

A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM.

WHILE the intense heat of the summer pervaded the city of New York, Mr. and Mrs. Morton, accompanied by their sons and daughter, moved to a country village named Zuam. This village had a large beach extending quite a distance along the shore which was a great source of enjoyment to the visitors, who came every summer to enjoy the cooling sea breezes. Everything in and around Zuam was very beautiful and withal enjoyable. The occupation of the people was principally farming, with a few exceptions of minor importance.

The Mortons moved to the seaside mostly for the sake of their daughter Bessie's health, who at this time was only five years old and seemed to be failing fast. Mr. and Mrs. Morton were followers of the Lord Jesus and had their children trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, little Bessie being indeed one of Jesus' little lambs. The Mortons boarded at a private residence. Among the many who boarded at the big hotel were Bessie's two aunts and an uncle who was a Colonel in the army, but now a cripple, and her grandfather. To these relatives she was much endeared, especially to the Colonel, whom she called her soldier. She was to them all as a little angel upon earth. Little Bessie tried by her daily life to show that she loved Jesus. The Colonel did not yet love the Lord, not even allowing anyone to mention the name of God to him, or his wife to read the Bible in his presence. He was very kind and lovable, but had no regard whatever for the Christian religion.

Bessie Morton was a great favorite with her playmates, because of her unselfish and truthful disposition. Every person in the village, old and young, regarded her as the best little girl they had ever met, much to the joy of her parents.

Among the children who with their parents were lodging near to the Mortons was a little girl called Mamie Stone. All the children were afraid to play with her on account of her being very cross and always taking their playthings. Bessie was not afraid of her and played with her continually. One day she slapped Bessie on the face, which sent her home to her parents crying very bitterly. When asked why she did not return the slap, she replied that it would not be Christ-like. Bessie waited until the following Sunday when they went to Sunday School; none of the little girls would sit by Mamie, so she began to cry. Bessie then went and sat by her, took her round the neck and said she would forgive her. By and by Mamie Stone lost all her crossness and became very good and kind.

During this time the Colonel had been taken sick and Bessie had not had the privilege of seeing him for several days. One lovely morning she was sent over to the Colonel's house with some fresh fruit. Her Aunt placed a little chair by the Colonel's bed so she could sit by him and talk to him. She sat still and watched his trembling hands, as he ate the fruit, for some time; and then whispered softly, to her Aunt, "If he dies he'll go to Heaven, cause he's so very brave and good, Won't he? He couldn't be so brave and good if he didn't love Jesus very much," she added, as she looked into her Aunt's face. "I suppose" she went on, "that's the reason he's so patient too. Oh, I know he must love Jesus very much and don't you think Jesus took care of him so he could love him more yet?" These words seemed to go straight to the brave man's heart, which had been shut against God, for he said to his wife, "I wish you would take her away." The next Sunday morning her Aunt crossed over to where Mr. and Mrs. Morton were staying, and asked Bessie to come and keep the Colonel's company as she was going to church. Bessie went and took her seat by his bed, asking as she did so what she could do for him, as she was his little nurse. "Well," he replied, "talk to me a little." Bessie repeated to him a hymn that her mother had taught her. Over and over again he asked her to repeat it until its truths found a lodging in his stern heart.

Jesus, Shepherd of the sheep,
Pity my unsettled soul,
Guide, and nourish me and keep,
Till thy love shall make me whole.
Give me perfect soundness, give,
Make me steadfastly believe.

She then went on to say how Jesus was our Shepherd, and he was one of his sheep, and she and her sister the little lambs, and that all he had to do was to trust in Jesus as his Savior. Here the conversation was ended. Good night had to be said and they parted. Bessie, dear little unconscious preacher, had said more in the Colonel's presence in one night than he had allowed his wife to say for years. Next morning he told his wife that the light of God had entered his heart, that he had resolved to trust God. Thus was the life of one child made a great blessing in that village, among her playmates and relatives and even among the workmen of the village was her influence felt. Dear children let your light shine, for it is a shining light, if not hid, "A little child shall lead them."

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N. S.