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THE MORNING LIGHT.

A True Story.

BY MRS. ANNIE KINNE.

"Where is the baby, grandmamma?"
The sweet young mother calls
From her work in the cosy kitchen,
With its dainty whitewashed walls.
And grandma leaves her knitting,
And looks for her all around;
But not a trace of baby dear
Can anywhere be found.

No sound of its merry prattle,
No gleam of its sunny hair,
No patter of tiny footsteps,
No sign of it anywhere.
All through house and garden,
Far out into the field,
They search each nook and corner,
But nothing is revealed.

And the mother's face grew pallid;
Grandmamma's eyes grew dim—
The father's gone to the village;
No one to look for him.
And the baby lost! "Where's Rover?"
The mother chanced to think
Of the old well in the orchard
Where the cattle used to drink.

"Where's Rover? I know he'd find her.
"Rover!" In vain they call,
Then hurry away to the orchard;
And there, by the moss-grown wall,
Close to the well lies Rover,
Holding to baby's dress—
She was leaning over the well's edge
In perfect fearlessness.

She stretched her little arms down,
But Rover held her fast,
And never seemed to mind the kicks
The tiny bare feet cast
So spitefully upon him,
But wagged his tail instead,
To greet the frightened searchers,
While naughty baby said:

"Dere's a 'itle dirl in the 'ater;
She's dust as big as me;
Mamma, I want to help her out,
And take her home to tea.
But Rover, he won't let me,
And I don't love him. Go
Away, you naughty Rover!
Oh! why are you crying so?"

The mother kissed her, saying:
"My darling, understand,
Good Rover saved your life, my dear—
And, see, he licks your hand—
Kiss Rover!" Baby struck him.
But grandma understood;
She said: "It's hard to thank the friend
Who thwarts us for our good."

—*Baldwin's Monthly.*

A PARTNERSHIP.

A Penny a Week and a Prayer.

BY MARY H. CROSVANOR.

There was quite an excitement in the Sunday-school of one of our city churches; the lessons were over, the classes arranged in long lines, and three hundred pairs of curious eyes were all steadily fixed upon the speaker, a tall, slender man with a kind, earnest face.

He was a returned missionary, one who was spending his much-needed vacation attempting to arouse interest in the work. He spoke to them of Japan, his adopted country, that land waking from its long sleep, and calling Christians to give to its people the Bible in the place of their old, unsatisfying myths. He told them of life in that strange land, the houses, the language, the beautiful work, bringing a little ripple of laughter by some touch of humor, and tears by a pathetic story.

He then told them of a boy whose heart had been touched by the Holy Spirit, who resolved to attend a Sunday-school against the wishes of his father, a wicked unbeliever. On the evening of every day he attended the school, he was regularly whipped by his father with a piece of rope. After this had been going on for some weeks, the boy appeared before his father on Sunday morning, and handing him the whip, made this request: "Father, as you are determined to whip me every time I go to Sunday school, I want you to whip me now, so that I may not have to think of the punishment while studying the Bible." The boy's courage led the father to the church, curious to see what so attracted his son, and ended in the man's conversion and confession of Christ. "I do not know how it is with you, but it seems to me I have heard of boys who would almost rather take a whipping than go to Sunday-school." Here he was interrupted by a movement in a class of bright-looking boys. "You seem to know some of those boys," he said, with a smile. Then resuming his address, he added: "And now, dear boys and girls, what will you do to help along this work? If every child here would resolve to give only one penny a week for a year, we would have a surprising sum. Only a penny a week! but it must be your own money, dedicated to the service of him who gives us all things and who died for the world. But the penny is not all; it needs God's blessing quite as much as larger sums, so when you put it in your box, ask him to bless your efforts and mine for the Japanese. So it will be is this way a penny a week and a prayer."

Then the school was dismissed; but the excitement was by no means over. Groups of little girls talked the matter over. The boys said little, but resolved to at least give it a trial, and see how it worked.

That same afternoon, two children were sitting upon the steps of a house in one of the poorer portions of the city, in earnest conversation. The girl was the one who had been attracted by the description of the Japanese church, where rich and poor worshipped in the same poor clothes. The other was a boy, two or three years younger, the crutch lying beside him telling a sad tale of helplessness and suffering added to poverty.

"I asked mother the minute I got home, and she said it was grand," the little girl was saying, excitedly; "but how was I to get the penny. You know, Johnnie, Mrs. Beach has asked me lots of times to look after her children while she went out for a day's wash, and offered me ten cents a week for doing it, too; but I never would, because they are the very hatefulest children you ever saw. Now, I'm going right in there to-morrow morning to offer to do it. Mother says I can have all she gives me for myself; but you know I ain't going to spend one cent, of it. I'm going to send it all to Japan."

"Oh, Maisie!" Johnnie exclaimed, opening his big blue eyes. "Ten cents a week! why, I expect that will be most a hundred dollars in a year, won't it?"

"Of course not, Johnnie. Besides, I won't make that every week, 'cause sometimes Mrs. Beach don't do washing, you know. But, what'll you do, Johnnie, to get a penny a week?"

"Maisie," he said, his lip quivering and his eyes filling with tears, "I can't do a thing. Not only wanse a cripple to work for them; I can't send anything to the poor little Japans."

Maisie's eyes moistened sympathetically, her mouth opened, then closed sharply, her cheeks grew red, but as Johnnie, overcome by his feelings, laid his head on the step and sobbed, her lips flew open again, and these words came out quickly: "I'll tell you what I'll do, Johnnie Peters, we'll be partners. You lend me that box of yours with the picture on it, and the money I put in will be yours and mine. There, now."

"Really and truly, Maisie! My! but you're a good girl;" then despondingly: "but that won't be my doing it. Ain't there anything a lame partner can do, Maisie?"

His sister thought some time, then cried out, triumphantly: "Of course, there is, Johnnie. He said it wouldn't be worth while to put in only pennies, there must be prayers, too; and, Johnnie, you know you never forget your prayers, and I'm real sleepy; so, Johnnie, I'll put in the pennies and you can put in the prayers."

"But what kind of prayers, Maisie? I don't understand."

"Oh, just ask God to bless our efforts, that's what the missionary said. I don't know what efforts means, but maybe it's only another word for pennies, and ask him to give Mrs. Beach lots of work."

So with tears all dried, and sunshine in his thin face, Johnnie entered into the partnership and limped off after the box, into which the following week was dropped the first fruits of Maisie's work—a black-eyed ten cent. piece. Hardly earned, too, for the Beach children had been unusually tormenting. The baby had cried for hours at a time, and as the little partners sat upon their doorstep looking at the coin lying in the bottom of the box, Maisie said, with a long-drawn sigh, "You'll have to put in your prayers to-night, Johnnie, after asking God to bless our efforts, and give Mrs. Beach plenty of work."

Week after week of the year slipped by, and the missionary in his far-away home thought often of that morning in the Sunday-school, and was curious to know if the children had persevered. It had been with them pretty much as it is with us. Some had forgotten all about it before the next day, others had kept up for a month or so, and then grown tired, while others again were patiently dropping in their money week after week. Among the latter were our two little partners, and, as Johnnie had conceived the charming plan of getting ten pennies for each dime, the box was becoming almost too heavy for the thin, weak hand of the prayer-partner.

Winter had come now, with its snow and cruel, biting winds; the doorstep was no longer a suitable resting-place, and they now kept close to the kitchen stove, discussing the amount, and wondering how many Bibles it would buy. One evening at twilight, as they sat there waiting for mother to come, the door opened and Mrs. Beach hurried in. "Maisie, your mother's fell down and hurted herself," she said, "and they're bringing her home; you'd better get her bed ready." Then seeing the child was too much stunned to understand, she pushed her aside and began to get the bed arranged. Soon the tramping of feet was heard and some men carried in the mother, laying her gently down, and leaving her to the care of Mrs Beach and a doctor whom they had called in. With hands clasped tightly together, Maisie and Johnnie stood by the fire. Was mother dead? The doctor had shut the door and they could no longer see the pale face upon the pillow. Maisie's face was almost as white; but she never shed a tear. It seemed a year before the door opened and the doctor came out. Maisie caught his arm as he was hurrying by, and gasped out: "Is mother dead?"

"Dead! bless your heart, it's only a broken leg; but it was a bad fall and she's lucky to escape with so little. She'll be in bed a long time, though." And away he went, leaving relief and yet dismay behind him. A broken leg; that must mean mother would be on a crutch all the time, like Johnnie; bright, active mother, who moved so quickly about the house. There would be no one to work, and where would the food come from—already Maisie fancied she heard Johnnie crying for something to eat. He was crying really, softly and quietly; but it was because mother was hurt; poor mother whom he had never known to be sick before. But now Mrs. Beach opened that dreadful door, and they could see mother once more, pale still, but with open eyes, and a little smile for the two terrified faces peeping at her. At the sight of the smile, the terror vanished, and they hurried to the bedside.

"Mother," Johnnie said, "you ain't all broken in little pieces, are you? The doctor said something was broken, and you'd be in bed a long time."

"Heaven help us, my poor children," she said. "With winter here and no money to come, how will we manage?"

"Never mind, mother," Maisie said, bravely. "Me and Johnnie won't eat much, and I can cook real well, and clean up, too. We'll get along finely, you'll see." So she kept up a brave face, singing a little song as she bustled about getting supper; but as Johnnie passed her on his way to bed, she threw her arms around his neck and said, with a little sob, "Pray, Johnnie; pray harder than you ever prayed in your life before, that God will help us through."

What dreary weeks; how they dragged along, as I yet how wonderfully Maisie managed. There had been a little money put away, so they had been kept from starvation, and from actual freezing; but the children knew for the first time what it was to go hungry to bed. One morning, as Johnnie crept shivering into the kitchen, he stopped horrified to see a handful of coal burning in the stove, and the box empty.

"Don't tell mother, Johnnie," Maisie said; but that's the last bit of coal, the money's all gone, and what are we to do?" and she burst into tears. To see Maisie break down, the strong, brave sister, was almost more than he could stand; but making one great effort to speak cheerfully, said:

"Never mind, Maisie, Spring's almost here, now. Maybe we won't freeze."

"Now, Johnnie Peters, don't talk nonsense. Spring won't come for two months yet, and there's no comfort in that. Something must be done. I've thought and thought, and there's only one thing." Here her eyes rested on the missionary box with its gay picture.

"Oh, Maisie, not that money, not the money we've saved and saved for the poor little Japan boys and girls. Oh, don't take that money; it ain't ours any longer, you know."

"I've thought of that, too, Johnnie, and all of this time when the money was going and going. I felt something would happen to keep us from spending that; but the money's gone, the coal's gone, and mother would never let us beg, you know; so what's to be done? Then, Johnnie, even if we do have to spend the money, the prayers will be there; that's some comfort."

Johnnie had reached down the box and was sadly looking into it. "Three dollars, Maisie; just think of it, and ten cents over, the last time you worked for Mrs. Beach. I believe it will break my heart to let it go."

Maisie's lip trembled, but her look was resolute. "If God wants us to give it to mother instead of to the Japans, Johnnie, don't you suppose he knows best?"

"Yes, Maisie," Johnnie whispered, meekly; and maybe he'll send someone to help us right now."

"Pray for it then, Johnnie, for I have prayed until there don't seem anything more to say."

And Johnnie, turning to go upstairs to the corner of the cold little room where was his sanctuary, nearly fell over a lady coming into the kitchen

"Miss Alice, Miss Alice," Maisie said, throwing her arms about her teacher, "I'm so glad to see you," while Johnnie caught her hand, and looking up into her face said, "Has God sent you to save the money for the poor little Japans?"

Maisie would have stopped him, but Miss Alice's kind sympathy soon drew from them the sad little story. Touched by their sacrifice, she spoke encouragingly to them, and as she went away, held Maisie's hand in hers while she said cheeringly, "Put the box away, dear, brave little girl, and wait a few hours longer for God's answer to your prayers."

That evening, a coal wagon rumbled into the narrow street, and deposited in front of the Peters' house such a goodly supply of fuel there would be no lack of fire for many weeks to come; then later, a basket from the grocer, and another from the market, until the closet was full to overflowing, and Maisie's heart was full to overflowing, too; and once more she sang as she moved about her work the little song which had died on her lips during those dreadful days of fear and trouble.

In a few weeks, Mrs. Peters was about the house, limping a little, but the doctor said that would soon pass away, and Maisie went back to work for Mrs. Beach, adding, week after week, with a joyful heart, to the stock of coin for the Japanese. When the year was out, and the collection was sent to the missionary, Miss Alice wrote him this little story, and he sent a letter to the children themselves, telling them how much the money had bought, and sending them a curious box, carved in some sweet-smelling wood, which they put aside to be used as a Japanese mission-box all the rest of their lives.

And now, dear children, are there not some of you who will resolve to give even one penny a week to the Lord's work—such a little sum, and yet one hundred pennies make a dollar, and a dollar can buy a good deal? But remember, though, the penny is not all; remember, money can do little without God's blessing, and so, as you drop them into your boxes, remember the whole request:

"A penny a week and a prayer."

N. Y. Observer.

The Ringing of the Bell-Buoy at the Harbor Ledge.

BY REV. EDWARD A. RAND.

"I am so glad to see you, May," said uncle Charles Gray, catching up his blue-eyed niece and lifting her high in his arms. "It was good in your father to let you come."

Aunt Phebe turned from the kitchen stove where she had lifted a sizzling mackerel on the broiler (to see if it were broiling too much), and her countenance was radiant with pleasure as that of her husband, when she greeted May.

"Send May, please," Uncle Charles had written to his brother Edward, the minister, "for we have no children to keep us company, and the house seems very lonely since mother's death."

And her father had replied, "May is coming, brother. The house is sure to have some music in it where May is."

Yes, May's voice was very sweet while penetrating, and it went with her nimble, busy feet all over the house, now up in the brown garret holding so many venerable heirlooms, then down in Aunt Phebe's room, then lower yet, in the kitchen, then lowest yet, perhaps in the cellar where her cry might be, "Could I have one of these red apples?"

What charmed her more than heirlooms in the garret, was the big blue sea. Oh how big it was! Reaching away from "Breaker's Point," in the east round to "Sandy Beach" in the west, and holding in its great, far-reaching, blue arms so many waves each with a head of white, shining foam, and here and there lifting the white-sailed ships as if they were only the wave-crests rising up and vessel-like shooting away! And what did she hear one day as she sat in her uncle's lap, there by the window looking seaward? It was a soft, sweet bell-call from the sea, that went, "Ding-ding-ding!"

"Uncle Charles, what is that? I have heard it before."

"Oh that ringing? That is the bell-buoy."

"A bell-buoy? What is a bell-buoy?"

"Well, it is where there are some bad rocks, the Harbor Ledge, we call it."

"Off in the sea? I always hear it one way, I heard it yesterday, and it is always off there."

She rose and pointed toward the drifting ships and the white-capped waves.

"That is it, May. It's off there."

"What makes it?"

"Well, the waves make the bell-ringing. The buoy makes you think of a bowl painted red, and it is fastened to the ledge. The bowl has a frame built above it, something like a tent, and in the top of the tent-frame is a bell. The sea as it rocks, moves this frame, and the bell rings. When the sea is quiet, the notes of the bell are soft. When there is trouble out there, in a storm say, then you hear it plainer. It is loud then."

"Why, Uncle Charles, that makes me think of father's sermon in church, last Sunday."

"What did he say, May?"

"Why,—why, he said, 'people did not hear God calling to them, though he was calling all the time.' But 'when there was trouble, in a storm'—that what he said, like you, you know—'why you hear God's voice plainer. Then it was real loud,' he said."

Uncle Charles was silent.

"Isn't it queer that you and father should talk so much alike?"

"Very," replied Uncle Charles in a sober voice. Soon, without a word, he put May upon the floor and walked abruptly out of the house. It was not like Uncle Charles to act in that fashion when he took leave of May.

Had she said anything that he did not like?

"Oh dear," she thought, "wish I didn't talk so much!"

Perhaps Aunt Phebe could tell her if she had made a mistake.

"What has Uncle Charles gone for?" was the question that fell in silvery notes at tall Aunt Phebe's feet.

"Oh I don't know, dear. He is going out in his boat this afternoon, and perhaps he is just getting his lines and bait ready."

It May had stepped out to the fish-house on a grass-topped hummock above the white sands, she would have seen Uncle Charles back of the fish-house, prostrate amid the green clumps of beach grass, and if she could have heard what he was saying, she would have caught these words: "Oh why is it, since my old mother died, that I seem to hear God speaking to me wherever I go?"

That afternoon, Uncle Charles' boat was off amid the little waves that were rocking like a fleet of blue cradles into which the big fish had put their babies, all about "Green Rocks," Uncle Charles' fishing-ground. The fishing was so good that it tempted him to stay longer than was prudent, for in the meantime a fog, that made no noise, only crept, crept softly dropped its folds all about him, and he was caught.

Uncle Charles was only an occasional fisherman, and consequently did not know the fishing-grounds so well as "Skipper Ben Brooks," or "Jack Tarleton," old experienced fishermen who went out in their boats every day. Uncle Charles preferred his fields to his fishing-house, and only fished a few times each season. If a daily visitor at the ledges, he could have told better the way home; but somehow, while he was making ready to go home, stowing away his fish, and winding up his lines, his boat was swung round by the sea and he did not notice it. He picked up his oars and began to row, but the boat was not headed right! There, in the midst of the densely-gathered fog, Uncle Charles was rowing, but he was going away from home! Going away and did not know it.

"I don't see," he said at last, "why I don't come to something familiar. Well, I will row on a spell longer."

The sea had been growing very uneasy, and the waves now jostled roughly against the boat as if they would say, "We don't want you here! We will upset you!"

That lonely boat, that angry sea, that smothering fog, the night coming nearer—all this did not look encouraging, did it?

But hark! Suddenly the man pulling alone off in the ocean heard a soft, faint musical call coming over the sea! "What is that?" he said. He listened again.

"Ding—ding—ding!"

"The bell-buoy!" he exclaimed excitedly, at once turning his boat's head in the direction of the sound. "Now I know where I am!"

"Ding—ding—ding!"

Louder soon echoed the notes of the faithful bell over the dreary, foggy sea. The waves were rising, the man rowing alone in that boat dropped his head, rested on his oars and murmured, "That is what May was talking about, and I can't get away from it. God's voice is like that bell in rough waters, sounding plainer when there is trouble. How it sounds now!"

No one ever knew, save God, why Uncle Charles halted out there in the ocean. But while the bell was sounding distinctly in his ears, musically saying, "This way, this way is home," Uncle Charles knelt in his boat. Then he looked up through the thick, gray fog, seeking God, answering the voice of the Spirit within, saying, "This way, this way is home."

When he took up his oars again, he pulled steadily for the bell-buoy. Its red frame and that calling bell looked so friendly, so home-like, Uncle Charles could have thrown his arms about it. He could not see land from this point, but there was the tide returning out from the harbor, making a current past the bell-buoy, and that told him which way now to row, and joyfully he pulled home. There was little May standing on the shore, watching patiently for her uncle.

"Aunt Phebe said the fog might bother you and you might not know which way to go, but I told her the bell was ringing real loud, and I guessed you'd hear it, uncle."

"Yes, dear," said Uncle Charles, stooping down to his little niece and lifting her fondly in his arms, "I heard it and it helped me, and I heard another voice, and followed that too."

May wondered what Uncle Charles meant.—*Standard.*

—A darkey, being brought before a magistrate, was asked: Haven't you been in jail for stealing chickens once before? No, sah, no indeed I hain't. Praise de Lawd for massy, nobody hain't cotched me yet. Hit seems as ef I was purtected by de higher powers.

—What book has helped you most in life? I asked my friend as home we took our way, and he replied,—pocketbook.

—Dan M——, a genuine son of Erin-go-Brah, while digging in the ground, was accosted thus: Dan, what are you digging? A hole in the ground?—Arrah, no, was the answer. I'm diggin' the dirt away, and lavin' the hole.

—You say you were very lucky the first time you bought a lottery ticket?—Yes; I drew a blank, and have never invested since.

—A little city boy, who had just returned from his first visit on a farm, gave this description of butter-making: You ought just see how auntie makes butter with a barrel and a broomstick!

Stuck Again. Mrs. O'Hoolihan—Faix, Dennis, an' phat are yez afther doin' now? O'Hoolihan—Begob, Rosy, it's meself aha bought a music stool for Katie, an' Oi've been winding the beastely thing up for over an hour, an' not a chrop of music can Oi get out of it at all, at all.—*Puck.*

—Mr. Dusenberry, I believe I'm wandering in my mind.—Don't be alarmed, my dear, you'll not get lost.

—William, said a teacher to one of his pupils, can you tell me why the sun rises in the East?—Don't know, sir, replied William, 'cept it be that 'cast makes everything rise. Teacher fainted.

—Cuffy said he'd rather die in a railroad smash-up than a steamboat bust-up, for this reason: If you gets smashed up on de train, dar you is, but if you gets blowed up on de boat, whar is you?

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