



Blind Cecilia.

A STORY OF JAMAICA.

Jamaica is an island in the West Indies, but it belongs to this country. There used to be a great many slaves there. They were poor black people who had been stolen from Africa by wicked men, and bought by West India planters. They had no wages; their masters could sell them again, and sell their wives and children too:—they could be flogged and chained at the will of their master or mistress:—they were not allowed to learn to read the word of God, and were often severely punished for going to hear it.

In 1838, the slaves in Jamaica were set free. It was a joyful day to them. Now they can have their schools, and chapels, and ministers, their neat little cottages, with gardens before and behind. They learn to read, and sing, and pray.

That you may judge how happy they now feel, I will tell you what sort of names they give to their little cottages and lands. There were some which a missionary found in one of their villages: "Bundle Rest," "Quite Content," "Heart's Ease," "Happy Retreat," "Bit of my own," "All Blair's Comfort," and one poor old

negress who had lived to the age of seventy years before she was set free, called hers, "Me no been thinking," meaning, "I never could have thought it."

When the slaves were set free, the British and Foreign Bible Society sent a copy of the New Testament and Psalms to every negro who could read. The negroes heard of the noble present that was coming, and they were soon as busy as possible, trying to learn to read with all their might before the Bible ship arrived. So many had learned to read that it cost the Bible Society ten thousand pounds to keep their promise!

There was one poor negro girl, however, who could not lay claim to a Testament. She sat and listened to others, but she could not learn. She heard a sweet verse here and there which made her long to be busy learning too, but she could do nothing: she was *blind*. She had been blind for several years. The good Moravian missionaries at that station were very sorry for her, and I dare say they had many a kind word of instruction and encouragement for the poor blind girl, but that was all they had to give her.

Not very long after there came some