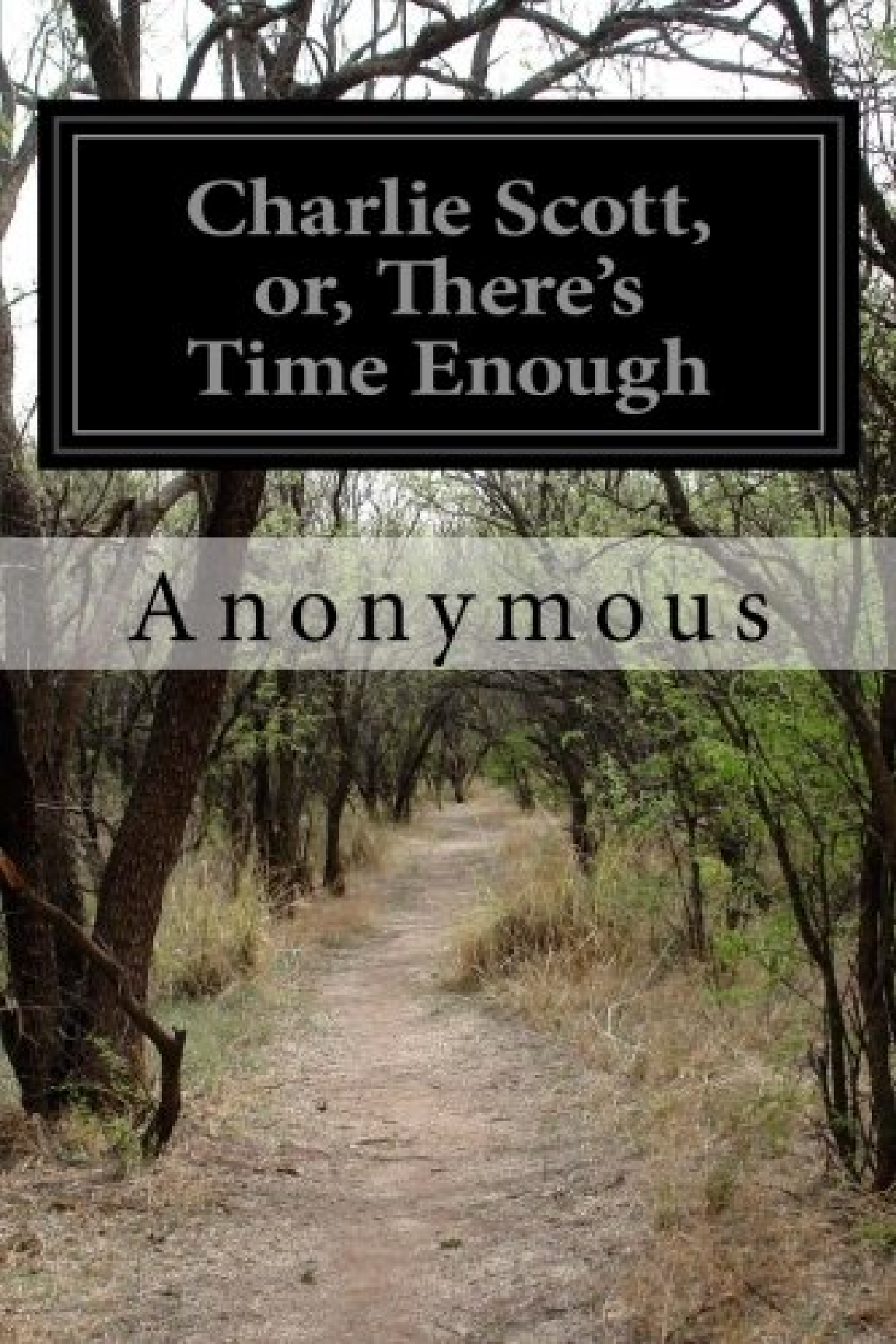

Charlie Scott,
or, There's
Time Enough
Anonymous

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CHARLIE RESCUED.

CHARLIE SCOTT;

OR,

THERE'S TIME ENOUGH.



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY,
56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD,
AND 164, PICCADILLY.

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CHAPTER I.

A SHIP AT LAST.



HIS has been a hard month for me," thought Morley

Scott, the pilot, as he stood shading his eyes from the sun, and gazing anxiously out at sea. He hoped to have caught a glimpse of ships in the distance, for the winds had been very contrary lately. Many ships had been obliged to pass by the harbour, unable to get in, and the pilots had found very little to do.

"That looks well," he thought, brightening up, as he saw a busy little steam-tug puffing along with a ship in tow; he knew a pilot would soon be wanted to bring it safely into the docks. He had not stood many minutes, trying to make out the ship, when he heard his name called, and turning round, he saw a boy running towards him.

"Here's the *Refuge* at last, Morley Scott," said the boy; "they want you on board directly, because they are coming in to-night."

Morley Scott put his hand in his pocket, and gave the lad the customary sixpence for his good tidings. "It's almost the last," he said with a smile, pointing to the sixpence; "but still the news is cheap at that."

"I should think it is," said the boy, as he ran off laughing.

Morley Scott walked quickly along the pier until he came up to a row of boys, who were sitting on the edge of the wall, fishing. He stood for a moment to watch them with an expression of amusement in his good-natured face. They sat perfectly still, afraid to speak or move, and scarcely daring to breathe, lest they should frighten away the fish; each boy watching his own and his neighbour's line with feverish anxiety. Suddenly one little fellow, in a state of great excitement, began tugging at his line.

"Now then, Charlie Scott," called a big boy, who seemed to be the head of the party, "what are you pulling in that line for again? That is the third time in less than ten minutes; how is it likely we can catch anything?"

All the boys joined in a low chorus of "Yes, indeed!" "A pretty fellow he is to fish!" "Serves us right for letting him come with us." The fact was, the boys had been very unsuccessful that afternoon; they had taken nothing, and it was a relief to have some one to lay the blame upon.

"I am sure there's something this time, though," said Charlie, still pulling away. His manner was so confident, that the boys became interested in spite of themselves, and several nearly lost their balance, craning out their necks to see beyond each other.

At last up came the hook, with a jerk that sent Charlie backwards; it had been entangled in a large piece of seaweed, that gave way suddenly just as he got it to the surface. "It's very strange," he said, as he examined the hook minutely, longing to find something alive, no matter how small. "It's very strange; I'm always feeling something, and yet I never catch anything."

"I tell you what it is, young Scott, if you don't mind what you're about, you'll both feel something and catch something soon that you won't like, perhaps," grumbled the big boy.

"Here, Charlie," called Morley Scott, seeing there was likely to be a quarrel, "I want you to run on an errand for me."

Charlie looked round, and seeing his father, he

jumped up readily. To tell the truth, he was not sorry of the excuse to give up his fishing; he had been thoroughly tired of it for the last quarter of an hour, although he did not like to own it to the other boys. He was a bright, happy-looking little fellow, about eight years of age, with light, waving hair, merry blue eyes, and sunburnt face.

"What is it, father?" he asked.

"I want you to run and find uncle John; tell him that the *Refuge* is lying off at sea, waiting for us. Ask him to come with you, because they want to be into the docks to-night."

Away ran Charlie with his message, and soon returned with uncle John. All three then made their way to the docks, where a number of small boats were moored.

"Do take me with you, father," pleaded Charlie, as the two men jumped into one of the boats and prepared to push off.

"No, no, Charlie, not this time," said his father; "remember you have your lessons to learn; besides, I dare say you have not had your tea."

"Oh, I can learn my lessons when I come back, and I've got a large bun here," he said, lifting up his jacket to show it; "uncle John bought it for me as we came along. Please do let me go, it's so miserable now, when you are away; I never like to go home, Mrs. Wood is so cross."

"Well, jump in then," said his father, with a sigh; he knew how the boy missed his kind, gentle mother. She had been dead nearly six months, and since then Charlie and he seemed to have been without a home.

When his wife died Morley Scott scarcely knew what to do for the best. He had no relation who could take charge of Charlie and of his house, so he thought it would be best to sell his furniture and go to lodgings. It seems he had not been very fortunate in his choice, for according to Charlie's account Mrs. Wood, the landlady, was often ill-tempered.

The two men took their oars, and began to pull in the direction of the ship that was lying out some distance from the harbour. Charlie had found himself a snug little corner in the stern of the boat, and was enjoying himself thoroughly in a quiet way, catching at the bits of floating seaweed and chips, spreading his fingers out like the arches of a miniature bridge, and letting the water rush through them, occasionally munching at his huge bun by way of variation.

For a wonder Charlie's busy tongue was still; he saw by his father's countenance that he was not in a mood for talking. It wore a troubled, saddened expression; he was living over the old sorrow that Charlie's words had called up. His uncle, too, seemed in deep thought, and rowed on in silence; although they were unconscious of it, perhaps, there is no doubt that all three felt the influence of that beautiful calm summer evening.

The rich hues of the setting sun were gradually fading out from the sky, yet wonderful shades of crimson, rose colour, and gold, still lingered lovingly amongst the clouds, and rested upon the waters. All the bustle of the town had been left far behind; there was nothing to break the silence but the measured plash of the oars, and the soft rippling and murmuring of the water as the little boat rode lightly

over the waves.

As Charlie gazed up at the glorious sky, he began to wonder where the sun went to every night, and how it was that there were always such lovely colours in the sky just where it disappeared; at last he came to the conclusion that the sun went into heaven, and that beautiful golden and rose-coloured light streamed out when the door was opened.

Charlie liked this idea so much, that he was quite disappointed when he learned afterwards that it was not the case.

"What a grand place heaven must be!" thought Charlie, remembering what he had heard at Sunday school. "How splendid God's angels must look, floating about in that beautiful light, with their white robes and crowns of gold!" Charlie went on thinking and thinking much in the same strain, until at last the ship was neared.

Morley Scott brought in his oars with a sudden movement, and springing up in the boat, hailed the ship, "*Refuge* ahoy!"

CHAPTER II.

GOING HOME.



T is more than hour since we left Morley Scott hailing the *Refuge*. How is it that the ship has not been moved yet? And here is the little boat turned homeward, and strangers have the charge of it.

Is Charlie asleep, that he lies there so pale and still? he has not moved once since we looked. And that something lying in the boat, covered by a ship's colour, what can it be? The night air is damp and chill, and the sea looks grey and deadly in the twilight.

One of the sailors leans forward to look at Charlie. "Poor little one," he murmurs, in a kind but sad tone.

"I wish we were yonder," said the other sailor, moving his head in the direction of the town. "I don't like the look of that boy at all; it may only be fainting, but it looks to me more like death than anything else."

It was almost dark when they reached the harbour.

"You stay with the boat," said the sailor who spoke just before, "and I'll go up into the town and see about help."

A man who had noticed their arrival sauntered up, curious to know if anything was the matter.

"Morley Scott and his brother are drowned."

In answer to the man's anxious questions, the sailor told him that when Scott's boat came along-side the ship a rope was thrown to them as usual to be made fast, and, unfortunately, both Scott and his brother sprang forward to catch it; the boat gave a violent lurch, and in a moment they were plunged into the sea, Morley Scott's head striking the ship's side as he fell. His brother was never seen again; they supposed he must have come up underneath the ship, and so met certain death.

Morley Scott's body they recovered, and had brought with them in the boat.

The sad news that two men had been drowned soon spread, and before long many anxious, awe-stricken faces were gazing down into the boat at the object which lay terribly still, covered by the ship's colour.

When poor little Charlie was lifted up, many a mother, with tears in her eyes, love in her heart, and thoughts of the little ones at home, pressed forward with offers to take the boy. One woman was even more eager than the rest: "Let me have him," she said; "he is like my own child that I lost last year come back again," and trembling with, emotion, she took poor Charlie, who was still unconscious, in her arms.

"I'll carry him home for you, Mrs. Heedman," said one of the men, kindly; "it's a good way to your house, and you'd find him heavy before you got there."

When Charlie awoke, as he thought, from sleep, he found himself, to his great astonishment, in a neat little bed with white curtains and counterpane. A small table stood near, with a glass, and bottles of

medicine, such as he remembered to have seen when his mother was ill; and opposite his bed hung a picture of the finding of Moses.

It was very strange: Charlie rubbed his eyes, thinking he could not be quite awake, surely, and looked again; but the things were still there. Then he tried to remember what happened before he went to sleep, but his head felt so weak and light that he could not think. He put his hand out and felt the curtains; they were real enough. Just as he was making up his mind that he would try to sit up and look about the room, the door was gently opened, and a pleasant face peeped in. Charlie remembered at once that it was good, kind Mrs. Heedman, who used to come and see his mother when she was ill.

She seemed surprised and glad to see that he knew her, and coming quickly up to him, gave him a kiss, put his pillow to rights, and told him he must not get up yet.

"I feel very tired, Mrs. Heedman," said Charlie languidly; "have I been asleep long?"

"You have been very ill, dear," she answered, gently, "so ill that you did not know any one for a few days. Are you glad I brought you here to this nice little bed, to take care of you?"

"Oh yes, thank you," said Charlie, earnestly. Mrs. Heedman saw that he was thinking and trying to remember something, so to change the current of his thoughts she poured out his medicine, and handed it to him. "Now drink this up, like a good boy," she said, "then I will bring you some beef tea soon."

Charlie rather unwillingly, and with a wry face,

drank the mixture. As he gave her back the glass, his eye rested on a picture that had been hidden before by the curtain; it was a ship and some small boats at sea. In a moment the something that he had been trying to remember flashed upon him, and burying his face in the pillow to shut out the picture, he sobbed out, "Oh, father, father!"

Mrs. Heedman stood quietly by, waiting until the first burst of grief was over, and asking in her heart for the help of God's Holy Spirit to teach her what she had best say to comfort him. Presently the heavy sobs almost ceased; but Charlie did not move or speak. She took his hand in hers smoothing and caressing it, as if to assure him of her sympathy.

"Charlie dear," she said gently, "it is very sad, and very hard to bear, is it not?" Charlie did not speak. She sat down beside him, still keeping his hand in hers, and went on speaking.

"Last year, when my own dear little boy died—you remember Tom, don't you, Charlie? Well, when he was taken from me, I thought my heart would have broken; it seemed as if I should never be happy again. I felt sad and ill, and weary of everything, just as you feel now." Charlie turned towards her, and looked interested. "For some weeks I was very unhappy, and thought no one had such a trouble as mine; but afterwards I learned how wrong it was of me to find fault with God's will; and when I began to count up all the blessings I had received, and remembered all that my dear Lord Jesus Christ had done and suffered for me, I felt sure that He who loved me so much would not let me suffer any pain or sorrow that was not necessary for my good."

Charlie was listening attentively; he quite understood

all Mrs. Heedman said. His mother had often read to him out of the Bible, and spoken to him of the Saviour.

Mrs. Heedman went on: "You must remember, Charlie, that you are now one of God's very dear children. We are all His children, but He has especial love and care for those whom He has been obliged to leave without any earthly parents. God promises in His own holy book, the Bible, that He will be 'a Father to the fatherless;' that He will relieve the fatherless; that He will help the fatherless; and that if the fatherless cry unto Him, He will surely hear their cry. When you are stronger, I will find the passages and read them to you, and many others that are very comforting. Now it is quite time that you had your beef tea; I will get it for you, and then we can talk again."

Charlie thought the beef tea was delicious; he was already beginning to feel that relish for savoury food that most fever patients experience when they are recovering.

"It's very nice," he kept repeating; and every now and then Mrs. Heedman met his blue eyes gazing into hers with a thoughtful, inquiring sort of look. At last he said, "Mrs. Heedman, do you think it was God who put it into your heart to bring me here and be so kind to me?"

"Yes, Charlie, I am sure of it."

"Then I'm quite sure that God loves me," said Charlie, energetically. "I can't help crying when I think about father," as he burst into another flood of tears; "but," he added, "I will try not to think any more that it was not kind of God to let him be drowned and leave

me by myself. I was thinking so a little while since;" and dropping his voice, he went on, "I want you, please, to tell me all about it—where father is, and uncle John. I saw them lift some one out of the water, dead, but I forget what happened after."

Mrs. Heedman told him as gently and as kindly as she could about his father's funeral; who arranged it, and where he was buried, and that his uncle's body had not been found. "When you are better, Charlie, we will go and see the grave, and you shall set some flowers on it."

"When I am a man," burst in Charlie, "I shall buy a beautiful tombstone for it."

"Very well," said Mrs. Heedman, getting up. "Now you must try to sleep a little. How very good and merciful God has been to you, Charlie, to spare your life in this illness! If it is His will, I trust I shall be able day by day to teach you how to devote the life He has given you to His service."

"Am I going to be with you always, Mrs. Heedman?" cried Charlie, opening his eyes very wide.

"Yes, I hope so," she answered. After a little more talking, principally on Charlie's side, who confided to her his private opinion of the cross Mrs. Wood, and his pleasure to think he was not going back to her any more, Mrs. Heedman left the room, and Charlie went to sleep.

CHAPTER III

ADELAIDE ROW.



HE house of the Heedmans was the end cottage of a long row, built for and occupied by the miners employed at the colliery that you might see in the distance. There were several rows of these cottages, but Adelaide Row, in which the Heedmans lived, was certainly the best in appearance. It was farthest from the mines, and was sheltered from the coal dust by its less fortunate neighbours. The houses looked cleaner and brighter altogether, and the little gardens flourished better.

John Heedman's garden was the pride of his heart, and the admiration and envy of the rest of "the Row." It certainly did look very gay and pretty. There were bright China-asters, sweet-scented stocks, French marigolds, rose bushes laden with blossoms, little clusters of candytuft, Virginia-stock, mignonette, and many other flowers, contrasting well in colour, and grouped in such good taste.

If John Heedman took a pride in his garden, Mrs. Heedman certainly took a pride in her house. Not that their furniture was more expensive than that of many of their neighbours, but it was in good order and neatly arranged. Nice white curtains were up at the windows; a few sweet-smelling flowers stood in a glass; and in a corner were some bookshelves, made

and painted by John Heedman himself, after work-hours, and very well stocked with good books; altogether there was an air of cleanliness, comfort, and refinement over all that made you wish to know the owners.

Mrs. Heedman often said in answer to her neighbours' remarks "that she must spend a deal of money over her house."—"It costs me nothing but a little thought and extra work. The poorest of us may indulge in order and cleanliness indeed, when you come to think of it, dirt and disorder cost the most, because your furniture gets soiled, and knocked about, and destroyed."

After Mrs. Heedman left Charlie, she began to prepare her husband's tea in the next room; and nicely she looked, as she moved lightly about in her clean light-print dress and white collar, her dark hair smoothly and plainly arranged, and a smile on her face. It was a face that made you look twice. Her eyes were so calm, so full of peace, you felt instinctively it was that peace which God alone can give. Some people do not believe that Christianity can make them happy; that is, because they have never felt it in their hearts. It is a peace which passeth all understanding. She was thinking of Charlie; how he would learn to love her, and please God; what a scholar he would be, and how carefully she would train him. She was trying to picture what he would be like if he lived to grow up, when John Heedman opened the door.

"Tea will be ready in a minute, John," she said, looking up; "I've been sitting with that dear child, and the afternoon has flown I scarcely know how. He got a turn for the better about one o'clock, and woke

up quite conscious and sensible;" and stepping softly to the door, she beckoned him to follow. They both stood looking at Charlie as he slept. He was very pale, traces of tears were still on his face, and one little thin white hand hung listlessly over the side of the bed. John Heedman stooped and touched it gently with his own rough, strong hand. "Poor little one!" he murmured.

That night, as John Heedman and his wife sat at tea, they determined to adopt Charlie, and make him as their own.

"I think," said John Heedman, "we ought to accept this child as a sacred charge from God, sent to us to be taken care of and trained for Him. Our duty seems plain enough; it is true we shall not be able to save so much, but perhaps there was a danger of our getting too fond of our bit of money; and God has seen this and sent the child, that, through it we may lend the money to Him. We shall have our treasure in heaven, instead of laying it up on earth."

"That is true," said Mrs. Heedman. "We shall be no poorer for what we spend on the child; and as for our old age, we will trust to the Lord—He will provide."

In a week's time Charlie was able to sit up; his favourite seat was at the open window, looking out into the pretty garden. He would sit for hours watching the gay butterflies and busy bees, roving from flower to flower, and gazing up at the ever-changing sky. The soft, fleecy clouds that sailed along so gracefully, Charlie liked to think were the robes of angels on their way to heaven with little children.

In a few weeks' time, to his great joy, he was strong

enough to go back to school; he was fond of learning, and the Heedmans were anxious for him to have as much schooling as they could possibly afford.

John Heedman had enjoyed a good plain education himself; he was intended for a tradesman, but his father died suddenly, and his mother and young sister being left dependent upon him, he went to work down the mine, as the wages were higher than he could get at any other employment. It was a great disappointment and trial to him, you may be sure; but he very wisely made the best of it, and thought to himself, "Well, if I am only to be a miner all my life, it does not follow that I need neglect my learning: it will always give me pleasure, and occupy my mind; and I shall be serving God better by improving myself, and using the powers He has given me."

He carried out this idea, and became a thoughtful, intelligent, well-informed man, respected both by his employers and fellow-workmen, and, what was better than all, he found favour in the sight of God. By the grace of God he was led to feel himself a poor sinner, and sought forgiveness through the precious blood of Christ. For a long while he groped in the dark, with the burden on his shoulders; but reading one day that passage in the third chapter of John, —"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have ever-lasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved," the light burst upon his mind, his prayers were answered, and he became an earnest Christian, a faithful soldier and servant of the Lord Jesus Christ; and he was rewarded—not with any great

earthly riches, but with much peace in his heart, with great strength and comfort in time of trial; with home happiness, and much that might have made him the envy of princes, who had shut themselves out from the love of God.

He made the good choice in his *youth*. He sought the Lord *early*, and found him, and He escaped the terrible anguish and suffering that attends repentance after a long life of careless sin.

All through life he had the love of the Saviour to help and cheer him on his way; in temptation he had God to look to for strength; in sorrow he had the Saviour to turn to for sympathy and help. Each night he asked forgiveness for the sins of the day, and each morning he sought a blessing and preservation, and went forth with a light heart, praising God, and full of thankfulness to Him for His mercy.

There was no anxious care for the future, in his heart he knew that his heavenly Father would guide him and care for him day by day.

It seems most unaccountable that any one should willingly refuse all this happiness; and yet how many boys and girls there are who never pause to think what choice they have made, and which master they are serving. You must be serving one, either God or the world. Which it is your own heart will tell you. Remember God will have no half-service. He has said, "He that is not with Me is against Me."

CHAPTER IV.

GOOD RESOLUTIONS NOT KEPT.



OUR years of Charlie's life soon passed swiftly away in his pleasant and happy home. He is now twelve years of age, and has grown a tall, strong, healthy boy. His blue eyes are just as merry, and his frank, fearless face as sunburnt, as when we first made his acquaintance on the pier. He is generous, grateful, and affectionate, and John Heedman and his wife—his good "father and mother," as he calls them now—are very dear to him.

I need scarcely tell you that they have never regretted adopting him, and could not love him better, or be more proud of him, if he were their own son. They have found him from the first clever at his learning, and painstaking; full of gratitude and love to themselves; honest and truthful; anxious to serve God, and really trying to do so in his way. But one thing has troubled them: for the last two years they have seen him gradually giving himself up more and more to the dangerous habit of "putting off." He had become, unconsciously, a very slave to it; it required quite an effort on his part to do any duty at once.

Perhaps some boys who read this are inclined to exclaim, "Was that all?" But if they think for a moment, I am sure they will see that it is very dangerous, *because* they are inclined to think lightly

of it.

Procrastination, or the habit of "putting off," is one of Satan's great temptations. Many a boy may be tempted to give way to it who would shrink from telling an untruth, or committing any flagrant sin; but Satan knows well enough how soon and how surely it will *lead* them into sin.

Unfortunately, Charlie had no idea how this habit was creeping upon him; he always contrived to find some excuse for putting off that satisfied himself if it did not satisfy others; and when it led him to do wrong, or into misfortune of any kind, he always fancied that something or some one else was to blame.

"Charlie," said Mrs. Heedman one morning, just before school-time, "did you learn your lessons last night?"

"No, mother," answered Charlie; "I can learn them this morning; there's time enough."

"Do get your books then, and begin; you have only a quarter of an hour."

"All right, mother dear," he answered, gaily; "I'll get them in a minute; there's time enough;" but Charlie was very much interested in teaching his dog Jumper to sit up, and kept putting off until at last the quarter of an hour was gone, and he found he had only just time to get to school. Grumbling at the time for flying so quickly, he snatched up one of his school books, threw his satchel with the rest over his shoulder, and started off at a quick pace, learning his lesson as he went. Of course he could not always look where he was going, and the consequence was

he knocked up against people, and trod on their toes, and so far from apologizing in his ill-humour, he declared to himself that "it served them right; why didn't they get out of his way?"

The clock struck nine: Charlie was desperate; he quickened his pace almost to a run, and taking a last glance at his lesson as he turned the corner, he came with a crash against a lamp-post, that sent him backwards, his book flying out of his hand, his forehead bruised, and his nose bleeding.

Poor Charlie sat on the ground almost stunned, and scarcely knowing for the moment what it was, or where he was. At last he got slowly up, gathered his books together, and turned towards home, holding his handkerchief to his bruised face, and feeling very miserable.

"It was all that stupid old lamp-post, mother!" he said angrily, when he was telling his tale to her.

"No, no, Charlie," said Mrs. Heedman; "was it not that stupid Charlie Scott, who did not look where he was going?"

It was no use going to school that morning. The bruises were doctored, and Charlie, after learning his lessons, took up an interesting book. He was fond of reading, and was soon deep in the contents.

"Just run into Mrs. Brown's, next door, Charlie, will you, and ask if she can let me have the bread tin I lent her yesterday," said Mrs. Heedman.

"Yes, mother, in a minute," answered Charlie, still reading on, and thinking, "There's time enough; I dare say the bread is not ready." After a short time she spoke again, "Come, Charlie, I'm waiting."

"Yes, mother, I'm coming," said Charlie, getting half off his chair, but still keeping his eyes on the book. "I'll just finish this chapter," he thought; there were only two sentences to read. When it was finished, he looked up, and saw his mother had gone herself for the tin. She came in, looking weary and tired, for she had had a busy morning, and Charlie's conscience smote him.

"Oh, mother, I'm so sorry," he exclaimed. "I thought I had time enough to finish the chapter."

"Charlie, I do wish you would learn to do a thing at once. I cannot bear to hear you so constantly saying 'There's time enough,'" said his mother; "it makes me tremble for your future. A cousin of mine was led into sin, and misery, and poverty, and at last died at enmity with his father, and unreconciled to God, through 'putting off.' He gave way to the habit when he was a boy, and it grew up with him unchecked."

Charlie was rather frightened at hearing this, and inwardly made some good resolutions; but as they were made in his own strength alone, you will not be surprised to hear they were soon swept away: however, he made, as he thought, a very fair beginning. When he was called to dinner, he laid down his book and went at once—I am afraid there was not much credit due to him for that, for he was very hungry,—and he got ready and set off in good time for afternoon school.

"Be sure you come straight home, Charlie," said Mrs. Heedman as he was going out; "your father's cough was worse this morning, and I want you to run along to the pit with some warm wrappings for him; the evenings are chilly now, and he feels the cold when he comes up."

"All right, mother dear, I'll not forget," said Charlie, waving his cap to her as he went out of the gate. He was in an extra good humour with himself for having made the good resolutions we told you of, and for having done so well since, quite forgetting that even the desire to do better came from God.

The moment school was over, one of the boys caught hold of Charlie's arm, and launched into a glowing description of a ship "nearly two feet long," that had been made a present to him, finishing off with "She's splendid, and that's just all about it. I am going now to name her, and launch her in that big pond in Thompson's field. Come along," he said, drawing Charlie in the direction of the field as he spoke; "you shall give her the name, and I'll launch her."

"I'm afraid I can't go," said Charlie, looking miserable, and making a faint effort to get his arm from Tom Brown's grasp.

"Why?" asked Tom.

"Because I promised to go straight home; and I have to take some clothes for father to the pit."

"Oh, that's it, is it?" exclaimed Tom. "Well, then, look here, your father won't be ready for nearly half an hour yet—I know what time they come up,—and you'll be wandering about there, cooling your heels, when you might as well be here."

"If I hadn't promised," thought Charlie, with a longing look in the direction of the pond.

"You needn't stay long," urged Tom. "The ship is close by; I hid her amongst some bushes so as not to have to go home again."

"Don't go; remember your promise," whispered Charlie's conscience. "But I want to go so much," answered Charlie's selfish little heart.

"Don't go, it would be ungrateful: think of your father's kindness to you," whispered the voice again. "I'm not ungrateful, and I mean to take the clothes," Charlie's heart answered, angrily.

The voice began to whisper again, something about it being a temptation, and he ought to ask God's help, but Charlie turned a deaf ear.

Tom Brown, seeing Charlie hesitate, felt pretty sure he would give in. Leaving loose of his arm, and moving off towards the field, he said, in a careless tone, "Come, make up your mind; do one thing or the other. I don't care whether you go or not, only I can tell you you'll not have such a chance again; Joe Denton would have jumped at it."



CHARLIE AND THE TEMPTATIO

This had just the effect Tom intended. Charlie

hurried after him, saying, "Well, let us be quick then. I'll just stay five minutes; I daresay there's time enough."

The scruples of Charlie's conscience were silenced. Conscience is a dangerous thing to play with, and it should be the prayer of every youth that God would strengthen him to keep his conscience tender; never mind if it be difficult sometimes to maintain a good conscience: in the end, as years go on, you will be thankful to find that it preserves from many a snare, and gives a pleasure, and gains the confidence of those around you.

The launching went off most successfully, but the time had flown much quicker than the boys had any idea of. Charlie was in full enjoyment of the honour of guiding the *Fairy* on her trial trip round the pond, when he was terribly startled at hearing the church clock strike five. In a moment he had dropped the string, caught up his satchel of books, and started off towards home.

"Here, I say, wait a bit," called Tom after him; "what's the use of hurrying now? Your father would be at home long since; you may as well stay another hour now." Charlie did not even stay to listen, but tore along the dusty road, angry with himself, and still more angry with Tom. He reached home out of breath, and found that his father and mother had just begun tea.

"Charlie, my boy, you're late," said his father, in his usual kind tone. His mother did not speak, and Charlie noticed that she looked sad; but she was as kind as ever, and picked out one of his favourite little well-browned cakes for him as he sat down to tea. Charlie felt unhappy and repentant as he

thought how ill he deserved all their care.

His father's cough was very troublesome; it was a loud, hollow, consumptive cough, most painful to hear, and still more painful to suffer; but not a word of complaint escaped John Heedman's lips. Charlie's unhappiness and repentance increased as he sat listening to it, and heard his father say, in answer to a remark made by Mrs. Heedman, "Yes, I think the cold air has seized my chest; that makes the cough worse just now."

Tea was out of the question with Charlie, and the little crisp cake lay untouched. "If they would only scold me, or punish me, or do something to me," he thought, "I should feel better."

"How is it you are not getting on with your tea?" said Mrs. Heedman, looking at his plate.

Charlie immediately laid his head on the table, regardless of tea-things and everything else, and burst into a flood of tears. "Oh, mother," he sobbed out, "I have been such a bad, wicked fellow to-day. Why don't you and father scold me or do something to me? you are far too kind; it makes me hate myself. I wish somebody would take away my new cricket bat, or steal Jumper, I do." There was a great sobbing after this, partly, we think, at the mere thought of the terrible nature of the punishment his imagination had suggested.

He went on—"I'm sure I meant to come straight home, but Tom Brown took and persuaded me to go and see his ship launched, and I only meant to stay five minutes, and I thought there was time enough, and it seemed as if the clock struck five directly. I'm so sorry—oh dear!" and down went his head on the

table again.

"I'm very sorry too," said John Heedman, seriously —"very sorry. I am afraid when you were making your good resolutions about coming straight home, you forgot that you might be tempted to break them, and did not ask for His help who alone can give you strength to resist temptation and choose duty before pleasure. Don't you remember the words, 'My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not,'and the exhortation to pray lest ye enter into temptation? Wipe away your tears now, and get some tea; we will talk about it afterwards."

CHAPTER V.

TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF.



HARLIE'S heart felt a little lighter for the explanation. When the tea-things were cleared away, and a nice little bright fire made up—for it was a chilly evening—Mrs. Heedman sat down to her needlework, and Charlie drew his chair close to his father's, waiting for him to speak.

Taking Charlie's hand in his, he began in a kind tone, "I want you to tell me just how you felt while Tom Brown was persuading you, as you call it, to go with him."

"Well," said Charlie, hesitatingly, "I felt I wanted to go very much, and I thought I would only stay five minutes, there would still be plenty of time to meet you; and something in my heart kept on whispering, 'Don't go;' but I did go, you know," he went on, in a saddened tone, "and then the little voice did not whisper again."

"Now," said his father, "you must think well, and tell me what sins your sad way of thinking there's time enough has led you to be guilty of in one short hour."

Charlie thought a moment, and then answered, without looking up, "Disobedience and ingratitude."

"Yes," said his father; "but there is one more—presumption. You know quite well, Charlie, that warning voice in your heart was placed there by God to teach and guide you; yet you would not listen; you turned a deaf ear; you knew better than the great God who made you; you put your own will before His, and treated His Holy Spirit with contempt. It is a most solemn and awful thought that God's Holy Spirit will not always strive with us.

"What a terrible fate!" exclaimed Mrs. Heedman, "to be left entirely at the mercy not only of the temptation of the world, but the sinful wishes and inclinations of our own evil hearts!"

"Terrible indeed," said John Heedman. "Now listen here, Charlie: The captain of a ship was warned by the pilot on board that the port that they were

making for was almost surrounded by rocks, sandbanks, and other hidden dangers, and that it would be certain shipwreck, sooner or later, for the captain, as a stranger, to attempt the direction of the vessel without the advice and guidance of the pilot, who was aware of every danger, knew exactly what was best to do, and could alone bring them safely into the haven. What would you think, Charlie, if I were to tell you that that captain, after being warned of his danger, refused to allow the pilot to help him, turned his back upon him, would not listen to his advice, treated him with contempt, and determined to take his own way; taking the helm himself, and steering straight for the very rocks he had been warned to avoid?"

"I should think he was mad," exclaimed Charlie.

"Not one bit more mad than those who risk the shipwreck of their souls by refusing the help and advice of the Holy Spirit in passing through this world, so full of danger and temptation."

"Oh, I see now, father; that is what my Sunday school teacher calls an illustration."

"Yes," answered his father; "and now let us have a little talk about 'there's time enough.' I dare say you will be surprised when I tell you it is really selfishness that makes you so fond of putting off."

"Oh, mother!" said Charlie, quickly, "I didn't think I was selfish. Do you think I am?"

Mrs. Heedman could scarcely help smiling at his tone of injured innocence. "I think I shall wait and hear what your father has to say before I give an answer."

John Heedman went on: "You remember, Charlie, the

French marigolds we set, don't you?"

"Yes, I do remember indeed; it was so odd, mother, it was all the same sort of seed, but when it grew up there was such a difference in the form and shade of the flowers, we could scarcely find two alike."

"Well, then, you will understand me when I tell you that in the heart of every one there is the seed of selfishness, which, as it grows, shows itself in a different form in each person. In some it shows itself as pride; in others as envy, greediness, jealousy, covetousness, procrastination, indolence, and so on. Every sin, if we trace it, we shall find that it springs from the seed selfishness—from love of self. It is love of self that makes us forget to feel for others—careless, disobliging; indeed, it would take me an hour to go through the list of evils that spring from that same love of self. Learn these things, my boy, when you're young. People seldom change their character and habits after they get men and women. It is easier to bend this twig than that tree in the road; and as you place it, so it will grow."

"What are we to do then, father?" asked Charlie.

"Ask God to help you to watch for it; and as it sprouts up, keep cutting it down, trampling upon it, and rooting it up, as you would some noxious weed that threatened to spread over your garden, smothering and stealing away the nourishment from your flowers."

"What would you call the flowers of the heart, father?" Charlie asked, with a smile.

"Faith, hope, charity, peace, love, gentleness, goodness," answered his father, readily; "one can

imagine all these flowers, and many more, perhaps, that I have not mentioned, clustering round the fountain of prayer, depending upon it for their life; and just as the crystal stream of the fountain must ascend, before it can shower down its clouds of glistening and refreshing spray upon the parched and thirsty flowers round its brim, so prayer must go up to heaven before it can bring down life and strength to the flowers of our hearts."

"I understand it all, father," said Charlie, for he loved to "work out" illustrations, as he called it. He went on, "And if the fountain were neglected, and ceased to flow, how soon the flowers would be scorched up by the sun! they would droop, and wither, and die. And so will the flowers of our hearts if we neglect prayer."

"That is very well said, Charlie; but we must take care not to be satisfied with just *knowing* all this. We must have 'deeds, not words.' I hope to-day has been a lesson to you that good resolutions, made in your own strength, are of no use. If the failure of to-day has not humbled you, and shown you your own weakness, God's lesson has been thrown away upon you. Let me see you make a fresh beginning; turn a new leaf over, and set to work in earnest to overcome this darling fault of yours, in the strength of the Lord—not in your own. It will not be all plain walking along a smooth road; you may often fall, through want of trust, or some failing of your own: but do not be discouraged; remember 'the greatest honour consists, not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.' You know how often we have watched the tide rising, and how you wondered at first that it did not come rolling on without any stoppage; but then we noticed that although each

wave fell back a little, it gathered strength to come on with redoubled energy much further up the beach than it had reached before, often catching up some lovely seaweed or shell in its backward course, to bring with it and leave at our feet. Each time you fall, then, remember the waves, and determine, with God's help, to rise again, and reach a higher mark in your onward course than you had attained before, bringing with you increased humility, trust, and love, to lay at your Saviour's feet."

"Thank you, dear father; I will try indeed," said Charlie.

"And now you had better learn your lessons; after then you can amuse yourself as you like. I don't think we have any locks or anything to oil or put to rights to-night," said his father, with a smile, "so you had better have your new paint-box out, I think."

"Mrs. Brown wants you to look at a lock in her house to-morrow, Charlie; it will neither lock nor unlock. And the bottle-jack has gone wrong; it went off with such a noise when she was winding it up yesterday: she wants you to see if you can do anything to it."

Charlie's face crimsoned with pleasure: his great delight was in locks, clocks, engines—anything mechanical, in fact; but the only way in which he could indulge his love for such things was in taking off, oiling, putting to rights, and screwing on again all the locks in their own house, or any of the neighbours that would let him. As he often conquered refractory locks, he became quite of importance in "the Row," and was often sent for. He had an old timepiece that some one had given him, and would spend hours in taking it to pieces and putting it together again; but he could not prevail

upon his mother to let him touch "the clock."

The lessons were soon learned, and then Charlie got to his painting. What a happy night he had, cutting out pictures from some illustrated papers, colouring them, and chattering incessantly, unless he was putting in any particular touches that he seemed to think required profound silence and holding of the breath!

"There, mother!" he exclaimed, holding up in triumph a picture of a very stylish lady that he had finished, "that's the way you should be dressed if I had my way; isn't she a beauty?"

"She looks gay indeed, Charlie," said his mother, smiling; "but I'm afraid that style of dress would not quite suit me. Let me see, what has she on? A bright blue dress, a scarlet cloak"—"Like Mrs. Greenwell's, you know, mother," interrupted Charlie, "and a blue bonnet with a green feather on it."

"Wouldn't a blue feather or a black one have looked better?" said his father, looking up from his newspaper; "blue and green are not considered pretty together."

"Well, I don't know why they shouldn't, father." Charlie felt touched at his taste being called into question. "The forget-me-nots, the bluebells, and the blue hyacinths grow amongst green leaves and grass, and I'm sure God would not have put them there if they didn't look beautiful."

"You have conquered me there, Charlie," said his father, laughing; "still I am not reconciled to the blue bonnet with the green feather."

When it was Charlie's bedtime, he gathered up all the

cuttings of paper and burned them, washed his paint-brushes, and put everything tidily away into a drawer that his mother had given him to himself, so that he might have no excuse for leaving things about. The contents of that drawer were miscellaneous indeed. There lay his pet the old timepiece, surrounded by bits of string, screws, old nails, a hammer, a screw-driver, old tops, bits of coloured glass, odd pieces of tin, brass, and wire, two or three apples, a pair of pincers, an old padlock, curious pebbles, a dog's collar, packets of flower seeds, a couple of door-knobs, two or three rusty keys, and many other treasures.

When the putting away was finished, he brought the Bible to his father and quietly took his seat. They made it a rule to have prayers before Charlie went to bed, that he might join them; and special mention was always made of him, that he might realize that every little thing connected with his spiritual life was of the same consequence to God as if he was a grown-up person. To-night there was much to ask for him—pardon for the past and help for the future; and Charlie's heart was very full as he listened to the simple, earnest prayer that was sent up on his behalf.

"Good-night, my boy," said his father as Charlie came round to him; "when you are dressing in the morning, remember that you must also 'put on the whole armour of God,' for you are going out to do battle, 'not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers;' not with an enemy that you can see, but with the spirit of darkness. 'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.' 'Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.'"

CHAPTER VI.

GOING OUT TO TEA.



NE evening, about a month after the events of the last chapter, Charlie was sitting near the window reading, when, to his astonishment, he saw a lady open the garden gate and walk to the door. It was Mrs. Greenwell, who lived in the large house with the beautiful garden, that was Charlie's great admiration. He knew Mrs. Greenwell quite well, because she had often stopped to speak to him, and ask him about his school, and the garden, and other things; indeed, she was Charlie's favourite lady—he was sure there was not another in the place like her.

You must not think he was vain, if we tell you that he gave a hasty glance in the glass to see if his hair was tidy, and his face and collar clean. He need scarcely have done so, for it was seldom that either was untidy or dirty; he had so often heard his mother say it was no disgrace to be seen in old clothes, so long as they were well brushed and mended, but it was a very great disgrace to be seen with dirty hands and face, and unbrushed hair.

Charlie ran to the door, wondering very much what Mrs. Greenwell could have called about. She spoke a

few kind, pleasant words to him, and asked to see his mother. Charlie ushered her into the best room, placed a chair for her with great state, closed the door quietly, and then hastened upstairs to find his mother, taking two stairs at a time, missing one, and coming down on his hands and knees in a lump.

"Dear me, Charlie," said Mrs. Heedman, who had come in at the back door, and was standing at the foot of the stairs looking on in amazement at his extraordinary scrambling; "what ever are you doing? is it a mouse?" remembering he had once chased a mouse upstairs with much the same sort of noise.

"A mouse! no, mother," said Charlie, coming down very mildly. "I wanted to tell you that Mrs. Greenwell is here, and waiting for you."

Mrs. Greenwell's errand was to ask if Charlie could be spared to attend a Bible class at her house twice a week. As well as instruction in the Bible and catechism, she intended to read instructive books to them on different subjects: natural history, travels in foreign lands, English history, the lives of good and noble men who had risen from the working classes, and on many other subjects that would be interesting and give them a taste for reading. Charlie was younger than most of the boys she expected, but she knew he was more intelligent and thoughtful than the generality of boys of his age, principally because he had such good home training.

Mrs. Heedman very gladly agreed for him to attend regularly. As for Charlie himself, his delight knew no bounds, especially when he heard that they were all to have tea, and spend the evening at Mrs. Greenwell's the next day. The moment she had left and the door was closed, Charlie broke into a dance

of triumph round the room that would have done credit to a wild Indian, and kept it up so long that Jumper became seriously concerned: he stood at a safe distance, barking, as if asking for an explanation, or expostulating with his master; but Charlie only snapped his fingers at him, and went on with his dance. Poor Jumper thought it was an order to sit up, and sat up accordingly, but soon finding his mistake out he dropped his fore-feet disconsolately. At last, as if a bright thought had struck him, he made a sudden rush at poor puss, who was sitting very upright with her tail over her toes, gazing innocently at the fire, and I am sorry to say he caught her rather savagely by the ear. Jumper knew puss to be his own particular enemy, and whenever anything went wrong he always seemed to conclude that she must be at the bottom of it.

This brought the dance of triumph to an end, much to Mrs. Heedman's satisfaction.

You should have seen Charlie the next day, when he started for Mrs. Greenwell's, in his best suit, a shining white collar, and new necktie; his brown hair arranged in his best style, and his bright face lit up with happy expectation. It was the first time he had ever formally gone "out to tea."

It would take two or three chapters to tell you all that Charlie saw and thought and heard on that eventful evening, but we must be content with a hasty sketch.

When Charlie first went into the room with its beautiful pictures, its handsome furniture, its bright lights, and many strange faces, he felt quite dazzled; but Mrs. Greenwell came up to him, and taking him by the hand, led him up to a boy about two years

older than himself, who was lying on a couch. "This is my son," she said, kindly; "he is quite anxious to know you, Charlie, so you had better sit down beside him." Harry Greenwell shook hands heartily, and made room for him, but did not rise from the couch.

"He must be very proud or very idle," thought Charlie; and yet, as he looked admiringly at him, he felt that he did not look as if he were either one or the other. Charlie had seen him out driving sometimes with his mother, but had never been close to him before. Harry lay there quite unconscious of Charlie's opinion and admiration, his delicate, expressive features full of animation, and his eyes sparkling with pleasure as he watched the boys talking and looking about them. He had begged very hard that they might come into the drawing-room. Harry liked to have pictures and ornaments and beautiful things round him, and he thought they would enjoy it too.

"How happy he must be," thought Charlie, "in this beautiful house, with servants to do everything for him, a carriage to ride in, and I dare say he chooses his own clothes, and can have whatever he likes for dinner! It must be very nice to be him," thought Charlie, rather enviously.

Just then a move was made for the room where tea was prepared. "You go on, Charlie," said Harry, in a kind tone; "don't wait for me; I'll follow." Charlie happened to glance back.

Harry Greenwell was lame.

He told Charlie later in the evening how it happened. The two boys were standing together at a small table apart from the rest; Harry, who had taken a great

fancy to Charlie, was showing some of his drawings. There was genuine admiration in Charlie's face and tone as he exclaimed, "How splendid they are, Master Harry! They must have taken you a long time to do."

"Well, yes," answered Harry; "you see I have had a good deal of quiet time to occupy ever since my hip was hurt; I haven't been able to play at any outdoor games like other boys, or even to walk much. You can't think how thankful I am that I have a taste for drawing; one cannot always be reading, and it makes the time pass so pleasantly."

"Was it long since? How did it happen?" asked Charlie, full of sympathy, and wondering almost that Harry could be thankful for anything under such circumstances.

"It was about three years ago, when I was eleven years old. I was out riding; something startled the pony, and he threw me. You see my leg is not deformed," holding it out as he spoke, "but I walk lame; the doctor says I must rest well now, and not overtax my strength, or I shall never be any better. It pains me a good deal even now sometimes."

"Did you always feel as—as quiet about it as you do now?" asked Charlie, rather at a loss for the right word.

"No," said Harry; "for a whole year all sorts of wicked, bitter thoughts were in my heart. I thought God was behaving hardly and unkindly to me. I wanted to die, rather than live to be a cripple. I almost hated people who were well and strong. When mamma had visitors I kept out of the way. Sometimes I stayed in my own room for weeks together. I couldn't bear any one to see me. It was a

great trouble to mamma." Harry was carried away by the recollections of that sad time, and had spoken in a low rapid tone, more to himself than to Charlie.

The boys turned over the contents of a portfolio in silence for a few moments.

Harry placed before Charlie a beautiful engraving of our Saviour on the cross. "He bore all that for me, and I am trying to bear my pain willingly and patiently for His sake, because I love Him; and I know He loves me, and helps me to bear my pain, and would not let me suffer it at all if it was not for my own good in the end," said Harry.

I have let you listen to this little bit of quiet talk between Charlie and Harry that you may determine, as Charlie did, to try to follow Harry's example, not to be discontented and impatient in sickness, or trial of any kind; to be often thinking of, and feeling thankful for, the blessings God has granted you; to love the Lord Jesus, and trust Him.

You must not suppose that the evening at Mrs. Greenwell's was passed in talking only. After tea, which was thoroughly enjoyed by the boys, they looked at pictures, books, shells, and other things. Mrs. Greenwell had so many little histories to tell about them, and talked so pleasantly, that the boys enjoyed it very much; but the great wonder and attraction was a microscope, or "magnifying glass," as Charlie called it.

Many of the boys had never seen or even heard of one before, and it puzzled them very much to be told that what looked to them very like a small lobster's claw was the foot of a fly.

"What beautiful little feathers!" exclaimed one boy.

"You know the sort of dust that sticks to your fingers if you touch the wings of a moth or a butterfly, don't you?" asked Harry.

"Yes, sir,'" answered the boy.

"Then that is some of it, magnified; the wings are covered with those beautiful little feathers, although we cannot distinguish them without the microscope."

But I cannot attempt to tell you one half of the wonders that the microscope revealed to them that night, or the lessons it taught them of the power and wisdom of the Creator. Mrs. Greenwell pointed out to them the immense inferiority of man's best and most careful work when compared with the simplest work of God, A piece of delicately woven silk, of the finest texture, that looked perfect to the eye, when placed under the microscope appeared rough, coarse, and uneven—rather like a common door-mat, in fact; but the wing of a fly, the hair of a mouse, the eye of an insect, the scale of a fish, the dust of a moth's wing, the leaf of a plant—anything made by God, and owing nothing to the hand of man—the more it was magnified, the more beauties you discovered. Examine by the microscope the humblest and most minute of God's creations, and you will always find beauty, order, and perfection.

CHAPTER VII.

A SAD BIRTHDAY.



T is Charlie's birthday: two years have passed away since the great going out to tea at Mrs. Greenwell's, and he is now fourteen years old. It is a very quiet and a very sad birthday for Charlie. His father is ill—his good, kind father. This illness had been coming on for the last six months. Many of his neighbours and fellow-workmen had noticed for some time that "John Heedman had a bad look," and would shake their heads and look significantly at each other as he passed by, with his slow gait, his stooping shoulders, and loud, hollow cough, now almost constant, and more painful than ever. Often when Charlie awoke in the night he would hear his father pacing the room, unable to rest, or even lie down. The first time he heard him, he thought "Father must be ill; he has gone downstairs," and springing out of bed, he crept lightly down to see what was the matter.

The shutters were thrown open, and the blind pulled up to the top. Charlie saw it was a calm, still night, and that every part of the sky visible from the window was spangled with a countless multitude of brilliant stars. His father stood at the window—he was leaning slightly forward—with clasped hands, and gazing up with eager, questioning eyes. Charlie felt that he was praying, and crept softly back. He sat down at the foot of the stairs to wait, feeling cold

and shivering, and with a strange fear at his heart. He had not sat many minutes when he heard his father moving; then he called softly at the door, "Are you ill, father? can I do anything for you?"

"Why, Charlie, how is this?" said his father, taking him by the hand and bringing him into the room.

"I heard you down here, and I was afraid you were ill. Are you ill?" asked Charlie, anxiously.

"Not altogether ill, perhaps, Charlie, and yet not well. My cough is very bad to-night, I can get no rest; when I lie down I feel as if I should be suffocated. But how cold you are, my boy! run away to bed," he said, trying to speak more cheerfully, "or we shall be having you laid up next."

The cheerful tone did not deceive Charlie; he clung to him. "Father, you are worse than you say—tell me all; do not treat me like a little child; I am nearly fourteen years old."

His father stood for a moment undecided, then he sat down and drew Charlie to him and told him all; how he had felt lately that his cough was getting worse and worse, and his whole frame weaker; that he was afraid some disease of the lungs had taken a firm hold, and that he intended to take a rest the next week and see a doctor if he did not feel any better. "You must not think I am going to die at once," he said, feeling Charlie tremble; "even if I have disease of the lungs I may live a long while yet, if it is God's will. I want you to be a brave boy, and not let your mother see you going about grieving and looking sad, and adding to her sorrow, but do all you can to help and comfort her. If you love me, you will try to do this." Charlie promised to try, and after a few

more words of comfort and encouragement John Heedman persuaded him to go to bed. "My dear boy," he said, "you know that your love is a great happiness to me, but you must not come down again if you hear me up in the night; it will make me unhappy if I think I keep you awake."

After this, although Charlie often heard his father of a night, he never came down again; but he crept softly out of bed and knelt down and prayed for him. He asked God to grant—if it were His will—that his father might get better; if not, that He would help him to bear his pain, for Jesus Christ's sake. It was not at all a grand, well-worded prayer, but it was simple, earnest, and heartfelt—just the sort of prayer God loves to listen to.

On the morning of Charlie's birthday, about a fortnight after that night he went down to his father, John Heedman was quite unable to go out to his work; he had been obliged to give up at last, and the doctor was called in. When Charlie was sent out of the room until the doctor's visit was over, he rushed out of the house, unable to bear the suspense, and wandering down to the beach, he lay down to think with his face hidden in his cap, as if to shut out the too joyous sunlight.

As he listened to the low, mournful surging of the waves, all his past life seemed to rise up before him; he remembered with bitter self-reproach how ill he had repaid the love and kindness of those dear ones at home; how often he had caused his mother hours of anxiety by his carelessness and procrastination; for Charlie had not altogether succeeded in conquering his great fault; how selfish he had been in every way. He remembered with shame how he had begged and

worried for things without caring or thinking whether they could afford it; he had denied himself nothing, and now all this expense of his father's illness was coming upon them. If they had not taken him to keep when he was friendless, they would have had plenty of money saved, and would have wanted for nothing.

As Charlie thought of all this, he determined that he would be a burden to them no longer, he would try to earn some money; there were boys far younger than himself, he knew, at work, and if he only earned a small sum at first, it would help. Full of this determination he made his way home. The doctor was just leaving as he went in, and Charlie heard from his mother that he held out no hope of his father's recovery; the disease had gone too far. He was on no account to go down the mine again, even if he fancied he felt strong enough; the impure air had already aggravated the disease. The doctor had said that if he took great care of himself he might, perhaps, be spared to them for some time.

Charlie's heart was too full then to speak to his father; he went into his own room, shut the door, and stood for a moment as if uncertain what to do. "If only Mrs. Greenwell had been at home," he thought, "I could have told her all about it, and she would have advised me."

"Tell it to God, He is always to be found, and can help as well as advise," something within him seemed to whisper. He listened to the voice, and kneeling down, poured out all his trouble, and sorrow, and anxiety, asking God to help him for Jesus Christ's sake. He then got up, bathed his face in cold water, for his eyes were swollen with tears, and

started off to the chemist's with the doctor's prescription that his mother gave him.

"Wait for the medicine," she said, "and bring it home with you."

He was waiting in the shop until it was ready, and turning over all sorts of plans for the future in his mind, when one of Mrs. Greenwell's servants came in. "Is that you, Charlie Scott?" she exclaimed. "Master Harry was just inquiring after you, if you had been at the house lately."

"How long have they been at home?" he asked in surprise.

"About two hours; they came this morning."

Charlie picked up the medicine that the chemist had placed before him, and set off home as hard as he could run.

"I'm just going to Mrs. Greenwell's, mother dear," he said, giving it in at the door; "I'll soon be back."

Harry Greenwell saw in a moment by Charlie's face that he was in trouble, and asked anxiously what was the matter. He liked Charlie, and from the first they had been as close friends as the difference in their station and education would allow. Charlie always went to Mrs. Greenwell and "Master Harry" when he was in trouble; indeed, Mrs. Greenwell had succeeded in making all the boys who went to her Bible class feel that she was their *friend*, and interested in all concerning them; and many of them were thankful for her advice and kind, encouraging words, when they were in trouble or anxiety.

Charlie told them of his father's illness, of his own

selfishness, his repentance, his self-reproach, and his anxiety to do something to help at home.

"My dear boy," said Mrs. Greenwell, "I am so glad you have come to me; but I trust you have already laid all this before your great Friend and Father in heaven."

"Oh yes, ma'am," answered Charlie; "but I feel so ashamed of having so often to ask God to forgive me; I feel almost afraid that He will be tired of me, and refuse to listen."

"We might be afraid of that," said Mrs. Greenwell, "if we asked forgiveness in our own unworthy names—if the Saviour had never died for us. But as you know, He came into the world to save sinners. He gave Himself for our sins. 'He was wounded for our transgressions: He was bruised for our iniquities, and with His stripes we are healed.' 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.' He has said, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you;' and if we doubt His word we are lost. If we repent, and are sincerely sorry for our sin, and ask God to forgive us, for Jesus Christ's sake, He will do so, no matter how often we go to Him. It is Satan who tries to put hard thoughts of God into our hearts. And now, in your trouble, Charlie, you do not know how the Saviour loves you and sympathizes with you. He knows what it is to suffer. He is waiting at the door of your heart, longing to come in and help and comfort you. He says, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock;' do not refuse Him entrance, Charlie."

Tears stood in Charlie's eyes when Mrs. Greenwell finished speaking, tears of thankfulness for such a Saviour, and of gratitude to Mrs. Greenwell.

When they began to talk of what Charlie could do to help at home, and earn some money, Harry asked him what he would like to do best.

"I should best like to be amongst engines, and machines, and those things," said Charlie. "Father meant me to be an engineer—a working engineer, if all had gone on well; he meant to apprentice me. But, of course, that is all over now," he said, with a sigh; "it would be so long before I could earn anything like good wages."

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Greenwell, turning over all sorts of plans in her mind. "You see," she went on, "errand boys get so little, and tradesmen will not give wages to inexperienced boys for shop work, when they can get apprentices. Haven't you thought of anything yourself?" she asked, after a pause.

"There's the pit," answered Charlie, with a sigh; "I could get six shillings a week, as trapper, directly. Joe Denton gets more than double that now."

"Oh, Charlie!" exclaimed Harry, "surely you will not have to go down those terrible mines?"

Mrs. Greenwell reminded Harry that was not the way to help Charlie. "I know he will feel it hard at first if he goes; but still I am sure he is a brave boy and will not shrink from it, if he feels it to be his duty. You would not have him idling about at home, thinking only of his own comfort, and picking and choosing his work, when his father, who has done so much for him, is suffering from a lingering illness, and wanting so many little comforts that cannot be bought without money?"

After a good deal of thought, Mrs. Greenwell said, "I

believe, Charlie, it is the only thing for you. It will be a great trial to you, I know, to give up all your dreams about engines and machines, and being a clever man, and getting rich, and having instead to go down into a dark, dreary coal-pit day after day, to a life of hard toil; but it appears, as far as we can see, to be God's will and your duty. You remember those words of our Saviour,—'If any will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.' We have all a cross of some kind to bear, and this is your cross, Charlie; take it up patiently, bravely, and willingly. He will not give you more than you can bear. Trust Him. There is no doubt some great blessing is in store for you, if you do not shrink from this trial of your faith."

Charlie had two or three very busy days before Saturday night came. As soon as he had decided to go down the mine, he went to a fellow-workman of his father's, Hudson Brownlee, and asked him if he would let him go down with him the first time. Brownlee was a kind-hearted man, and took an interest in Charlie. He promised to see about his work for him, and call on Monday morning at ten o'clock. Charlie kept it quite a secret from his father and mother until Saturday night, then, putting on some of his oldest clothes that he had routed out ready for Monday, and taking his father's lamp in his hand, that he used in the mine, he walked into the room where they were, made a bow, twisted himself round in front of them, and with a cheery face and merry tone said, "Do I look like work, father? shall I do?" At first they looked at him in amazement, but gradually his meaning came upon them.

"My dear boy," said Mrs. Heedman, laying down her knitting, "what do you mean?"

"I mean this," said he, putting down his lamp, and taking each of their hands in his, "I am not going to be an idle, selfish fellow any longer. It's all settled and done. I am going down the pit on Monday, with Hudson Brownlee, and I shall have six shillings to bring home on Saturday night; think of that, mother, and I shall soon get twice as much. Father shall want for nothing."

Tears of love and pleasure stood in John Heedman's eyes, for he knew what it must have cost Charlie to make up his mind to it. "You know how happy it makes your mother and myself to hear you speak so bravely and gratefully," he said; "but are you quite sure, Charlie, that you have counted the cost? Take another week to think of it; thank God, we are not likely to want for some time, there is a little store put by. Remember it is a hard and dreary life to a young ambitious spirit; think it over again."

"I have thought of it, father, ever since the doctor came to see you on Tuesday; it is quite settled. Mrs. Greenwell and Master Harry both seem to think it is my duty. They say I can serve God the same, and I shall be just as dear to Him as if I was ever such a rich engineer; and no honest work is a disgrace."

"That is true," his father began; he was going to say something else, but Charlie seemed anxious to finish his say.

"Master Harry says, father, I must think of what I have been taught, and try to do my duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call me. He says if I am obliged to work with my hands, I can work with my head too. Master Harry has offered to give me lessons in the morning before I go to work, and he will lend me books to read, and I shall have that

to think about whilst I am down the pit. It won't seem half so dreary when I have busy, pleasant thoughts. And, father, Mrs. Greenwell says I have had such good training at home, and been able to get to Sunday school and Bible class so regularly, that I ought to be quite a missionary amongst the boys I shall meet, who have not had such opportunities."

Application was made for him to be engaged at the pit, and it was agreed that Charlie should begin his new duties on Monday.

CHAPTER VIII.

DOWN THE MINE.



LL boys and girls know the pleasure of drawing up to a nice, bright, sparkling fire on a cold winter night. They give little shivers of comfort, and say, "What ever should we do without a good fire, such weather as this?" But we dare say very few give a thankful thought to the miner, whose hard toil has procured this comfort for them.

Perhaps some who read this do not live in a mining

country, and have not read or heard much about coal mines. If so, we think they will like to follow Charlie as he goes to his work on Monday morning. Hudson Brownlee called, as he promised, but we are sorry to say Charlie kept him waiting full five minutes whilst he searched for a comforter. His mother had told him to get it ready on Saturday night, but he put off until Monday morning, then he put off until he got back from Harry Greenwell's. Harry kept him longer than he expected, and he came tearing along just as Hudson Brownlee reached the door; then the comforter had to be found. At last they started. When Charlie stood near the great, dark, gaping mouth of the pit, and remembered that he had to go down there, he certainly felt as he afterwards described it, "very queer"—not afraid, oh no, but queer.

The cage, as it is called, had just been let down, with its number of sixteen men; when it came up again, Hudson Brownlee, Charlie, and some other men and boys got in. If Charlie felt "queer" before, he felt still "queerer" now, and when the cage began to descend, he felt almost sick with the motion; it seemed to him as if they were never going to reach the bottom. Down, down, down they went; the clatter of the engine above, and the creaking of the cage, making Charlie fancy every now and then that the rope was giving way, and that in another second they would all be dashed to atoms. Whenever he looked up, and remembered that all their weight was bearing upon that rope, he screwed himself up into the smallest possible compass, as if that would make him lighter. He could scarcely see anything at first, the change from broad daylight to the glimmering light of the lamps that the men carried was so great.

"Are you all right, my boy?" said Brownlee's cheery

voice; "keep up your heart, we shall soon be out of this. He's a new hand," he said, turning to the others.

"Who is it?" they asked.

"Why," said Brownlee, lowering his voice, "it's that young one that John Heedman took to keep; his father was drowned, you'll remember—Scott, the pilot."

On hearing this most of them were silent, but one boy thrust his lamp forward, and stared rudely in Charlie's face.

"Why, if it isn't that Miss Nancy fellow, Scott!" he exclaimed, in either real or pretended astonishment. "But it can't be," he went on, in a mocking tone, "and yet it is; why, how ever has it happened that such a nice, good boy, the ladies' pet, has come down amongst us roughs? I thought he was going to be made a gentleman of—dear, dear! and he hasn't got his white collar on; and his mother isn't with him."

"Come, hold that saucy tongue of yours, White Bob," said Brownlee, in an angry tone, "or it will be worse for you."

The boy's proper name was Bob White. He was a tall, thin, singular-looking lad, about fifteen years old, with a pale face. When he first went to work in the mine some of the boys called him White Bob, in nonsense, and the name had stuck to him.

He was certainly silent after Brownlee spoke to him, but he kept throwing back his head, lifting up his hands, turning up his eyes, and expressing his mock astonishment in so many odd ways, that the rest of the boys, although they bore no ill-will to Charlie, were convulsed with laughter. As for Charlie himself,

he was in a great passion; it was fortunate that just at this moment the cage reached the bottom, and in the general scramble to get out he lost sight of Bob.

"Now, my boy, keep close to me," said Brownlee, "never mind those fellows: keep your temper, and they'll soon tire of it. Now look about you; you are many hundred feet under ground." It was a strange scene to Charlie. Look where you would, nothing but black met the eye—black walls, black floor, groups of black men standing about—every one and every thing was covered with the bright coal dust that glittered and sparkled in the rays of the lamps, like black diamonds.

"Now," said Brownlee, "we must get to work. I'll take you to your place, as it is in my way;" and they turned up a sort of road or gallery that had been cut out of the slate and coal. On each side of this branched, right and left, other roads or galleries that had been formed by the taking away of the coal; from these again branched other roads, and so on, that you might walk for miles under ground, in and out of the workings of the mine. As the coal is hewn away the roof is supported by props of wood. In some places it was so low that Brownlee had to walk stooping. Of course Charlie did not find all this out at first, for they only had the light given by their lamps to guide them and relieve the intense darkness.

"What is that?" asked Charlie, as a little spark of light like a glowworm appeared in the distance, and a low rumbling noise met their ears.

"You'll see in a minute," said Brownlee, smiling at Charlie's wonder.

The light came gradually nearer and nearer, and then

Charlie saw it was a lamp carried by a boy who had charge of a little pony and some coal tubs—sort of square tubs on wheels. Brownlee told him that the boys who had that work were called putters; they were occupied in taking empty tubs to the men who hewed the coal, and in bringing away the full tubs, and that they earned good wages: they had a shilling a score for the tubs they removed.

"I should think the poor ponies have a hard life of it," said Charlie. "Do they take the tubs right away to the mouth of the pit?"

"No, they only go so far, then the engine pulls them to the shaft, and they are drawn up to bank, to be emptied and sent down again."

"We seem to have come a long way," said Charlie.

"About a mile," answered Brownlee; "but we've worked a deal further out that way," pointing to the left. "We're either under the sea or close at the edge, out there."

Charlie gave a little shudder. "Where is my work, please?" he asked.

"Oh, we've passed your place; the door we came through last is the one you have to take care of. I'm just taking you round a bit, as you're new to it. Mind your head," he called, as they turned up a low gallery to the right, and they both went along stooping. "Stop there," said Brownlee, creeping along by himself a little further, and sitting on his heels opposite a wall of bright coal. "There," he said, "how would you like to sit cramped up like this for six hours, hewing coal, and hearing the stone above you crack like a gun, and move about as you work,

expecting every moment you'll have to run for your life—that is, if you have the chance? I had a narrow escape last winter," he said, as he joined Charlie again; "two of us were working together, and all of a sudden there was an awful crack, like a cannon going off. It was who could scramble up and run quickest, I can tell you. It was my luck to be last, and down came a tremendous piece; the end of it just dropped on my foot as I was running, and it held me as fast as if a mountain had been on the top of me, although I was free all but my foot. None of them durst venture to me for a good bit, for there was an awful noise going on round me, and there I laid as fast as could be, expecting every moment would be my last."

"What dangerous work!" exclaimed Charlie. "I should think nobody durst do it if they didn't know they had God to protect them and take care of them."

"I'll see you to your work now," said Brownlee, turning the subject. "Here we are," he said; "do you see this seat behind the door? then all you've got to do is to sit here and pull that rope that opens the door when the putters or any of the men want to come through. The boys stay down twelve hours, but I'll see you again before I go up. It'll be lonely for you at first," he said, kindly.

"Rather," said Charlie; "but I must remember that I am not alone."

Brownlee looked at him inquiringly.

"I mean, you know, that we are *never* alone; that He is always with us," said Charlie, simply, with an upward glance and movement of the head.

"Oh, aye," said Brownlee, hesitatingly, and moving off, as if he felt it was a subject he could not say much upon.

It was strange how that thought clung to the miner—not alone; not alone! It haunted him, and often as he worked he glanced uneasily over his shoulder into the darkness beyond, with a sort of feeling that he was being watched—that there was a presence, an invisible something or some one hovering near, and listening to his very thoughts.

It was quite a relief when a putter or any one came near that he could speak to. Hudson Brownlee had known perfectly well ever since he was a child that "God is everywhere," but he had never thought about it; he was *realizing* His presence for the first time, and it made him nervous to feel that he was alone with God, who was powerful, and whom he had neglected.

We must now go back to Charlie. His duty, if it was dull and lonely, was simple and easily attended to. He had opened the door for a great many boys and men, but he had not seen anything more of Bob White. Charlie remembered he was an old enemy, and had often waylaid himself and the other boys on their way to Mrs. Greenwell's class, and ridiculed them. His saucy, mocking tongue made him the terror of most of the boys in the mine. He had had the run of London streets for ten years, before his mother removed into the north, and was more than a match for most of the north country boys in a battle of words.

CHAPTER IX.

NOT ALONE.



HARLIE'S morning had passed away pretty well, and he began to think it must be dinner time; at any rate he felt hungry, so he sat down and looked to see what his mother had packed up for his dinner. There was a nice little beefsteak pie, just about as much as he could eat, and two or three of his favourite little round cakes to finish with; so Charlie in high glee, spread the cloth they were wrapped in over his knees, said grace, asked himself very politely if he would take a little pie, said thank you, and took the dish. He had eaten about half of it, and was enjoying himself very much when who should he see coming along but Bob White. What should he do? Should he try to wrap his dinner up and put it out of sight, or go on eating? but before he could decide, Bob was upon him.

"Why," exclaimed Bob, pretending to start with surprise, "if here isn't the ladies' pet! and getting his dinner too," said Bob, stooping down to look curiously in the dish that was on Charlie's knee.

"Pie," he remarked, "and very good it looks; what else? Oh, cakes! well, I'm in luck's way to-day, I am," breaking a piece off one and putting it in his mouth.

"What's in the can?" he asked, pointing to it with his foot.

"Water," answered Charlie, trying hard to keep his temper.

"Well, you're a one to know manners," said Bob, "never to offer one a place to sit down on—move along. I'll hold the dish;" and suiting the action to the word, he snatched it up, and before Charlie had recovered himself, the rest of the pie was half eaten.



CHARLIE AND THE PIE.

"Give me that dish," said Charlie, trembling with

passion.

Bob paused, and put on an injured countenance. "Can't you wait until I've finished? shouting out for the dish like that."

Unseen by them both a gentleman was standing in the shade, watching the whole affair, and just as Charlie was rushing upon Bob like a little whirlwind, he stood out in front of them in the lamplight. Bob dropped the dish in his fright, and stood with his hands hanging down and his mouth open, staring in dismay at Mr. Carlton, the viewer.

Mr. Carlton took out his note-book, and turning to one of the pages, quietly said, "This is the third time, White, that I have found you quarrelling with and tantalizing boys younger than yourself, and neglecting your work. Now this shall be the last time; you leave on Saturday night."

All the impudence had faded out of Bob's face. "Oh, sir," he begged, clasping his hands in his earnestness, "please look over it this once. What shall I do if you turn me off? I dare not tell my mother; you know, sir, that she is ill, and what I earn is all we have. I deserve it perhaps, sir, but she doesn't—just this once!" he pleaded.

Mr. Carlton felt some one touch his sleeve; it was Charlie. "I beg your pardon, sir," said Charlie, in a low tone, "but will you please forgive him this time?"

Mr. Carlton looked at him with surprise. "Are you begging for him? have you forgiven him?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," answered Charlie. "I am very sorry I lost my temper so. I have been well taught, and perhaps he hasn't."

Mr. Carlton considered for a moment.

Bob could not hear what Charlie was saying, but he fancied from his manner that he was telling his wrongs, and a sullen, angry expression spread over his face.

"Come here, White," said Mr. Carlton. "I have consented to look over your bad conduct once more; but remember you owe it to this boy," putting his hand on Charlie's shoulder; "he has pleaded for you; he has returned you good for evil: see that you are not ungrateful." He then left them, after asking Charlie his name.

Bob stood still, feeling and looking very awkward. Charlie went up to him, and held out his hand. "You'll shake hands and be friends, Bob, won't you?"

Bob shook hands shyly, and turned away to his work without speaking; but Charlie fancied he saw tears in his eyes.

Soon after it was time for the men to leave. They came pouring out in all directions from the workings of the mine, and Charlie was kept busy. Hudson Brownlee came nearly last.

"How do you get on?" he asked kindly.

"Oh, pretty well; I'm getting more used to it already."

"Good-bye," said Brownlee, taking a step forward, and then standing still. "What was it you were saying about not being alone?" putting on a careless, off-hand tone.

"Oh," said Charlie, "I meant I should not feel lonely or afraid, because I knew God was with me. I remember father reading out of the Bible, 'Fear not,

for I am with thee;' and I know it is true, don't you?"

"No," said Brownlee, thoughtfully, "I can't say that I do."

"If I had my Bible here, I think I could find the words directly."

"Ah," said Brownlee, "that's a book I don't know much about. You see I'm no scholar. I was careless about learning when I was young, and what little I did know I have almost forgot. It takes me such a while to spell out the words that I lose the meaning."

"What a pity!" exclaimed Charlie, "You see it's almost impossible to get on right at all without the Bible, because God tells us in it what we are to do, and what we're not to do," he went on impetuously. "I was just thinking, as we came along down here with our lamps, about that text, 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.' If we had not had lamps we should have been groping about in the dark, stumbling over things, knocking up against the props, hurting ourselves, and losing our way; but our lamps showed us the right path, and how to keep out of danger. And we should go groping and stumbling through the world in darkness, too, falling into all sorts of sin and temptation, hurting our souls, and losing ourselves altogether, if we had not the light of God's word to guide us."

"Where do you get all your learning from? you seem to know a deal for a boy," said Brownlee.

"Oh, father reads these things from the good book every day. I dare say he feels them comforting to himself when he's in the pit. Besides, I've been to a Sunday school."

"Well, they are true," said Brownlee, thoughtfully; he held up his lamp and looked at it. "For twenty years this has been the only sort of lamp I've troubled myself about, but please God, if it's not too late——" Charlie could not hear the rest, for he waved his hand and followed the other men.

At the end of the twelve hours Charlie was preparing to follow some men and boys to the shaft, when Bob White made his appearance. "It's rather queer," said Bob, shyly, "finding your way about here; will you go up with me?"

"Thank you," said Charlie heartily, setting off with him, and talking away as freely as he could to put Bob at his ease.

You may be sure Charlie was very glad to get home and rest after he had told his father and mother what he had seen and done. So ended his first day down the mine.

CHAPTER X.

A NEW FRIEND.



FTER the conversation with Brownlee about the Bible, Charlie took his pocket Bible down the mine regularly; his father wished him to read a little every day at his dinner-time. He was one of those people who never like to waste a minute, and in his dinner-time he managed generally to have something to read that was worth reading. Bob was really grateful to Charlie for interfering in his behalf, and lost no opportunity of showing it. It was astonishing how he improved: so much good in him that had been lying dormant was called out under Charlie's better influence. Sometimes he seemed half ashamed of his good behaviour, and would break out for a time into the old reckless way; but one night on their way home Charlie was talking in his own loving way about his dear father and mother, and their kindness to him; how his plans for being an engineer had been put aside by his father's illness; how he hoped soon to get more wages for their sakes, and so on, when in some unaccountable way Bob's whole nature seemed softened; and as if he could not help it, he poured out to Charlie his home troubles and all his old life; how he had fallen amongst bad companions, and grew up to be hardened and reckless, almost without even a wish to be better. Sometimes, when he saw Charlie and the other boys going to Mrs. Greenwell's class, looking so happy and clean and orderly, the wish that he was like them would creep into his heart; but he drove it away, and called after them with mocking words. All this and much more he told Charlie with tears streaming down his face, and his voice broken by sobs.

It almost frightened Charlie to see mocking, reckless Bob give way so completely. He was just wondering what he had better say to him, when Bob bid him good-night abruptly, and turned off home.

After that night Bob never again attempted to keep up his care-for-nothing-or-nobody tone before Charlie. He generally brought his dinner now to eat beside Charlie. The first time the Bible was brought out, when they had finished, which required a little courage at first, Bob got up and sauntered away; the second time he sat still and whistled popular song tunes in a subdued tone, while Charlie read to himself; the third time he sat quietly; the fourth day the Bible was brought out he shuffled about uneasily, and at last said, "You may as well read out if you must read; it's dull sitting here without anybody to speak to."

Charlie gladly agreed. "Let us read in turns," he said.

Bob did not object, for he read well, and was rather proud of it. After this the Bible reading was an established custom, and Bob got very much interested as he read the history of Joseph, Moses, and others. Hudson Brownlee, happening to pass one day, stopped to listen when he saw how they were occupied, and soon a third was added regularly to the little party. After a parable or any striking passage had been read they would each give their own idea of its meaning and teaching, spending much thought upon it in their eagerness to give it in the best and clearest way. Often during their work Hudson Brownlee, Bob, and Charlie too, would ponder over some passage they had heard or read, comparing the different opinions upon it, applying it, thinking it out, and turning it over in their mind, until some great truth would stand out from the rest, fixing itself immoveably in their hearts and understandings. And so this study of the Bible, begun without any real religious feeling (on Bob and Brownlee's part, at any rate), led them to higher

things—to a knowledge of God's holiness, of their own sin and unworthiness, and their need of a Saviour.

But this was a work of time, and we must now go back a little in our history.

When Charlie had been two months down the mine as a trapper, he was advanced to a higher post and better wages as a putter. He might have had the increase of wages quite a month before, but he put off applying for the place until it was too late, and another boy had been appointed. Harry Greenwell lent him some elementary books on mechanics, for his old love for such things was as strong as ever, and now that he was putter he had many opportunities of examining the working of the engine stationed down the mine. Those were glorious days for Charlie when it was out of order, and the engineer had to come down; he would hover round him, holding the tools for the men, helping to lift or carry anything, glad of any excuse to be near. His questions were so sensible and thoughtful, and his suggestions sometimes, for a youth, so good, that the engineer became quite interested in him, and explained to him thoroughly the working of the engine, giving him really valuable teaching in mechanics; and this knowledge stood him in good stead, as you will hear.

On coming down to his work one morning he was surprised to find his favourite, the engine, at a stand-still. A number of the miners were near it, all talking together, trying to account for the accident, and deploring the absence of the engineer, who was away for a day or two's holiday.

Mr. Carlton, the viewer, looked vexed and annoyed;

he was asking the overman to send to a mine a few miles off for their engineer. Charlie made his way to the engine, and soon saw what was wrong. It was not much, and he felt sure that if he had the help of a pair of strong arms he could get it into working order.

In his excitement he pushed his way to Mr. Carlton, and exclaimed, "I know what is wrong with her, sir; if you will just come and look, sir, I'll show you."

Mr. Carlton, surprised and amused, followed him, and Charlie, stooping down and pointing up, full of animation, explained so clearly and intelligently the nature of the misfortune, and how it might be remedied, that Mr. Carlton, no longer with the amused expression on his face, called to one of the men, "Come here, Shields, and help him."

In an hour's time Charlie's pet was working away as hard as ever.

"Well done, my boy," said Mr. Carlton; "tell me where you picked up all this knowledge."

The men were gone off to their work, and Mr. Carlton soon drew all Charlie's little history from him. He made no remark, excepting that when Charlie made his polite bow and turned off to his work, he asked him where his father lived.

In the evening, when Charlie got home, he thought his father and mother looked very smiling and mysterious, and after they had kept him guessing what was the cause for a little while, they told him that Mr. Carlton had been there; he thought they would like to hear of Charlie's success with the engine. "And here's good news for you," said his

mother. "Mr. Carlton says that if you like to work as a putter six hours a day you may help the engineer, and learn all you can, the other six, and he will give you the same wages as you earn now."

Charlie threw himself into a chair, and sat quite still for a few moments. "Isn't it wonderful, mother?" he said at last—"isn't it wonderful? When I went down the pit there seemed no chance of my ever doing anything else all my life. The *other* seemed impossible; and yet how God has brought it all about! I shall be an engineer after all, and I have good wages too to begin with. If I hadn't given up all thoughts of it, and gone quietly down the pit because God made me feel it was my duty, I should have lost all this. I hope I shall never doubt Him after this. Won't it be capital, father?" he went on, getting excited. "When I get plenty of money you shall have such a beautiful garden and greenhouse! I think you're feeling better for the rest already, are you not?"

John Heedman could not bear to damp Charlie's happiness, so he turned off the question by saying, "Mr. Roberts, the clergyman, was here to-day. I told him about Brownlee and Bob White; he was very pleased to hear about you all meeting for Bible reading, and he is going to look out for them, and get them to a Bible class he has every week, and to the house of God."

The only drawback to Charlie's happiness now was the increasing illness of his father. Sanguine and hopeful as he was, he could not blind himself to the fact that every day his father got weaker and weaker.

A visit to John Heedman was a lesson in Christianity to any one,—his wonderful patience under suffering,

his perfect trust in the Saviour, his quiet waiting for the end—happy to go, yet happy to stay and suffer so long as it pleased God.

CHAPTER XI.

SORROW, HUMILIATION, AND REPENTANCE.



E are quite sure that you have been very glad to read of the progress which Charlie has made since we first met him on the pier a little sunburnt boy only eight years old. You have seen what good, kind friends he met with; how well he was trained; how nobly he came out when his father was ill in denying himself and going down the mine, and how he was rewarded; and you have seen, too, how he tried to do something for God in helping Brownlee and Bob White; and yet we are so sorry to have to tell you that all this time his old habit of putting off was still growing up with him, and latterly a good deal of self-righteousness had crept into his heart. Unconsciously he began to have a very high opinion of himself, and would often think with pride how

different he was from many boys that he knew.

Unfortunately he seemed to have no idea how completely he was in the power of his old enemy, procrastination. It would have made our story much too long if we had told you every instance in which he gave way to it, but we think you will see that this habit of putting off was his besetting sin, the one flaw in his character. The ship was sailing pleasantly along, with decks clean swept, with colours flying, and all looking well and prosperous; but there was a leak, one little treacherous leak, which, if it remained unnoticed and unstopped, would soon bring confusion and destruction upon the ship, gay and gallant though she looked.

We may often be deceived in ourselves, and think that we are going on well, but God cannot be deceived. He sees us as we really are, not as we appear to ourselves and to others. He is training each one of us, and He saw in Charlie's case that a fiery trial was needed to burn out of him that besetting sin that had been so long indulged. Just as gold is purified by being passed through a fiery furnace, so our hearts need to be purified sometimes by great sorrows, by fiery trials; and so it was that Charlie had to suffer a most bitter, a most sad and humiliating fall.

Eleven months had passed since John Heedman first called in the doctor; he had lingered so long, but now the end was very near. He would not hear of Charlie staying away from his work, although Mr. Carlton had kindly offered to let him have a few days at home.

One evening when Charlie came in from work his mother gave him a letter. "You had better go straight

to the post with it," she said, afraid that he would put off. "Your father is very anxious it should go by to-night's post. Now, Charlie, *do* take care," she said, anxiously.

Charlie's good opinion of himself—his pride—was touched.

"I wish, mother, you wouldn't talk to me as if you thought I didn't know what I was about," he said, in an angry tone, slamming the door after him as he went out. He had not gone far when he met Bob White, who was going with a note from the clergyman to get some books out of the library. "Come with me," said Bob, "and we'll have a look through the books."

"I've got to go to the post office," said Charlie, "but there's time enough yet; I'll go with you." He argued with himself, "What's the use of putting the letter in ever so long before post-time if it won't go a bit the quicker." He was in an irritable humour, angry to think that *he* should have been doubted. If he had been like Tom Brown, or Joe Denton, or any of those careless fellows, it would have been a different thing.

Arrived at the library, both the boys were soon interested in looking over the books, and the time flew rapidly. "I'll just glance at these," thought Charlie, taking out two more with very attractive titles, "and then I must be off to the post."

Charlie took up a third, determined that it *should* be the last, when Bob said, "I think you had better inquire how the time goes."

"It's nothing like time for the post to close yet, is it, sir?" he asked of the librarian.

"It only wants three minutes to the time; it is not possible for you to save it, I am afraid."

Charlie dashed down the broad steps and along the streets as hard as he could run; but he was too late, the post had just gone, and he was obliged to drop the letter into the empty box. He walked slowly home, out of breath and out of temper, hoping no questions would be asked. "I don't see why I should say it was too late unless I'm asked," he argued, shrinking from confessing to his mother that she was justified in doubting him. Nothing was said about the letter that night; his father was much worse, and everything else was forgotten. Charlie was almost heartbroken to see him so ill, and miserable at the thought that he was deceiving him about the letter.

The next morning, as he was leaving the room to go out to his work, his father called him back. "Charlie," he said, "I am expecting a sister of mine to-night, and I want you to go to the train and meet her; she would get the letter you posted last night this morning, and will have time to get here by the half-past eight train to-night." He paused for a moment. Why did not Charlie undeceive him about the letter *at once*? He made up his mind to tell him, but put it off until his father had finished all he had to say.

"I have not seen my sister for years," said John Heedman; "she is the only relative I have living, but some misunderstanding rose up between us after my mother's death—at least, she took offence, and I do not know the reason even now. I wrote several times, but she did not answer. That letter you posted last night was to her; she will come, I know, when she hears that I am so near death. There must be something to explain away, and I am anxious for a

reconciliation before I die; indeed, it is the only earthly wish I have left." He said this so earnestly, and with such an anxious, longing expression in his eyes, that Charlie was obliged to turn away; he could not bear it.

How *could* he tell him that she had not got the letter? If only he had confessed his neglect the same night, before he knew the contents of the letter, it would not have been half so bad.

"You had better go now, my boy," said his father, kindly, "or you'll be late at work."

Charlie went. I need not tell you that he had a miserable day.

At night his father called him into his room and gave him as careful a description of his sister as he could to guide him in knowing her. Charlie dressed and went to the station, and walked up and down the platform until the train came in, gazed at the people, and walked home again. It seemed as if he could not help it; instead of recovering himself after the first false step, he had gone on sinking deeper and deeper into sin and deception; he seemed powerless to help himself.

"Hasn't she come?" exclaimed his mother, seeing he was alone. "Oh dear, what will your father do? he has been almost living upon the expectation of seeing her these last few hours; he has watched the door ever since you went out. I'm afraid the disappointment will throw him back sadly."

Charlie could not trust himself to speak, but turned into the sick room. His father was propped up with pillows, and looked eagerly to the door when Charlie

entered; he still waited in expectation until Mrs. Heedman came in and closed the door. "Where is she?" he asked; "where is Jane?"

"She has not come," said Mrs. Heedman, gently; "perhaps to-morrow morning will bring her.—You posted that letter in time, Charlie?" she asked.

"Yes, mother," Charlie answered, in desperation, and in a very low voice.

"It will be too late to-morrow," said John Heedman, sinking back on his pillows exhausted—"it will be too late." He lay so still for about an hour that Charlie thought he slept; after that he called Charlie to him, and wished him to sit up that night with his mother. He spoke very tenderly and lovingly, and told Charlie how happy his gratitude and love and obedience had made him, and how he thanked God that Charlie had never told him an untruth or deceived him, although he had still grave faults to overcome. He spoke for some time, every word sending a pang to Charlie's heart, who knew how unworthy he was of his confidence and praise. He sobbed hysterically, but was unable to speak.

What a night that was for Charlie, as he sat there with his mother hour after hour in the still and darkened room! His anguish and remorse became unbearable. How could he let his father die without undeceiving him and asking his forgiveness? He could not—he must not. Oh! if he had only spoken at first, when the first false step was taken, he would not have been led into all this sinful deceit, and that terrible lie would never have been told. Now it was such a difficult task—and yet he must do it. He glanced at the timepiece: when the hour-hand reached one he would tell him; he would think now

what he had better say—how he should begin. How fast that hour seemed to fly! It was one o'clock, and he had nothing ready to say; he dare not begin; he would wait until two, perhaps his father would be awake then. Two o'clock came; his father still slept, looking so calm and peaceful—how could he disturb him to listen to his sad tale of sin and shame?

Soon after his father awoke; he started up and looked anxiously round. Charlie and his mother felt instinctively that it was death. In his terror, Charlie sprang towards him. "Father, forgive me," he burst out, in an imploring tone. "I did *not* post the letter in time. I told a lie—forgive me—speak to me! pray forgive me!" A look of unutterable anguish passed over his father's face. Charlie waited for an answer, but none came. His father was far away from him—he was at rest; he was in that home where sin and sorrow cannot come.

It is useless attempting to describe Charlie's misery, it was so great. His father, who had so loved and trusted him, had at last died, with his hope in him crushed, his confidence in him broken. His father had died, listening to his confession of sin and deception, and without being able to judge whether his repentance was sincere. The confession came too late for his forgiveness or counsel.

The thought of all this completely crushed Charlie. For hours he sat crouching on the floor in his own room, without a single comforting thought. He had not only deceived his father, he had offended God. He sat in his misery, feeling careless whether he lived or died. No tears came, but his heart throbbed with a dull, aching pain that was unbearable.

It was a bitter, bitter lesson to Charlie, but it did its

work; it led him to think and pray more earnestly, and to watch; and by degrees the darling sin that had been so long indulged was crushed and rooted out.

You will be glad to know that he grew up to manhood, admired and respected by those who knew him not only for his talent as an engineer, but for his upright Christian character. One thing he was noted for, that was punctuality. "No fear of Scott being behind time or putting off," would often be said of him.

His good mother lived many years to see and share his happiness; and Harry Greenwell, who had always insisted that Charlie would come out well in the end, was delighted to see his prophecy fulfilled.

Yet, in the midst of his prosperity, how often Charlie's thoughts went back to that sad, sad time! all the old feelings of pain and regret would come back at the remembrance of his sin, and that look of anguish on his father's face, that could never be forgotten. Yet, although these thoughts left him saddened for a while, they also left him full of thankfulness to the Saviour, whose blood cleanseth from all sin, and grateful to the all-wise and merciful God, who had sent the trial to him in kindness and love. He saw clearly that if he had only humbly watched *at first*, that bitter day would have been spared.



Transcriber's note:

There was no Table of Contents in the original, one has been added in this etext.

J. AND W. RIDER, PRINTERS, LONDON.

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