

**ROB'S FIERY FURNACE.**

It was the first night of the fall term. The boys had been busy all the evening unpacking and putting things to rights. Now they were telling each other of the happenings of vacation and planning what they would do 'his term.

But all the evening Rob had been troubled in spirit and sore perplexed. There had been one happening of the vacation that he had not mentioned to Will; he had sought and found his Saviour. He had chosen Christ for his Master and promised to own and serve him henceforward and for ever. But oh, how could he take his Bible, read his chapter, and then kneel down to pray before Will! Haven't some of you boys an idea how hard a thing it seemed to this young soldier to do?

"It would not do me the least bit of good, I know," he argued to himself. "I shouldn't know a word, I was reading, and I am sure that I could not think to pray. It would be much better to do it by myself. I'll tell Will about it when I get a good chance, and of course I will try to have him see from my actions that I have changed."

But all the time there was something kept whispering in Rob's ear, "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

"It isn't denying," he pleaded impatiently with himself. "I wouldn't do that, of course, and I am sure the Bible itself says that we should not pray to be seen of men, but go into our closet and shut the door."

But the little voice would not be silenced, and Rob's face grew more and more perplexed and troubled as he sat there listening to Will, watching the hands of the clock as they moved steadily along towards nine. There were only ten minutes left before the bell would ring. He must decide then one way or the other. It seemed to him that Will might almost hear his heart beat. If only something or somebody would call Will out of the room, or if he would only go to bed and fall directly asleep; but no one came, and there Will sat as contentedly as could be.

"It seems good enough to see you again," he said. "But some how it seems to me you're soberer than common. Anything the matter, old fellow?"

It certainly seemed to Rob that his heart stood still for a minute. If he only could tell Will all about it! But somehow he could not get the words out.

"Well," said Will, sitting up, "there goes the bell, and I am ready for it, for I am tired from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet, I do believe," and Rob's chance to explain was gone.

What should he do? How could he go to his trunk and get out his Bible, and what would Will say and do? It seemed as if it would be easier if there were others in the room; he would not feel quite so much as if Will were just watching him.

"You won't get to bed to-night, Rob," said Will at last, as Rob pattered about doing this thing and that.

The light was almost out, and Will, with his eyes half shut, was sleepily wondering if Rob could be homesick or what, when all at once the light shone bright as ever, and Rob marched over to his trunk, took out his Bible, and sat down. It seemed to him that he had never felt so mean in all his life as he had in those few minutes of indecision. He remembered how only a few weeks ago in Sunday-school he had been so strong and bitter in his condemnation of Peter for his denial, how he had been unwilling to find any excuse for him. He remembered also how earnestly Miss Mason had cautioned them to watch and pray lest they too should fall in the same way. He had felt almost hurt at her doing so; at any rate he would never be such a mean, ungrateful coward as that. He fancied that he would have done just

as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, had done, and chosen the fiery furnace rather than deny his Master. And now to think how near he had come to doing just that! He thought with a hot flush of shame how he had said, the Sunday they had that lesson, that he wished he could have such an opportunity to own Christ. "The harder

it was the happier I would be," he had said. When he rose from his knees he found Will watching him.

"What's up, old fellow? This is a new wrinkle, isn't it?"

"O Will," he said, speaking hurriedly lest his courage should give out, "I've been such a coward, and I'm so ashamed!

I gave myself to Christ this vacation, and I do mean to serve him faithfully, though I almost denied him to-night."

Rob's breath gave out then. He had a feeling that he was right in the midst of his fiery furnace and that the flames would consume him in an instant; but to his surprise, like the three of old he escaped unhurt. Will, whatever he thought, lay down and closed his eyes without a word.

But the next night it was his turn to be troubled in spirit and Rob's to be perplexed. Finally, when Rob took up his Bible, Will spoke from the window where he had stood for five or ten minutes gazing out into the darkness. "If you don't mind and had just as soon—I—don't care if you read out loud."

"O Will!" was all that Rob could say, but his face looked the rest.

"I've been thinking a long time," continued Will, "but I didn't suppose you had. I tried to make an excuse of you, but that won't work any longer and I've about made up my mind, if you don't mind, that we'll pull together."

And for the second time all that Rob could say was, "O Will!" but it meant a great deal and Will knew it.—*Kate S. Gates, in Child's Paper.*



'And then a merry couple show their faces side by side.'

**FRIENDS.**

The scent of early morning is abroad upon the breeze,

And Tom is in the garden, standing underneath the trees,

While a shower of tiny pebbles proves the truthness of his aim

As they rattle where a creeper twines about a window-frame.

He hasn't long to wait, before the window's opened wide,

And then a merry couple show their faces side by side;

You want to know them, do you? Why that's Charlie Ross and Pete,

As fresh as any larks, and all agog their friend to greet.

"Oh, Tom, old fellow, tell us why you're making such a row."

Says Charlie, and the puppy gives a playful little "wow,"

To supplement the question, as he thinks is only right,

For to copy what his master does is ever his delight.

Now, Tom's a good bit older than his jolly little chums,

But very, very fond of them, and frequently, he comes

To call them to the meadow for a romping game to play,

Or to wander through the forest all a happy summer day.

Don't you envy him a little? I confess I really do:

You never saw a more confiding couple than the two;

And Charlie loves his doggie: yes, it's certainly the case,

While Pete adores his owner and reveals it in his face.

They're alike in disposition, I may state it for a fact,

Just a little wild and roguish in the way in which they act

Pete will get into mischief, and Charlie tears his "togs,"

But then, you know, "boys will be boys," and dogs of course are dogs.

They never seem to weary of each other's lively pranks.

Whether rambling by the river or reposing on its banks;

Then, talking of caresses, Pete repays them in a trice,

The only thing, he "slobbers" so, which isn't very nice.

Now isn't it a puzzle? There are people to be found

Who are harsh, and even brutal, to a setter or a hound;

Though a dog that's treated properly will hardly ever fail

To turn out pure devotion, from his muzzle to his tail!

That is rather a digression, and I fear we've missed the "chaff"

From Tom, which makes the pair up at the window fairly laugh!

No matter, we have learnt enough to know the way it ends,

So wish another pleasant day to both the little friends.

FRED EDMONDS.

man got well enough to start on his journey to Ireland.

About a year after this had taken place the officer was removed to Ireland. Before he had been there long he met in the street one day the very Irishman to whom he had shown so much kindness in Scotland. The poor man became almost wild with delight on seeing the officer, and shouted out, at the top of his voice: "Here's the man that saved my life." And the kindness of the officer to this man was the means of saving his own life several times. For, during the first year that he was in Ireland, a great famine prevailed there. This led to great suffering, and caused many deaths. On more than one occasion this officer found himself surrounded by men, with pistols in their hands, who were about to kill him; but, as soon as they saw who it was they would cry out: "Sure, and you're the man who saved Pat Mooney's life; we won't hurt you."

And all the time he remained in that district he was known and spoken of by the people as the man who was kind to a poor sick Irishman when far away from home.

—Selected.

**UNEXPLORED.**

Is this life worth living?—yes—  
Life once given ends no more.  
What know we about the land?  
We have only touched the shore.

—William Lyle.