



FRANK AND EDWARD POCOCK, FRED BARKER, AND NATIVE BOYS.

A Great Improvement.

YOUNG Archibald Albert, an orderly boy, Once had, to his very great pleasure and joy, An autograph album presented to him. Its pages were neat, and its covers were trim. Within its gay bindings of superfine leather He promptly endeavoured to gather together The names of his every relation and friend, Till the book should be filled from beginning to end.

But soon he perceived, with surprise and dismay And disapprobation, the very strange way In which people wrote in his elegant book : He found it distressing to give it a look, Some autographs proved such a tangle and scrawl You scarce could determine their letters at all ; While others more crooked, and some seemed to stray To the edge of the page, as if running away. Some looked as if caught in a terrible gale— His grandfather's trembled—grandmother's was pale ; His father's was blotty, and straggled away ; His mother wrote nicely—he begged her to try.

He pondered the matter ; then purchased another Fine album, as bright and complete as the other, And carefully copied the names, every one. And neatly and fairly, as it could be done. With every angle and every line Drawn out like a copy, correctly and fine. With every i and every t Neatly dotted and crossed, as they needed to be. His letters were regular, even, and nice ; His capitals stately, exact, and precise. Then Archibald Albert, in viewing the whole, Breathed a sigh of relief from his orderly soul, And exclaimed to himself : "It is better by half, Than to let each one write his own autograph !" —St. Nicholas.

In the Leopard's Cage.

THE keeper of a certain menagerie was accustomed to take his baby girl every day to the cages of the animals, and they soon grew to be very fond of her, showing signs of pleasure whenever she put her tiny hand through the bars to pat or stroke them. A savage old jaguar, however, refused to be friendly, and one day when his cage door became unfastened accidentally, he crept out and crouched to make a spring for the child. The father was holding her before a cage of leopards. To remain in that position was certain death for both. Quick as thought, he slipped the bolt of the leopards' cage and thrust his darling in among them. Then he

seized a rope which was dangling from the ceiling and lifted himself, hand over hand, out of the reach of the jaguar, until the enraged beast could be shot. The leopards welcomed the little girl, and honoured the trust by keeping her safely.

A Man Who Was in Earnest.

SEVENTY-FIVE years ago there was a poor clerk, living at Landport, in England. He had a wife and two children. The second was the boy Charles, and as soon as he was old enough he had to do something for his own support. Although he had an ordinary day-school education as a little boy, yet, at ten years of age, he was obliged to go to work in the employ of a London blacking manufacturer, pasting labels on pots of blacking, because his father had become bankrupt, and was imprisoned for debt. The family had become larger now, and little Charles had a hard time, and was about as poor and wretched a little boy as you would care to hear about.

But, after a while, his father had a little money left him—enough to get out of prison and take a position as reporter on a paper—and he then apprenticed Charles to a lawyer, with whom the boy served long enough to learn something of the hooks and crooks of the profession. But there was another kind of hooks and crooks that he longed to become familiar with. He wanted to become a reporter, like his father, so he bought a book on stenography, and by hard, persistent study, fitted himself to be a reporter. He then managed to get a position on a newspaper, where his work was so careful and accurate that he got ahead very fast. Then, after all this hard work in a practical direction, he ventured to blow on the spark of genius, which he believed burned inside of him—that is, he wrote some short sketches of English life. He was delighted to have them accepted, and printed in a magazine, over the signature of "Boz." These sketches attracted some attention, though they gave small evidence of his wonderful talent. But the young man knew that talent must be developed by hard work, and that he was not afraid of. Each successive thing he wrote was better and better ; and when he wrote the *Pickwick Papers*, he set the

whole English-speaking world a-laughing, and his reputation and his fortune were made. Still, he kept hard at work, trying to improve his style, until his writing became a part of the most remarkable in the language, and, in the opinion of some critics, his mastery of English is next only to Shakespeare's.

This wonderful young man is remembered to-day as Charles Dickens. Speaking of his own career, he says, "I will only add, to what I have already written of my perseverance at this time of my life, I know this to be the source of my success. Some happy talent, and some fortunate opportunity, may form the two sides of the ladder on which some men mount, but the rounds of that ladder must be made of stuff to stand wear and tear, and there is no substitute for thoroughgoing, ardent, and sincere earnestness. I never could have done what I have without habits of punctuality, order, and diligence—without the determination to concentrate myself on one object at a time. Whatever I have tried to do in my life, I have tried with all my heart to do well ; whatever I have devoted myself to, I have devoted myself to completely. In great aims and small, I have always been thoroughly in earnest."—*Treasure Trove*.

Teachers' Department.

Mr. Talkative.

HE is the superintendent, not of our school, but of the unfortunate one over the way. He is a good man, but he has a tongue. Not that we object to him on that account, for a tongue is a useful member of the body, though hardly ornamental. Our friend uses his tongue when there is occasion, which is all right ; and when there is no occasion, which is all wrong. He talks and talks, not because there is a necessity for it, but he has formed the habit, and no one has the courage to tell him the habit is one which ought to be changed.

As if the school was a pleasure-boat, full of teachers and children, he tries to float it along in a current of talk. Every Sunday he talks about coming early and staying in school until it closes ; and if one boy misbehaves, then there is a lecture to the school on good behaviour. He repeats himself ; and the strangest thing is, that he can keep on talking as readily when the school is inattentive as when it is in a listening mood.

He is tiresome, but he is borne with because he is so good-natured. He rattles, but then he never scolds. He is an alarm-clock, which goes off very easily, but when once started cannot be stopped until it ruins down.

If Mr. Talkative would only talk because he had something which must be said at that precise moment, how greatly he would improve ! If he would fall in love with brevity, then we would all fall in love with him. But whoever heard of a ready talker, who was past the age of forty, who ever checked flow of talk in mercy to the unfortunate hearers ? A few such cases are on record to show us that miracles have not ceased.

But one thing Mr. Talkative does which is greatly to his credit and the comfort of the school. He urges brevity on the part of others who speak. He knows the value of time and that the half-hour