



POOR OLD NAN.

For the Sunday-School Advocate.

## LITTLE ALICE AND OLD NAN.

POOR "OLD NAN!" Her name was indeed a by-word and a reproach among all the children round. Alice was not the only one who thought there could be no moral law so severe as to require love or even pity for this miserable object of her dislike and terror. And why all this hatred for such a sad-looking object? Not because she was old, and wrinkled, and homely; not because her poor bent form was covered with rags that seemed all insufficient to screen her from the wintry blasts; not because she lived all alone in a wretched hovel, the whole appearance of which was forbidding and untidy; these were not the reasons "Old Nan" was dreaded. But in every youthful heart in the neighborhood was written some dark deed of her meddling with and disturbing childish joy. Charlie D. could tell how she stoned his dog Trip from her door, so that the poor fellow had to be killed to relieve his sufferings. Tommy L. remembered one time when his new kite that Aunt Mary made him chanced to fall by her door, she caught it up and threw it upon the fire, and it was all in ashes before he reached it. Little Ellen B. had received quite a scolding from her merciless tongue when she attempted to pick a few berries that grew in the hedge near her hut; and Lucy M. knew, "just as well as could be," that it was no other than "Old Nan" who went into the entry of the school-house and took from her dinner-basket the nice white turnover that she was intending to share at noon with little Annie H., who was too poor to have such dainties. And did ever any one hear of her speaking a kind word to a child or looking at one without a frown? When Tommy carried her the little parcel that he saw her drop in the street, didn't she tell him he was a little thief and had better mind his own business?

But of all the petty grievances that were so oft repeated from ear to ear by the children of Lindbrook, none seemed to Alice worthy to be compared for depth of crime with the one her own little self had suffered.

Alice's father one cold morning in the last spring-time had brought into the house a little wee lamb, whose mother had left it bleating in the field. He gave the poor thing to Alice, telling her if she would nurse it carefully it might in time become well and strong, and then it should be all her own.

It was a pleasant thought to the little girl that her kind care might save a suffering lamb from death, and she resolved to try. She begged a large basket of her mother, and filling it partly with wool, she laid the lamb in it, and after feeding it with warm, sweet milk, she let it rest quietly. Every time it uttered its piteous, moaning cry she would

run to it and try to make its bed more comfortable, to place it in a better position, or to give it food. So by and by the lamb grew stronger, and it learned to know its little benefactress, and would lay its head upon her knee when she came near it, and wag its fleecy tail with delight. Then Alice washed it in clean water until its wool was white and soft, tied a pretty blue ribbon on its neck, and called it her own little Frolic. It was her constant companion now, and seemed to enjoy to gambol with her on the green grass, or to ramble in the shady grove with her beside it almost as well as did Alice herself. It was so loving too. It would look up in her face when she was sad with such an earnest, wishful gaze, that she would feel as much cheered as if a dear friend had spoken loving words to her. All summer it was her constant companion.

But one sad morning she went as usual, while the dew was on the grass, to meet her little favorite in his pretty orchard inclosure, and to ramble with him among the flowers. She bounded lightly across the pebbly brook, where he so often drank, and peeping through the fence, called "Frolic! Frolic!" Not seeing him as usual bounding toward her, she climbed upon the fence and shouted louder than before. But she heard nothing in reply except the echo of her own voice ringing back from the neighboring hills, "ic, Frolic." At last, seeing no trace of him in all the orchard, she ran quickly home to her mother, crying, "O my dear little Frolic is gone and I shall never see him again."

Her father sought in all the pastures and sheep-folds about, but nothing could be found of Frolic. At last, one day as some children were gathering wild grapes, not far from "Old Nan's" cottage, they found, hid away down in the bushes, the soft, woolly coat of poor little Frolic, with the blue ribbon still hanging about the neck. They lost no time in carrying it to Alice, telling her it was, of course, "Old Nan" who had killed her lamb, and eaten its tender flesh, and thrown its skin with a part of the dear little head and pretty soft ears away out of sight in the bushes.

Alice cried long and bitterly at the sad sight, and from that hour "Old Nan" was pictured in her mind as the sum and center of all evil.

I will tell you of a visit Alice made to old Nan in your next paper.

## LITTLE CHILD'S PRAYER FOR TRUTH.

O FATHER! bless a little child,  
And in her early youth  
Give her a spirit good and mild,  
A soul to love the truth.

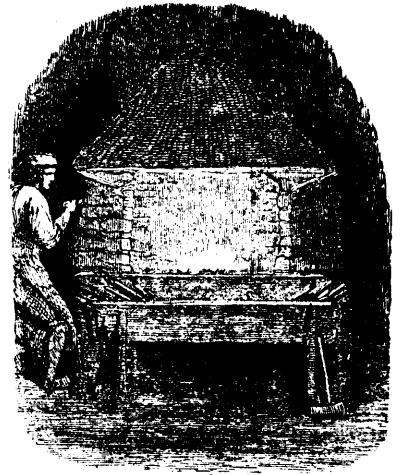
May never falsehood in her heart,  
Nor in her words abide,  
But may she act a truthful part  
Whatever may betide.

## A FAITHFUL DOG.

A LITTLE boy, only three years old, whose parents live near the wood of Grenoble, in France, being missed one evening not a great while ago, search was made for him by the members of the family in every direction, but in vain. The neighbors being notified of the loss, turned out to find the child, and sought for him in every thicket and building far and wide without success; and the chill of despair settled down upon the frantic mother's heart, who could not be persuaded that her darling had not been carried off and devoured by a wolf.

At last it was noticed that the house-dog (that was much attached to the child) was missing; and it was then recollected that he had been missing for some time previous to the discovery of the child's absence. This circumstance inspired hope, and search was at once begun for the dog, his name being loudly called by his master. After a time a responsive bark was heard, and, guided by the sound, the party proceeded to a barn at some distance, in which they found the child lying fast asleep and the

faithful dog watching by him. The little fellow had gone into the barn for a nap, and the dog had stuck to him with a fidelity which only a dog is apt to show in such cases.



From the "Sunday-School Almanac."

## SPARKS FLY UPWARD.

Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.—Job v, 6, 7.

SEE how the sparks fly up that blacksmith's chimney! Why don't they shoot out at the sides of the fire instead of going up? Because they are in a strong current of heated air which forces them upward.

Well, as the sparks go up in obedience to a law they cannot resist, so trouble and sorrow will come to your heart by a law of life which no one can evade. Everybody must have trouble. Boys and girls, young people, men and women, have troubles. But you need not mourn over your troubles, my child, because Jesus will help you bear your sorrows, and make you all the wiser, stronger, and better for having had them. How good Jesus is!

## A WOMAN OF METTLE.

A WOMAN in Staffordshire was carrying her husband and son's dinners to the mouth of a coal-pit one day. By some mischance she fell into the pit. Not thinking of herself, she still held a tight grasp of the bottles, and, providentially, her stretched-out arms made her expanded clothes like the parachute of a balloon, so that her fall was considerably broken, and she was saved with only a few bruises. Her first exclamation on reaching the bottom was, "There, the bottles be safe!"

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