

Youth's Department.

BIBLE LESSONS.

Sunday, November 6th, 1864.

Read—LUKE x. 1-24: The sending out of the seventy. 1 SAMUEL XXIV.: Saul is reconciled to David. Recite—EPHESIANS IV. 29-32.

Sunday, November 13th, 1864.

CONCERT: or Review of the past month's subjects and lessons.

BUSTER AND BABY JIM.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE BLUE FLAG," ETC.

"With God all things are possible."

CHAPTER V. THE HON. MR. B.

It was hard for Buster to accommodate himself to the regular life of his new abode. To eat and sleep, go out and come in, study and play, lie down and rise up, work and stop working, by the clock, were new things, indeed, after the wandering habits into which the poor boy had fallen. Yet to all this he became by degrees accustomed, and even this outward training took from him somewhat of the wild, reckless air which had marked him before. In the work-room and in the class, Buster showed any thing but stupidity, and yet the friend who had placed in him this kindly asylum was still anxiously watching for some more satisfactory signs of improvement. In vain he inquired, week after week, for good news about Buster. The boy often proved turbulent and unmanageable, and more than once he had undergone the severest punishment in use at the institution. Buster was, through the force of circumstances, slightly altered; but it was plain that he needed but to be exposed again to temptation, to fall back into all his evil practices.

Buster had been for several months at the asylum, when the boys were one day summoned to the chapel at an unusual hour. In they marched to the sound of music, keeping time, and stepping truly as well-trained soldiers. Leading one of the long files came Buster, his head erect and his great black eyes wandering hither and thither as if asking what was the provocation for this extraordinary assembly.

The boys were hardly seated when the superintendent introduced to them the Hon. Mr. B. of Ohio. At a given signal they all rose and politely acknowledged the introduction.

Mr. B. was a splendid specimen of Christian manhood. His tall and strongly built figure at once attracted Buster's attention and won his unqualified approval; nor could the boy help owing to himself that the face of the stranger was as attractive as his well-knit form.

The many voices of the children blended in a cheerful hymn of praise, and as Mr. B. listened to the holy words they so sweetly sang, the unbidden tear clouded his eyes. Rank upon rank, line upon line, rose the heads of the singers. In thought Mr. B. wandered to the scenes of vice and misery from which these poor children had been rescued, and angels' work indeed it seemed to him to have gathered these neglected outcasts and taught them even with the lips to praise the God of heaven. In a kind of touching recitative rose those beautiful words of commendation which the Lord said to address to those on his right hand at the day of judgment. When the children came to the closing sentence, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," Mr. B. could almost imagine the Saviour bodily present among them and speaking himself the sacred words that came from the lips of the singers.

A Saviour near at hand he seemed; and when Mr. B. rose to call upon him in prayer, he spoke to him as One in the midst of them, yearning with his almighty heart of love fully to take to his bosom these the least of his flock, yet precious above all price in his eyes.

When the prayer was over, Mr. B. knew that he was expected to make an address to the children. In many public places and before many critical audiences had his eloquent voice been heard, yet now there was a sense of choking in his throat, and a growing feeling of inability to say what he wished to the young hearers before him. Like the Syrophenician woman, he humbly prayed in silence, "Lord, help me." He felt that the message must come from God, if it should be blessed to do the work for which he was yearning.

The superintendent glanced at Mr. B. and saw by the working of his face that just now he was too much moved to give vent to his feelings in words.

"Boys," began the superintendent, "let me tell you that the gentleman who is to speak to you to-day has spoken to thousands of men, of grown men, and they have listened with delighted attention. In the State he comes from, he is looked up to more than if he were the governor. I like to show him to you as a Christian gentleman, one to whom God has given health, talent, and wealth, and he delights to use them all to work for his heavenly Master. Boys, listen to Mr. B. It may never fall to your lot to hear such a man again."

Mr. B. stepped out beyond the desk which stood upon the raised platform where he had been sitting. With his powerful figure in full sight, and his strongly-marked kindly face looking lovingly upon them, he began.

"My lads, your superintendent has spoken in my praise. Let us grant that what he has said is true, true as far as the world knows any

thing of me; yet in my closet I must bow the knee and cry like you, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' Boys, I will tell you a story. I knew a child once, a poor, wandering, homeless child, who had no mother to rock him on her knee, no father to earn him daily bread. His little tender hands soon learned to steal, his baby lips could speak an oath and laugh while he was speaking. What wonder that he grew in wickedness as he gained in years? I will not tell you how he went from step to step, till his young heart was hardened in sin. Perhaps some of you may know too well the evil path he trod. That path ended, as it must surely end, in misery. He found himself shut up within damp, gloomy prison walls. No pleasant sunshine to cheer him now; no friendly voice to bid him take courage. Two long years he was to spend in dreary confinement. He bowed his head upon his hands and cried as if his heart would break. There were no rough companions round him now; no gentle hand to wipe those tears away. Alone, alone in his guilty misery sat the wicked orphan-boy. So the wretched days and weeks came and went. One morning there was a visitor in his lonely cell. A kind motherly face was bending over the poor hardened boy. He would not answer her gentle words; he would not look into her loving eyes. Yet she came again and again. Sickness seized upon the weak frame of the prisoner. She nursed him as tenderly as if he had been one of the sweet children of her own comfortable home. She made him love her; he could not help it; and when by and by she talked to him of the precious Saviour who had sent her to his side, he learned to love that Saviour too.

"One long year passed, and then another, and at last the prisoner was free once more. He might go where he would, and find for himself a home. Did he turn back to the wretched alleys he knew? Did he seek the old sinners, who had led him astray before? No; he had his Bible in his hand and his God overhead. There was no such path for him now. Straight for the open country he went. On, on he walked, till the city was far behind him. He used his right hand for honest labor by day, by night he continued his journey. In the wide West he found a resting-place. No one knew him there. There he began his new life. God had forgiven him for Christ's sake, and he could cheerfully bear poverty and hard work, knowing that he had a sure home in heaven.

"God blessed that poor lad, and gave him friends, and a home and wealth, and even some share of this world's honors. He stands before you now, and thanks his heavenly Father for all his mercies. I have been telling you my own life, my boys. I know what it is to be poor and homeless and tempted and wicked. These are strong enemies, but God is stronger. He can help you, if you will but fight on the right side. God can cleanse you and strengthen you and bring you off conquerors. He will forgive you for the sake of his dear Son who died on the cross for you. He will help you to lead a new life. You will have a hard struggle for it, but you will win if you fight bravely. The coward gains no battle. He who is afraid to begin, will never end with honor. My dear boys, let this day be, at least for one of you, the most important day you have ever known. Go in secret to the great God of heaven. Ask him, for his Son's sake, to blot out all your sins, and help you to live a new and better life.

"May the Holy Spirit bless to you these words of mine; and when you shall have triumphed over sin and shame, may you take poor wandering children by the hand, and lead them to the feet of Jesus. Let us pray."

As sincerely, humbly, earnestly, and trustfully as when he first knelt at the feet of Jesus, Mr. B. now sought forgiveness for himself and the children in whose name he spoke. One young heart, at least, went with him. For the first time, Buster prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner. Cleanse thou me, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

To Buster it now seemed possible that even for such as he there was an upward path. God helping him, from this day forward he would leave his evil deeds behind him, and strive to be a true servant of Christ.

CHAPTER VI. PARTING.

We have seen the beginning of a Christian life, the tiny grain of mustard-seed taking root in poor Buster's heart. This was the commencement of a good work, but it was truly only the commencement. Mr. B. had rightly said the struggle was a hard one. Old habits and old temptations would rise again when they seemed almost conquered, and new faults sprung up where others had been subdued. Yet Buster persevered.

Two years Buster continued at the Asylum, before his kind friends dared to trust him away from their watchful eyes and timely counsel. At length there was a new party of boys starting for the West, to find homes among the farmers of the fast growing states. Buster's name was on the list. As Buster he still was known, but in solemn baptism he had taken the Christian name of Paul. He chose to be called after the great apostle, who, though counting himself the chief of sinners, had yet through the grace of God become among the chief of saints.

Again Buster was to take a journey, far, far longer than the ride in the swift cars that had brought him to his late home. What a change had been wrought in him since, rough, wicked, and reckless, he entered those sheltering walls. The friend who had then been his guide was now with him to bid him farewell.

Buster took the hand that was stretched out to him, and grasping it in both of his, he ex-

claimed, "God will bless you, sir. I can't thank you. I do not know how to say what I feel. I owe every thing to you. I'll try to do you credit. May-be you'll hear of me one of these days."

"I trust I shall see you at the right hand of God, rejoicing among the redeemed. Be watchful and humble, my lad. Hold fast to your Bible. Be faithful in prayer. Resist the very beginnings of evil, the angry look, the profane word, the touching of the slightest trifle that is not your own. God bless you, and bring you off conquerors."

"Thank you," said Buster, humbly. "But Oh, sir, you will keep a watch for him? May-be he'll turn up yet. Remember, blue eyes, and curly brown hair, small and slender, and an old, smart look in his face: That's he, that's Baby Jim."

What was it that unnerved the great strong boy? His hands trembled as they gave that final grasp at parting. Ah, the Christian brother but yearned the more tenderly for the companion of his childhood, and longed to know him snatched from those evil paths whose end is death.

"I will pray for him, and watch for him, my boy. Trust him to the Lord, and labor to be a brother who shall be a fit guide and example for him when we shall have found him."

Buster heard the parting words, and answered, "Aye, aye, that's what I will." Then with another "good-by," he sprang into the cars that were to bear him away to the scene of his future life.

JEWELS FROM THE LIPS.

Grace had been wishing all the afternoon to ask her mother something; but several friends had spent the Sabbath with the family, and her mother was so much occupied that she had to wait until bedtime. Her mother was accustomed, after gently arranging the pillows and making everything pleasant for the night's rest of her little girl, to sit a few moments at the bedside, and have their "little talk," as Grace called it.

The longed-for opportunity came at last. "Now, mamma, I want you to tell me if you ever saw a little girl that had jewels dropping from her lips when she spoke. I know there is a fairy story about it, and you have told me fairy stories are not true; but to-day, in the Sabbath school, Mr. Ellis said he had seen more than one little girl and boy who had something worth more than jewels, that dropped from the lips when they spoke. He said he had heard them fall. How could it be, mamma? Mr. Ellis would not tell a lie, and he said if we didn't find out about these jewels before next Sabbath, he would tell us then."

"You have been a good little daughter this afternoon," said her mother, "and I shall be glad to answer you. A jewel is always something very precious; but the word does not always mean that which is to be worn as a part of the dress. I might call you my 'jewel,' because you are my darling child. But Mr. Ellis told you he had 'heard them fall' from the lips of children. So have I."

"Why, mamma?" "Yes I have, indeed. One day last week I was passing the park, and I heard a company of school-boys on the other side shouting across, 'Ragged Dick, halloo! Ragged Dick, how's your father?' Two boys were just before one of them. They were good little Willie Fernald and Richard Lane, ragged enough, to be sure, poor boys. His father is a drunkard. As I went by them I noticed that tears were falling from Richard's eyes, but jewels were dropping from Willie's lips."

Grace opened her eyes wide, and looked wonderingly at her mother.

These were the jewels: "Never mind, Dick, I love you. Don't you care about them, nor mind what they say. We shall have a pleasant time up at my house. We can play in the yard; and then I've got a new book that father gave me, full of pictures, and we can look it over together;" and I noticed that Dick wiped the tears away, and was comforted.

"Yesterday, as I was going through the hall, near a certain nursery door, I heard a little girl talking very pleasantly to her baby brother, who had begun to cry. I know he was quite uneasy, for his mother had been out some time, but his sister was gentle, and her words and voice so sweet and free from all anger, that he soon became quiet again. He heard the jewels fall from her lips."

Grace's cheeks were glowing, and her eyes glistened, for that little patient girl was herself. Mr. Ellis's strange remark was explained. Kind words were the jewels. As her mother bent over to kiss her, she said, "I hope such jewels will fall from your lips every day, dear little Grace. Jesus will always help you to speak thus, if you ask Him."

IS MAN'S STATURE DIMINISHING?

Sharp observers notice a tendency in city life to diminish the size of the human form, but there seems no foundation for the common belief that men have deteriorated from earlier ages. The Scottish Guardian says:

It is a very common opinion that in the early ages of the world men in general possessed superior physical proportion, and were of a greater size than they are at present, and this notion of diminished stature and strength seems to have been just as prevalent in ancient times as at the present. Pliny observes of the human height, that "the whole race of mankind is daily becoming smaller,"—an alarming prospect

if it had been true. Homer more than once makes a very disparaging comparison between his own degenerated contemporaries and the heroes of the Trojan war. But all the facts of the circumstances which can be brought forward on this subject tend to convince us that the human form has not degenerated, and that men of the present age are of the same stature as in the beginning of the world. In the first place, though we read both in sacred and profane history of giants, yet they were, at the time when they lived, esteemed as wonders, and far above the ordinary proportions of mankind. All the remains of the human body (as bones, and particularly the teeth,) which have been found unchanged in the most ancient urns and burial places, demonstrate this point clearly.—The oldest coffin is in the great pyramid of Egypt, and Mr. Greaves observes that this sarcophagus hardly exceeds the size of our ordinary coffins, being scarcely six feet and a half long. From looking also at the height of mummies which have been brought to this country, we must conclude that those who inhabited Egypt two or three thousand years ago were not superior in size to the present inhabitants of that country. Lastly, all the facts which we can collect from ancient works of art, from armor, as helmets and breastplates, or from buildings designed for the abode and accommodation of men, concur in strengthening the proofs against any decay in nature. That man is not degenerated in stature in consequence of the effects of civilization is clear, because the inhabitants of savage countries, as the natives of America, Africa, Australia, or the South Sea Islands, do not exceed us in size.

Straw Bonnets in Yankeeeland.

Harper's Magazine gives the following history of the first manufacture of these articles in the United States.

There was a time when the manufacture of bonnets was a purely domestic affair. The straw was grown, prepared, braided and sewed by the same family, and the bonnet stiffened with common starch and ironed with a common flat. But as the days of home-pun have passed away, so have these days of home-made bonnets. Although no great invention has been produced to mark a progressive leap in the manufacture of straw bonnets—although the machinery now used is simple and not large in quantity, yet improvements have been gradually taking place, until now every operation has been so systematized that we have bonnet-factories as truly as cotton-factories—factories containing a great living machine, each portion of which has peculiar functions and is fitted for certain parts of the work. These factories have particular localities where they are most fully developed, or perhaps it would be better to say have a particular locality for, aside from two establishments in Connecticut and two or three in New-York city, they are all confined to Southeastern Massachusetts. Here we find a dozen towns, relying upon not quite a score of bonnet-factories for their principal means of support—towns in which straw is queen as true as cotton is king in many other of our manufacturing villages. Twelve thousand persons would be a fair estimate of the number employed by these establishments, and from these are sent away annually nearly eight million bonnets and hats.

The manufacture of straw bonnets is confined to this section of New England, because it was here that the American branch of the business originated. In 1798 Miss Betsey Metcalf, of Providence, Rhode Island, now Mrs. Baker, of West Dedham, Massachusetts, saw an imported Dunstable bonnet in a Providence store, and straightway wished one like it. Taking some oat stubble from a field where her father's laborers had been reaping, she split the straws with her thumb-nail and made her first attempts at plaiting. After several failures she succeeded in imitating the braid of the admired affair in the shop, and made herself a bonnet. Thus the ingenious girl, only twelve years of age, acquired the honor of being the first American manufacturer of straw bonnets. She is now an old lady of seventy-eight, and still braids, having presented us with a specimen of her handiwork, a beautiful straw ornament, on a late visit to her. Many persons urged her to get a patent on her process of braiding; but being then, as now, quite tenacious of her reputation as a Christian, she said her name should never go to Congress. A facsimile of Mrs. Baker's first bonnet is preserved in the rooms of the Rhode Island Society for the Encouragement of Domestic Industry.

The Watchman & Reflector adds the following:

A MOTHER IN ISRAEL.—It is refreshing to meet with examples of a truly primitive devotion like that narrated below. The subject of it we well know, know as of a type of piety most remarkable in these times. In the West Dedham church, whoever is absent from Sabbath worship, from the Sunday school, or from and meeting, no matter what the weather may be, it is not "Mother Baker." Whoever withholds from any good object, it is not she. Referring to a late article in Harper's Magazine on straw bonnets, A. S. P. (Rev. A. S. Patton), says, in last week's Examiner:

Mrs. Betsey Baker, whose name is mentioned as the first person who made a straw bonnet in America, recently wrote a long letter to my wife; and, if it were not a violation of confidence, I should be tempted to give it to your readers as an evidence of mental and spiritual freshness of one who, though nearly eighty years of age, lives in the present, and has a heart brimful of religion. As a little token of Christian love, she sends me a book-mark with this motto: