of one of Max's old gloves. Benny considered these wounds highly honourable, and hastened to exhibit them to Raynor, as soon as he returned at night.

"How did you cut yourself, Benny?" said Raynor, with more severity than pity in his manner.

"With my new knife, Mr. Penfold gave me. *My new knife*," said Benny, producing his treasure, and proceeding to open the blades in a free way that was rather alarming, considering what

had happened to the two disabled fingers.

"Give me the knife!" said Raynor.

Benny gave it up at once. Raynor quietly closed the blades, and put the knife into his own pocket. "You are too little to have a knife," said the elder brother, with more care for Benny's fingers than for his feelings.

"It is *my* knife! Mr. Penfold gave it to me!" said Benny, his face flushing, and his chest swelling, while the tears rushed to his eyes. "Give me *my* knife."

"It must be my knife, till you are old enough to use it properly," said Raynor, decidedly. "I will put it away, and keep it for you till you are a big boy."

"I'm a big boy now!" said Benny, indignantly. "I have my hair cut short, like yours, and my trowsers have

got pockets, and see how thick my shoes are!"

The momentary satisfaction occasioned by the remembrance of these honours came near putting Benny into a good humour, but at that moment Raynor buttoned up his pocket in a decided manner, that seemed to invite him to a continuance of the conflict.

"I will have my knife!" screamed Benny, flying at the pocket, with his cheeks glowing with anger.

"Naughty boy! You must go up stairs, if you don't behave yourself!" said Raynor, with what he meant to be great dignity.

The manner did not strike Mrs. Waller favourably, but she prudently kept silence.

"I won't go up stairs! I won't! I won't!" shouted Benny, giving Ray-

nor's chair some threatening kicks with those very thick shoes.

"Then I shall have to carry you," said Raynor. In another moment, Benny, struggling and screaming, was borne from the room.

In the midst of the feather bed he was deposited, and then Raynor went out, turning the key of the room in the lock, to make sure of the safety of the little delinquent.

Raynor did not feel like going back to the sitting-room, just then. He was conscious of being more excited than he cared to own. He took two or three turns in the narrow entry before he could make up his mind to go down stairs. No one spoke to him, when he took his seat at table, until Mrs. Waller said, "Shall I take Benny's supper to him?"

"No, I thank you!" was Raynor's only reply.

Mrs. Waller was particular, every time anybody was helped, to put something on a plate beside her, so that before the meal was over, the culprit seemed to have in store for him a true Benjamin's portion.

As soon as supper was done, Raynor went up stairs, with the full plate in his hand. He knocked at the door. A pleasant voice called out, "Who's there?"

"It is I. Your brother Raynor. Are you a good boy now?" was the reply.

"Yes, I'm sorry. Come in!" said Benny.

Benny had not moved from the spot where he had been dropped. When Raynor opened the door, the little fellow lifted up his red and swollen face

to be kissed, saying, "Please kiss me, Raynor. I am sorry I was a naughty boy. I won't do so again."

Raynor stooped down, and the little arms were twined round his neck, and the wet cheek pressed close to his. "Love me, Raynor. I want to be a good boy," said Benny.

"I do love you, and I have not been happy, at all, at supper without you," said Raynor, kissing the child very tenderly. "Here, I have brought up your supper for you. Mrs. Waller put it on the plate. I believe she thought you were going to be very hungry."

Benny forthwith began to eat his supper, putting now and then into Raynor's mouth what he considered a choice morsel. These same morsels had a far better relish than the food that Raynor had forced himself to take down stairs, and

they soon came so often, that the brothers were at last actually taking supper together, as pleasantly as possible.

"Now, Raynor, will you put me to bed? I'm tired, and want to go to sleep," said Benny, when the meal was over.

Raynor undressed the child, his strong hands moving with unusual gentleness.

When Benny came to say his prayers, he put his arm round Raynor and said, "Kneel down with me, won't you? I love you, Raynor."

Side by side the brothers knelt, while the younger spoke his simple petitions. There was real earnestness in the way he spoke, "Please Lord forgive Benny all he has done naughty, and help him to be a good boy." It seemed, too, to Raynor, that there was more than

wonted tenderness in the "God bless Raynor," which closed the simple prayer.

Benny went to sleep with his arms round Raynor's neck. Many and searching were the thoughts that passed through Raynor's mind, as he lay there, with those loving arms about him. When should he be as a *child*, to his Heavenly Father? When should he so truly believe in his forgiveness, and turn to him in grateful love?

Verily, there is deep wisdom in those words, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

CHAPTER XI.

JOY.

Mr. Penfold was going to take Benny to the museum. He was brimful of joy, nay, his cup was running over, and everybody in the house must have a share in his gladness. He actually stood at the door of the shop, and told the passers-by, in the abundance of his delight, that good Mr. Penfold was going to take him to the museum. Care-worn men, and shabby dressed women, went on their way with a bright smile for a moment lighting their anxious faces, as Benny made his triumphant announcement.

We cannot make a child keep his joy to himself. He must have somebody to

share it with him, or it is a poor, half joy, after all. Here the chubby little fellows give their elders a lesson it were well for us to learn. Let us try to make others happy with what we enjoy; and, above all, when we have found a friend who will wipe all our tears away, let us lead the sorrowful of earth to him! When we have the promise of a glad home among the heavenly angels, let us not be content to go silently and selfishly thither. Let us hold out our hands, and beckon to those around us, to go with us and share our joy.

Through the busy streets of the city, Benny went skipping at Mr. Penfold's side. His beaming face seemed to make bright his very path, and strangers turned to look upon him as flowers bend to seek the sunshine.

What a dreary world this would be,

if the children were all left out! Bethlehem must have been a sad, sad spot indeed, when it was suddenly sown with little graves, and no prattling two year old child made music at his mother's side. We are so used to having the wee, happy things about us, that we hardly think to thank God for them, as among our choicest blessings.

Ah! if Christians would only be like the little children — a fount of joy for all the world — and why should they not? Why may they not go on their way as cheerily as Benny, at Mr. Penfold's side? Safe in the hands of that great Protector, they need fear no evil — they need have no anxious cares. God's true children should cast sunshine wherever they go, even as Benny's bright face made glad the hearts of passing strangers.

A weary, weary time it had seemed to Mr. Penfold, since he was a boy; but with Benny's hand in his, he was beginning to feel young again. By the time they reached the door of the museum, he was in almost as great a glee as his little companion.

"That can't be Joshua Penfold!" said one of his business acquaintances. "No, no! I never saw him out of his office on a week-day. He never would have chucked that little fellow under the chin so; and then, going to the museum! It can't be."

Yes, it was Joshua Penfold, and a pleasant afternoon he seemed likely to have of it. Why, he had not talked so much for many a day. He had to tell Benny all about the wax figures, and, before he knew it, he was giving a history of one of the scenes to quite an

audience of the "small fry," who had collected around him. Benny was full of admiration for the various waxen worthies shut up in glass cases, and had perfect confidence in their being faithful likenesses of the original. He made Mr. Penfold smile, by saying, "that General Jackson's cheeks looked just like Pierre's, and Queen Victoria was almost as pretty as Mrs. Waller."

There was a great crowd in the region of the bears. Mr. Penfold had turned for a moment to speak to an acquaintance, and just then a rough party, pushing by, carried Benny along with them, and he was wholly separated from his kind protector.

It was in vain that Mr. Penfold forced his way hither and thither; he could not find his little charge. Far from the bears and their admirers, Benny was

borne by the moving mass, while Mr. Penfold asked questions of his neighbours, and became very unpopular, as "the little red-faced man, who was in everybody's way." Benny, meanwhile, gave himself no anxiety as to the result of his adventure. He managed to get on the outside edge of the crowd, so that, as it moved on, he kept near the cases, full of stuffed birds and beasts of every clime. Benny tried to fancy he was in the ark, seeing the dumb companions of Noah's voyage. The hum of the restless, talking crowd, he thought was like the noise of the waves, and he became so much pleased with the fancy, that he almost forgot it was not real. If, now and then, a misgiving crossed Benny's mind, it was quickly checked by the thought that Mr. Penfold would take care of him. He would come for

him, when he wanted him to go home. So the afternoon passed away. The evening came on, and but increased the crowd that was gathered to see the wonders of the museum. Worn out by fatigue and excitement, Benny at last resolved to sit down in a niche, between two great glass-cases, and there wait till Mr. Penfold should take him by the hand to lead him home.

Against the wall the little fellow leaned, while on, on, moved the eager, curious visitors, making a kind of Babel with their mingled talk. Benny's head soon dropped on his bosom, and, hidden safely away, he fell into a sound sleep.

Mr. Penfold had grown tired of pushing hither and thither, asking for a little curly-headed boy, in a full suit of plaid homespun. Nobody had seen any such

child; at least, nobody had any news to tell of him.

At one of the doors of exit, Mr. Penfold established himself, while at the other he stationed a friendly policeman, to watch for his charge. Benny could not slip out unobserved. That was a comfort. It was hard work for Mr. Penfold to keep his ground, but he did, and every child who passed under the gas-light, by his door, was subjected to his careful scrutiny.

Silence and dimness were stealing over the museum, and yet Mr. Penfold lingered round the door. He could not go away. He could not go without Benny! Perhaps the child had thrown himself on the protection of some stranger, and had been at home all the time that Mr. Penfold was haunting the mu-

seum, like a will o' the wisp flitting over a marsh.

Straight for Mrs. Waller's went Mr. Penfold, cheering himself all the way with the hope that prompted the sudden change in his movements.

Of course, no Benny was found at Mrs. Waller's; but, instead, there were four indignant friends, who were inclined to think Mr. Penfold an unworthy bachelor, not fit to be trusted with the care of a child.

Raynor was for having the streets filled with criers, who were to keep everybody awake, shouting "lost child!" till Benny was found.

Max started out at once, on an independent search, with no other guide but his nose, and no other means of finding the object of his search, than an unavailing inquiry for "*the poy, Penny,*" an

inquiry which produced more laughter than it won assistance.

Mrs. Waller tried bravely to keep up courage by assuring everybody that he would certainly be found; but her voice was very husky, and at length she dropped into a chair, and threw her apron over her head, to take a good cry. Pierre but for a moment expressed his indignation at Mr. Penfold, for letting go of the child's hand under any circumstances, and then he hooked his arm with Mr. Penfold's and made straight for the museum;—Raynor following, in a most unhappy state of mind.

Pierre at once demanded admission to get the little boy that was locked in by mistake. Though his English was poor, he made himself understood, and his tone was so confident that the doors were opened, and his bright eyes went

peering into every cranny. At last he came upon Benny, sleeping as soundly as if he were stretched on Mrs. Waller's feather bed, instead of being curled up in a little heap, amid the darkness of the deserted museum!

"I thought you would come for me, Mr. Penfold. I guess I've been asleep!" said Benny, shutting his eyes to avoid the glare of the gas-light, turned full upon him.

Benny seemed to think the whole affair had been managed admirably, and with the ride home, in Pierre's arms, by moonlight, as a particularly pleasant part of the proceeding.

When Mr. Penfold was in the silence of his own room, that night, he thought much of his little companion; and somehow his heart seemed softened and touched by the querulous joy, and im-

plicit trust of the child. So it is often with a world-worn man, to whom the preacher speaks in vain. God's "little ones," have that ministry among us. Would that all would listen to their teaching!

Did Mr. Penfold remember how Benny's face had been turned to him, from time to time, in the midst of his joy? Had he marked the expression, half gladness, half gratitude, that had beamed from every feature? Did Mr. Penfold so turn to his heavenly Friend in thankfulness for all his blessings? Were his pleasures such that he dared to thank God for them, and in the use of them?

That pleasure is not likely to lead us astray, for which we involuntarily look up to our dear Lord in grateful love. When our glad hearts seek our Father's face, that face beams upon us a smile of holy approval.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SICK-ROOM.

SOME people seem to think that there are no children worth caring for, besides their own, and that the present gratification of those same youngsters is the only earthly thing of importance. So it had proved, on the afternoon of Benny's visit to the museum. Somebody's Jacky or Johnny, just out of a sick-bed, and still weak and excitable from scarlet fever, had been taken to the museum, instead of being made quietly happy at home. An abundant supply of the foul air of the sick-room had been brought with Master Jacky or

Johnny, as a present to the healthy little people he might chance to meet.

Children suffering from contagious disorders, and children who lie and swear, are somewhat alike, in one respect; they are dangerous companions, and had better be kept by themselves, until they can be let out without doing other people harm.

This good rule not having been followed for Benny's advantage, the poor child had to pay the penalty for somebody's imprudence. Tossing with fever, and his face all on fire, he lay for many days a sufferer, while the whole family was plunged in anxiety and distress.

Raynor watched over Benny with unwearied faithfulness, until a severe sore throat placed him at the side of his little brother. There they lay, in utter helplessness, while their humble friends

ministered to their wants, and anticipated their slightest wish.

Benny was best satisfied when his hand was clasped in Raynor's. A little fluttering thing it was, stirring with an uncertain movement, like that of a bird just about to wing its way to the sunny skies. Raynor trembled as the hot fingers quivered in his. Soon, very soon, that hand might be lying all too still and cold, while the Benny that he had loved would be far away.

Raynor's thoughts were sad and troubled. How would his father bear the news of his darling's death? Now, for the first time for many months, a flood of old memories came over the mind of Raynor. Benny climbing his father's knee, privileged to search every pocket, and explore purse and wallet without reproof. He could see again the home

of his childhood, where the sad father had a smile only for his boys. Could it be that their father had ceased to love them? Could any stranger have taken their place in his heart? Could he fail to mourn, should he hear that his little Benny was no more? Had Raynor been right in taking the responsibility of cutting off all intercourse with his father? Why had he not, like the child, continued to trust and write, and write and trust, cheerfully awaiting an answer? Raynor saw revealed the pride of his heart, the stubbornness of his will, which had made him too ready to believe that his father had ceased to care for him. "But Mr. Penfold thought so," whispered a self-justifying spirit. "Mr. Penfold did not know my father. He had never seen him happy with his boys," was the just reply of the awakened

conscience. How could he ever meet that father's face, and tell him Benny died among strangers, still loving and trusting the father whom Raynor had been willing to believe an unnatural monster?

"Raynor! Raynor!" whispered Benny, putting his hot lips close to Raynor's cheek.

"What, darling!" said Raynor, with more than usual tenderness.

"Raynor, perhaps you and I will die. That would be so nice, to die together, and go to see mother. And father would come by-and-by, and tell me why he didn't answer my letters, and we should all be so happy, just as we used to be in the old home. Don't you want to die, Raynor? I do."

"Don't talk so, Benny," said Raynor, shuddering. "Dear Benny, I want you

to live, and see father in this world. I want to take you back to him, and tell him you have always loved him and trusted him."

"But I could see him in Heaven, and mother, too," said Benny. The little fellow tried to sing a stanza of a favourite hymn, but his voice failed, and he only added, in a whisper, "I should see Jesus, in Heaven, and the beautiful angels. I want to die, Raynor."

"You must talk not, Benny," said Mrs. Waller, coming in, and laying her cool hand on his hot forehead. She put a cup of cold water to his parched lips. He drank, and then fell back into a drowsy state, half stupor, half sleep.

Raynor could not sleep; he could not even lie still. He tossed to and fro, a prey to fear and regret. He had not the full faith which would have made

him not only willing to die, but sure of being welcomed to the Heavenly kingdom, for the sake of the All-sufficient Saviour. Not on the perfect Christ, but on his own sinful self, dwelt his sad thoughts. He knew that he deserved chastisement, and trembled lest he was to see before him the cold, silent form of his dead brother, and to hear the reproaches of that father who could listen no more to the prattling voice of his youngest child.

"O, Lord, suffer me to live, to confess my fault," prayed Raynor. "Let me see my father's face once more, and ask his forgiveness for all the harsh, jealous, angry thoughts I have cherished towards him."

Raynor dared not pray in words that Benny's life might be spared, but the deep yearning of his heart was to see

the little fellow once more in health, and to restore him to his father's arms. He knew that here trial and temptation awaited him, and above there was a certainty of eternal joy for such little trusting souls. He did not ask to have him stay in this world of sin and sorrow, but his tears fell, and his heart throbbed its agonized remonstrance, at the very thought of parting from his dear little companion.

Far, very far, was Raynor yet from the model which Christ set in the midst of his disciples, and pointed out for their careful imitation. His soul must be moulded and fashioned, and enlightened by divine grace, ere he could leave his sins and cares to the Lord, and, with the faith and trust of a little child, long to "fall asleep in Jesus."

CHAPTER XIII.

A RESTING PLACE.

THE church bells were not ringing out a joyous peal! There was no sound of drums and trumpets, as on a day of national jubilee. Yet, in at least one humble home, there was a gladness which made every heart light. Benny was better! Max had been trying, in his best English, to tell the good news to the milkman, who never failed to ask for the little boy, whose face had been to him as a murmured blessing on his morning rounds. Pierre was writing one of his queer letters to Mr. Thall, telling him, with French extravagance, that he was "ravished with joy, en-

chanted, delirious with delight," to be able to give him such good news. Mrs. Waller was making savory broth for the invalid, while Raynor sat beside him, his heart running over with deep gratitude to the God who had mercifully spared his treasure. Benny, meanwhile, did not realize that he was the object of so much interest. He was willing to live, though he had wished to die. His joyous spirit found food for satisfaction in all the circumstances of life, sent him by his Heavenly Father.

Benny was sitting in a low chair, wrapped up in Pierre's gayly-flowered dressing-gown. His tiny feet were thrust into Max's warm mittens, while his head rested on one of Mrs. Waller's best linen pillow-cases, woven by her mother in the fatherland.

The blue eyes looked larger than ever,

and more earnest and loving. Now, they were fixed on Raynor, as Benny said, "Will you write me a little note to Papa, to-day? I can tell you just what I want to say." Raynor had a letter of his own to write to his father that day — a penitent, trustful letter. He would, however, first make the child happy, by granting his request. This time the pen and the brown envelope should be faithful. The father should know how truly and confidently his little son had clung to him through months of apparent desertion.

Raynor had taken his pen in hand, and was just writing the "dear father," by way of a commencement. Down stairs, Max was arranging the wares in his window, in the most attractive manner. Hesitatingly he held in his hand a stock of horn combs, undecided whether

or not to put them next to the box of gay-coloured sewing-silks. The combs were left in a most unattractive heap, on the top of the sewing-silks.

Mr. Penfold had stepped into the store, accompanied by a lady and gentleman.

"How is Benny this morning?" said Mr. Penfold, with unusual excitement in his manner.

"Goot! Goot! Besser!" said Max. "Augusta! Augusta!" appealing helplessly to his wife, to express the various symptoms of improvement which had so filled the whole household with joy.

Mrs. Waller came forth, the bowl of broth in her hand. "It is the fater! It is the mutter!" exclaimed Mrs. Waller, her big blue eyes filling up with tears of joy. "I know! I know! Come! come!"

It was not hard to trace, in Mr. Thall's face, the features of Raynor, though on a larger scale. There, too, was much of the same expression of pride and delineation, mingled with Benny's gentle sweetness, lingering round the expressive mouth.

It was easy to see that it was Mrs. Thall who was leaning upon her husband's arm. With almost an own mother's eagerness, she pressed after Mrs. Waller.

The good woman threw open the door of the room where the brothers were sitting together.

"My dear, dear boys!" said the father.

In another moment Benny was clasped to his father's bosom, while Raynor's arms were about him.

"Forgive me! forgive me! dear father!" said Raynor, lifting his stream-

ing eyes to the pale countenance of Mr. Thall.

Benny spoke not a word, but he nestled close in their strong arms, and pressed his cheek to the fond face that was leaning down to his. Joy, deep joy, filled his heart, and spoke in every feature.

CHAPTER XIV.

A MOTHER.

MRS. THALL was sitting lovingly at Raynor's side, speaking in low, sweet tones. "And was it to avoid me, that you wished to leave your home, Raynor? Did you believe that I could love a father who would grow cold to his boys, those boys of whom he had so fondly and proudly told me? How I promised myself to be a true mother to you! How I planned to win Benny's little heart, and make you love me, because I so truly loved you! How I grieved when I found that you had gone, gone far away, where I could not know you,

could not strive to make you good and happy! But I could pray for you. *We* could love you and pray for you,—your father and I. Yes, it was for our dear, absent boys we prayed. It was of them we talked. It was for them we planned and hoped, and hoped and planned and prayed. A little visit to their uncle, we thought, would be quite enough for them, and then we would go for them, and bring them back to their own home, and be to them the truest and best of parents. But God saw otherwise. He had another plan for them and us. Before we had time to receive a single letter from you, we were on our way northward, to seek you and bring you back. A storm overtook us. Our vessel was dashed to pieces, and we should have been lost, but for a French ship

that took us on board, and carried us safely to Bordeaux. There your poor father lay long in the delirium of fever, caused by the suffering and distress of the wreck. Even in his wanderings, it was of his boys that he talked,—his darling boys. It was for them he murmured his broken prayers. To them he stretched out his arms; then wept that he could not fold them to his bosom. Again and again I wrote to Mr. Devine, hoping, still hoping, to tell your dear sick father that I had a letter from the children he so fondly loved.

"No word, no line came to cheer him. When the weary months had passed away, and his feeble limbs began to gain their strength, he was sure he should gain faster, if he were but on the way to meet his boys. We started, and by

slow, short stages we moved on, till we were at last on the good steamer that was to bring us to you. He was right. Every mile that brought us nearer these shores saw new colour coming into his cheeks, and now he looks so well, and oh, so happy!"

"I'm so happy, too!" said Benny, his face all beaming with joy and love.

"And I—I am not worthy to be so blessed," said Raynor. "I have been a poor, jealous, proud, stubborn boy. Can you, will you love me? May I call you mother?"

"*My* Raynor! Your father's Raynor! I know you. You are not all pride and stubbornness. I know your true, kind, upright heart. I know how you struggle as a Christian child with the tempters that assail you. Love you? Yes, indeed, I will. I do love you. Then

you *will* call me mother? I will try to deserve the sacred name. I will try so to lead you Heavenward, that I may some time see you rejoicing with your own blessed, sainted mother in the kingdom of our Father."

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

We need not follow Raynor and Benny on their return to their West Indian home. We are sure that love and joy will be their companions. There is no happiness on earth like that which God gives to a family united in the bonds of Christian love. Whether they have poverty or riches, a sure gladness is theirs, a gladness which is of the nature of the joy of the angels in Heaven.

It was a mortification to Pierre to find that all his precious letters had been wasted, and that it was not through his cunning plan that the brothers were

restored to their father's arms and home. Yet the kind Frenchman was unselfishly glad to witness their re-union. Pierre took not "a red-flannel holiday," but a real day of leisure, in which to bid the boys good-bye and see them safely on board the gallant ship which was to bear them over the sea. His bright eyes sparkled through tears as he took his last look on his young friends, and he checked his own regrets by the remembrance that his loss was their gain. Often, as Pierre fashioned some graceful design, amid his days of toil, his heart was cheered by the remembrance of the affection of Raynor and Benny, and it was a glad day for him when he received a real letter, fairly printed by Benny's own hand, a letter full of grateful love to the dear friends at Mrs. Waller's.

The West Indian boys had taught Pierre to respect the faith in which they were trained, a faith which allows no object for the soul's deep worship but the one true God, a faith which enjoins truth, humility and love.

As for Max, he never told anybody, either in English or German, what he felt about parting with his lodgers, but stored away among his choicest treasures were some of Benny's scraps of scribbled paper, and the mittens which had served him for slippers, in his days of convalescence.

Mrs. Waller had too truly a woman's heart not to grieve for "her own Benny." Before many months, however, one of the best of human comforters came to Mrs. Waller's home, in the shape of a little, round-faced baby, named Max Waller, after its father,

and doomed, in due time, to hear sundry stories, of which Benny Thall would be the unvarying hero.

Mr. Penfold had been the silent witness of the meeting between the father and the children. The father whom he had doubted and condemned had been true and constant and loving. The proud and wilful son had been welcomed without a single reproach, while the dear, trustful child, Benny, had found joy and rest in his father's bosom.

The scene was not lost on Mr. Penfold. He, too, had a Father, a Heavenly Friend, whom he had doubted and forsaken. Would that Father receive him, should he turn unto him in true penitence of heart? "Our Father who art in Heaven," is the prayer that our Saviour has fashioned for the lips of sinful men; so thought Mr. Penfold, and, as a

lost and wandering son, he sought the face of the great God of Heaven.

No earthly forgiveness is so full, so free, so loving, as that which our Lord and Saviour joyfully grants to his repentant children.

"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."