

not mean that sort of color; but he was puzzled all the same to know what she did mean.

"Reuben, you know something about soldiers?"

"Yes'm," and Reuben's thoughts went back in a twinkling to the story of his great grandfather and his brave fighting, and his hat shaped like George Washington's; his mother had entertained him and Beth's childhood with stories that she had heard while sitting on her grandfather's knee.

"Well don't you know they wear their country's colors? A uniform, we call it; and when we see them, we are never at a loss to know which side they are on, because their colors tell us instantly. Now the Lord Jesus Christ has called you to be a soldier, and you have accepted the call, and I say to you, be sure you wear his colors always. Let nobody doubt on which side you are."

A bright, pleased look came into Reuben's eyes. This was a new thought to him, that he was really a soldier like his great grandfather, of whom his mother had told him dozens of times he had reason to be proud. It was nice to think he wore the colors of his Captain. He understood almost in a flash what Miss Mason meant.

"Yes'm," he said, his voice showing his gladness; "I'll try for it."

She saw that he understood her, and was turning away with a smile; but she turned back. "And, Reuben, one thing more; remember your Captain has had your orders written out for you in a book, and he expects you always to look for direction as to what he wants done. You can talk with him, to be sure, at any time; but, after all, you can hardly expect him to repeat to you directions that you might find by looking for them in your order-book."

"That's the Bible!" said Reuben, and his eyes flashed. "I never thought of it; thank you, I'll remember."

Did he walk with a sort of martial tread as he went down the aisle to meet the waiting Beth? He understood for the first time that he was a soldier.

They sat together, he and Beth, that evening, in the pretty little parlor. It was so funny for the Stones to have a parlor! This little speck of a room was the most delightful spot that Reuben and Beth knew anything about. It chanced to be a mild day, and the door leading into the neat kitchen had been thrown open all day; besides, the sun had shone in at the east window all the morning, so there was a pleasant warmth in the room, and here sat Beth and Reuben together reading their Sabbath-school books. At least Beth was reading. Reuben had closed his book and was deep in thought. The story had been about a Christian girl who had prayed for, and talked with, and worked for, her brother, and led him at last to give his heart to Jesus. It made Reuben think of his sister. Ought he to talk to her? He had prayed for her all the week. Indeed, it was the first thing he thought of that Monday morning when he prayed; how much he would like to have Beth understand about this new sweet feeling that had come into his heart. Ever since her name had come into his prayer as naturally as his own. Still all this week he had not said a word to her on the subject. This astonished him a little; he always told Beth everything; she had heard about the boys in the shop, and the spoiled pasteboards out of which he meant to make his fortune, and the two tickets to see the pictures, and—well, everything that had had to do with the eventful days during which he had been separated from her; everything, but this one experience: his talk with his teacher, his promise to her, the thought he had given to it all that Sabbath afternoon, the kneeling down in the solemn midnight, and the strange new feeling with which he arose, and that had been with him ever since. In regard to all these things he had been entirely silent. He was surprised to find that he shrank from telling Beth anything about it. Why should he? Reuben did not know then so well as he afterwards learned, about the enemy who longed for nothing so much as to keep him from showing this new spirit to Beth and enlisting her at once as a soldier in the same army. To-night as he sat staring into the twilight, thinking of the book he had been reading, of Miss Mason's words about showing his colors, of his promise to try for it, there came suddenly to his heart this question:

"Are you showing them to Beth? Does she know anything about this new Captain of yours? Suppose you had never mentioned Mr. Barrow's name to her during all these days, would you think of yourself?"

"Oh, but Mr. Barrows has done so many things for me; I had to mention him." And then did Reuben's cheeks glow for very shame! Did he really mean that this new Captain had done nothing for him? Oh, no, no! He could never mean that; for Reuben had thought about it a great deal during this week, and he felt very sure that it was this great Captain of his who had been leading him in these strange new ways. All his life, perhaps, but certainly on that night in which he took that awful ride with Spunk and Spunk's master, and felt himself directed where to go, and what to do, and the weeks that had followed had been no less wonderful! Oh, yes, Reuben was very sure that a great deal had been done for him. Then why didn't he tell Beth about it?

He resolved that he would.

"Beth," he commended, "it is too dark to see to read any longer, let's talk."

"Well," said Beth, closing her book promptly, "talk." But all that Reuben did was to sit and stare out of the window.

"Why don't you talk?" said Beth; "lots of things must have happened to you since we had a long talk last."

"There have; great big things. I'm trying to think where to begin."

"Begin at the biggest thing of them all and come on down, and tell me all about it."

"The biggest thing that ever happened to me in my life," said Reuben, speaking slowly and gravely, "is that I've got to be a soldier, and have got to be a Captain, and wear his colors, and am bound to obey him, just exactly, every time."

"Reuben, what in the world are you talking about?" said Beth, and she dropped her book on the floor and came and sat on the edge of the chair that was in front of Reuben's own, and stared at him, astonishment in her voice, and astonishment in her face.

"Why," said Reuben, forgetting a little, "that's it, you see; I don't know how to tell you. It's a long story, that is, it's long to think it, but when you come to tell it there doesn't seem to be much that a fellow can tell. Look here, Beth, suppose you were walking down this road"—and Reuben arose and took careful steps on the pretty flowers in the carpet, toward the west window—"and you should meet somebody who said to you, 'I want you to turn right square around and go the other way,' and you should make up your mind to do it, don't you see how different everything would be right away?" Whereupon Reuben turned and walked briskly toward the east window. Beth watched him wonderingly.

"I should want to be pretty sure who was talking to me, and what he wanted me to turn around, and what good it would do, anyway, before I should make up my mind to do any such thing," she said at last, seeing that Reuben seemed to be waiting for her to speak.

"Exactly," he said, coming back to his chair. "Well, the fact is, I found out that the One who met me wanted to do the best thing for me all the while, and knew what was the best, and made me, in the first place, and had a right to direct me which way to go; and I just turned around and made up my mind to follow him the rest of my life."

"It must be you mean you are a Christian!"

Reuben always remembered the great astonishment in Beth's voice as she spoke those words.

"I suppose I am," he said gravely—"he had not put it into his words before—if a Christian means one who has made up his mind to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, take him for Captain, you know, why, I'm one, sure."

"That is what it means," said Beth, nodding her head. "Miss Hunter told me so; she told me a good deal about it; she wanted me to go that same way, but I didn't think I wanted to do that; I wanted to leave you behind; I wanted to keep right along with you and not go anywhere at all that you didn't; and now you've gone and left me!" and Beth dropped her head on her arm and began to cry softly.

"O, Beth, I haven't!" he declared

eagerly; "I've come back for you, don't you see? That's what I am trying to tell you. I want you along. I couldn't be a soldier without you; we've always been together. Girls can be soldiers in this army just as well as boys; it's different from any other army. 'I say, Beth, won't you come right along? That's the very reason I wanted to tell you about it to-night.'"

Beth had already dried her tears and was listening.

"What did you mean about hearing somebody speak to you, and ask you to turn around, and all that? I don't understand what you mean."

So Reuben began at the story of that midnight ride, part of which she already knew, and told her about the terror, and the horror, and the prayer, and the quiet that came to him, and the sense of somebody leading him, and he following just where the Somebody led; and from that he jumped to the experiences of but the Sabbath day before; the lesson, and the teacher's question, and her talk with him, and his promise, and what hard work he had to keep it, and how Grace Barrows helped him along without knowing it, and how, finally, after midnight, he knelt down and settled it, and how he had been sure ever since of the presence and help of his Leader. Then he told how Miss Mason had reminded him that very day to be sure and show his colors. "I wanted to show you, Beth, the first thing, and ask you to put them on."

It had been quite a long story; the twilight faded out entirely while he talked and left the room dark but for the glow of the firelight. Beth had listened in silence, but with the utmost attention. She drew a long sigh when he closed, and if Reuben could have seen her face it would have told him that she felt herself left behind.

"You've been converted," she said at last.

"Have I?" said Reuben; "I don't know. I don't even know what the word means."

"I do, Miss Hunter told me; she said there were two sides to it; God had one side, and folks the other. God called to people, asked them to belong, you know, just as you heard him ask you—that is his side. Then they said either 'I will,' or 'I won't,' and that's their side; and she said even God couldn't do anything for them so long as they said 'I won't,' because he had promised himself, when he made them, that they should have the right to decide things for themselves, and that was their side. Then she said just as soon as they made up their minds to say 'I will,' he put new feelings into their hearts, so that they wanted to do right, where before they hadn't cared, or hadn't thought anything about it; and all at once they knew that the thing they wanted most was to follow the Lord Jesus, and please him, and she said that new feeling in their hearts was called being converted and there wasn't anybody else who could do it only just God; and I know you have been converted."

"Well," said Reuben after a very thoughtful silence, "I never heard it explained before, but it sounds like Miss Mason's talk, fits right in, and I guess it is all true. I've often wondered what it felt like to be converted; I'm glad I know. I'll tell you what it is, Beth, you do your part, right away, won't you, so he can do his, and then we'll go on together."

"Does mother know?" asked Beth.

"No, she doesn't. I wanted to tell you first. Fact is, I don't know how to tell such things. Do you suppose mother will understand what I mean?"

"I guess so," said Beth; "she will have to be told, anyhow; for things will have to be different now, you know."

"How different?"

"Why, every way. We'll have to have eating in the Bible every night and morning, and kneel down and pray, and say a prayer at the table every time we eat."

"How do you know?" asked Reuben very much startled. "Who could read in the Bible and pray? People don't always do that."

"Oh, they do," said Beth, confidently; "Miss Hunter told me about it; she told me about a bad man who was converted, and he began the next day to read in the Bible and pray, and they all knelt down, and everything was different; and you know, Reuben, you are the man of our house."

(To be Continued.)

Truthfulness is a corner stone in character.

HINTS TO TEACHERS ON THE CURRENT LESSONS.

(From Peloubet's Select Notes.)

Oct. 26.—1 Kings 6: 1-14.

ILLUSTRATIVE.

The quarry for the Temple. This world is the quarry where the living stones of God's beautiful temple in the heavens, the completed and perfected church, are being shaped and polished for their places in the building. Few places are more rough, more lacking in every element of beauty, than a stone quarry. I began my ministry among the quarries of Cape Ann, which have since been multiplying over its granite surface. Were I to take the owners of some of the newer quarries and walk with them over the familiar places, I could say to them,—"I remember when I used to walk here among stately trees, or sit under the shadow of a great rock and feast on the surrounding beauties; but now you have blasted the rocks, you have cut down the trees, you have littered the fields with broken fragments. What does it all mean?" Then they could take me to some noble buildings in various cities, and say,—"Do you see those stately buildings, beautiful cornices, graceful arches, lofty columns? Well, there is the meaning of the quarry." So the heavenly temple is the solution of the mysteries of Providence in this world. The cares, burdens, sorrows, joys, work of this life are fitting us for our place in that temple where no sound of the tools shall be heard while it is in building.

PRACTICAL.

I. There is not a single Christian living who has not a task like that of Solomon to fulfil. Every Christian ought to say, "I purpose to build an house to the name of the Lord." (1) He must first become himself a living stone of the spiritual temple (2 Pet. 2: 51) (2) His body must be the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 6: 16), his whole being a sanctuary (1 Cor. 3) (3) His house should be a house of prayer (Josh. 24: 15.) (4) Are not these human temples themselves the stones erect, precious, to be used by-and-by in that great heavenly temple which the Lord shall build and not man? (2 Cor. 5: 1)—E. de Pressensac.

LITTLE AFRICANS' PLAYTHINGS.

It takes but little to please children,—and many of us, like Eliza Cook, have wished ourselves back to the days,—

"When sticks of peppermint possessed
A sceptre's power to sway the breast,
And heaven was round us while we fed
On rich, ambrosial gingerbread."

As for playthings, the fancy of the little folks is everywhere pretty much the same, and about equally simple. "Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw." A missionary writing to the *Methodist Recorder*, speaks of the toys with which the children in Africa amuse themselves.

The girls in Africa, as elsewhere, are fond of dolls; but they like them best alive, so they take puppies for the purpose, and carry them about tied to their backs, as their mothers carry babies. Some of them "play baby" with little pigs. The boys play shoot with a gun made to imitate the "white man's gun."

Two pieces of cane tied together make the barrels, the stock is made of clay, and the smoke is made of a tuft of loose cotton. In one African tribe, the boys have spears made of reeds, shields, and bows and arrows with which they imitate their fathers' doings; and they make animals out of clay, while their sisters "jump the rope." Besides, the African children, like children all over the world, enjoy themselves "making believe." They imitate the life around them, not playing "keep house," "go visiting," or "give a party," because they see none of these things in their homes; but they pretend building a hut, making clay jars, and crushing corn to eat.

THERE is something radically wrong in the domestic administration when boys of twelve or fifteen years, and even those only eight or ten years old, are out every night after night till a late hour without even arousing parental suspicion. The judge in the Quincey case took the right ground when he declared that it is the fathers and mothers—not the boys—who are to blame when such youngsters come to grief.—*Brooklyn Union*.