

The Mother's Message.

ISAAC, a mother of noble birth,
 "What would you tell to your darling son
 If time were measured for you on earth,
 And the sands of the hour-glass nearly
 run
 A shadow darkened the sunny face
 As she mused on the parting sure to come;
 The smile with its witching and tender grace
 Died out, and the soft, sweet voice grew
 dumb.
 And then, as she thought on a thousand
 things
 That were left for speech in the dying hour—
 When we long to hear as on angels' wings
 The one of our life, the richest dower
 God gave to woman—she slowly said,
 "My words would be simple and plain and
 few:
 'Remember, my boy, when I am dead,
 To keep your faith that the world is true.'
 "I would have him believe in his fellow-men,
 For trust is the sweetest of human needs;
 And hope like the star of Bethlehem;
 And 'Love one another' the best of creeds;
 "I would have him honest and brave and
 pure—
 Living a life that he would not rue;
 But, whether in sorrow or joy, be sure
 To show his faith that the world is true."

A BOY'S FRIENDSHIP.

A Story of Boy Life in England.

CHAPTER I.

BY THE BROOK AT CRICKLEFORD.

It was a warm summer evening among the Derbyshire hills. Not a cloud flecked the sky, which in the west was glowing with the ruddy light of the sunset. The shadows were lengthening behind the row of pollard willows which showed the path of the brook through the meadows down to the river two miles away. So still it was that the farm-labourer crossing the field yonder could be heard distinctly saying "good-night" to someone on the other side of the hedge, and the click-click of the white gate as he passed into the road disturbed the rooks in the spunney close by, sending them in evening flights, with a chorus of caws, above the trees. Insects in myriads hummed and sailed in the slanting rays of rosy light, and, down among the reeds and forget-me-nots, a splash set the water-lilies dancing, where a rat had started for the opposite bank.

All this and much more was filling the eyes and ears of a boy sitting under a hawthorn tree by the little bridge which crossed the brook. He had laid down his little fishing-rod, careless of the bobbing float among the minnows, for the quiet beauty of the hour had stolen his thoughts as he gazed at the trees and sky. To his young heart, softened and impressed, all this spoke of God and heaven.

His cap was pushed back, and the dark brown hair fell upon the collar of the rather thread-bare velvet jacket which he was wearing. A bright intelligent face, a trifle older than his years perhaps, and a touch of sadness

in the hazel eyes, bright because his heart was happy, shaded a little by the fact that he was a fatherless boy.

"I wonder how people can live in towns, no fields, no trees, only bits of sky like ribbon-strips over the streets. How I love the country! I hope, please God, that I shall not leave it, at any rate until I am a grown man." He was talking aloud, and so full of his musings that he had not heard a step on the footpath near.

"You love the country, my boy? So do I!"

So addressed, he looked round hastily and caught the glance of a gentleman who had been walking in the distant fields, and was now returning, his walking-stick in hand.

"What is your name, laddie?"

"Frank, sir."

And the boy, so speaking, rose from the ground.

"A good name, and one which ought never to be borne where there is not a strong heart and an open countenance."

Then they fell to chatting about fish, and where the pike were reputed to lie in the deep bottoms of the brook, also where Frank had gathered the bunch of forget-me-nots, in search of which he had driven the minnows away, what ferns he held in his hand, and the prospect of a fine day on the morrow. During this conversation, the stranger parted up his rod, and told Frank that he would bear him company as far as Crickleford, the village where the boy lived. Trudging along together on the country road, Frank soon became quite at home with his new friend.

"And what is your father, Frank? I quite forgot to ask after him."

"My father has been dead several years, sir; he was a solicitor in Middleport."

"Rather a grimy place for a little poet like you to be born in, Frank."

"I don't remember much about it, sir, I was very little; and, after father's death, it was found that there was just enough for mother to take that white cottage which you can see among the trees, under the high hill yonder."

"Then I daresay you find sometimes it needs care to make ends meet, my boy."

"Yes, it is rather a struggle for us sometimes; but we are very happy together; and never forget father's favourite expression: 'Love lightens labour.'"

"Quite right, Frank; and better still, we read in the Bible that God promises to be a husband to the widow and a father to the fatherless. So be brave, Frank, and trust in him, come what may."

"So I will, sir; and, if I am spared to be a man, I hope to make something out, and get mother some comforts."

"What would you like to be?"

Frank was silent for a few moments, at a loss to express the height of his boyish ambition, it seemed so very unlikely to ever come to pass.

"I should like most of all to be able

to write a book, but I am afraid that you will think that a very foolish idea."

"No, not at all, Frank: there are plenty of books in the world, but there is always room for one that can speak a good and useful word."

"Then you think, sir, that after all it is not impossible?"

"By no means: but, in the meantime, you have a book to write which you can begin at once."

"At once! what is that, sir?"

"The book of which the Apostle speaks when he exhorts us to be an epistle known and read of all men."

"You mean the book of my life, then?"

"That's it, Frank. By the grace of God write all these pages well,—a character of purity, piety, patience, and peace, which in large and unmistakable letters will catch the eye of those about you."

Thus talking, they drew near to the village. Crickleford lay embosomed between two high hills, and the pretty little house where Frank lived stood on a shelving ledge of rock, half-hidden by the lilac bushes and golden-tressed laburnum.

"No, thank you, my boy, I must not come in, for I have some distance yet to walk. But let me leave you two thoughts in your mind, which I have faith, Frank, you will not willingly forget. First of all, be faithful to God at any cost, knowing that he who fights on that side is bound, in the long run, to win. 'Greater is he that is for us than all that can be against us.' Then try rather to be good than great, do your duty to your mother, forgive your enemies; and, whenever you want a friend, here is my card, write or come to me. Good-bye; God bless you, my boy."

Frank hurried homeward, and that night had much to tell his mother over their frugal supper about the kind friend with his wise counsels, and the future with its hopes and fears.

(To be continued.)

Immigrants.

BY ERNEST GILMORE.

DURING a recent visit to New York we visited Castle Garden—a place which, when once seen, lives in one's memory for ever. Going down the pleasant walks on our left hand, we see many delightful scenes. Here are the "free swimming-baths." What a luxury they are to the poor and weary toilers of the great city! What a refreshing scene of happiness to God's "little ones," who avail themselves of the blessed privilege extended to them! Battered and soiled, they rush on to this fount of purification, to emerge from it soothed and cleansed, and possibly a little nearer their God. After their baths they can stand upon the shore of the great ocean, some of them faintly realizing that God's love to them is deeper and broader than are the mighty waters swelling to their feet.

But there is a sad side to Castle Garden. Turning to the right, we walked down the broad ocean pathway until we reached the landing-place for immigrants. Fortunately, we were allowed entrance. Going a few steps, we met a young German boy all alone. He was a clean, respectable looking boy, but his sad, pleading face haunted me still. He carried a satchel and bundles, and a card—sewed upon his hat-band—told us that he was directed to some far-away street of the teeming city. My heart ached for him as the thought came surging into my mind, "Will any one meet him in this new, strange land, so far from Fatherland? Will he find a home and friends?" But he was only one of a multitude. Choking back my tears as best I could, I walked on. At my right I saw one happy family, mother and little ones smiling, and even laughing aloud. Then afterward I saw several stout German girls, apparently happy and contented. But these two were all the pleasant scenes; the rest are painfully pathetic.

Huddled together, upon the ground or upon their baskets and bundles, woe-begone families are seated. Some of the older ones have a stolid look; but most of them glance up so appealingly that none but a hard-hearted looker-on could possibly withhold sympathy. Most of the children are bare-headed, although many of them have their heads covered with calico handkerchiefs. Some of them look quaint and interesting in their short-waisted, long-skirted dark flannels, reaching to their bare, dirty feet. There goes a weary-faced, bent old man. I wonder if his tottering feet have found a resting-place on the Rock? There walks along a trembling, pale old woman; timid and tired, she looks as if this world to her was only a desert drear. "Dear Father," we pray, "lead her to the covert from the storms of life."

Ah, these poor immigrants! We pity them deeply while we pray for them. We, too, are immigrants seeking to find our home in the New Jerusalem; but there is one important point in which we differ from these of Castle Garden: they bring their possessions with them—we must send our treasures on ahead of us.

Questions to startle us are these: Are we sending on to our future home all the treasures that we possibly can? Do we wipe all the tears that we can away from sad faces? Do we comfort all the burdened hearts that are near us? Do we give as many "cups of cold water" as we might? Do we visit as many of the sick as we ought? Do we clothe as many of the naked? Do we feed as many of the hungry? Do we lift as many of the fallen as our Father wishes us to lift? If so, then great will be our reward when at last we reach our Father's house.

Do right and leave results with God