

THE LITTLE CHILD IN PRISON.

Dear children, if you will listen a while, I will give you a parable.

Once upon a time, and I must not tell you where, I beheld a little boy in prison. I had passed house after house, until I came to a small building of singular appearance. I went up to it. Seeing two little windows or diamonds, I went up to them and soon observed a little boy within the walls. As he looked wishfully at me, I fell into conversation with the poor fellow. The following is the substance of our talk.

“What! a boy in prison?” “Yes,” he said. “How old are you?” “I am ten.” “But will you tell me how you came to be shut up here?” “It was for no fault of mine. I have been a wicked child, but I have committed no crime.” “Have you parents?” said I. “I have a father. But I never saw him, to my recollection. I have heard them say he lives in a distant country. My father left me, when I was an infant, in the care of others. And I have been shut up here ever since I can remember.”

Right under these little windows was a small door, not large enough for the little boy to go out, but which he could open and shut at his leisure; and where he received his food and made known his wants.

“But,” said I, “why does not your father come and see you?” “Oh,” said he, “he lives away off. But he has sent me word that I may come and live with him, if I will.” At this he showed me a letter which he said was from his own father. He wrote affectionately, saying he was rich, and should soon send for his boy to come and live with him.

“Well,” said I, “you expect then to go and live with your father, do you not?” At this his chin quivered and his eyes filled with tears. “Yes,” he said, “I do. This prison is a hard place. I am so weak I can scarcely stand. Ever since they read me the letter from my father, every day seems like a month. I look out of prison every day, and see others at liberty to walk where they please, and it makes me sad, and I cry.” “But do you ever pray?” said I. “Oh yes, every night and every morning I go down on my knees and pray to God.”

So I talked with the little boy as well as I could, and left him in prison. A few days ago I heard his father had come for his boy, and he had gone from prison. He brought him a good suit of clothes, &c. They said when the boy found he was actually come for, he turned pale and trembled exceedingly. And when he went towards the door to go out, he looked back and said, “Farewell, prison. I am going home to live with my father.” And no sooner was the door opened, than his father took him up in his arms and kissed him. All in the room wept aloud, as when Joseph met his father. Now the little boy is a prisoner no longer. He is at home with his brothers and sisters. I understand the boy thinks more of his father and more of his home than any of

his brothers. And his father loves him the more for all the sorrows of childhood. And indeed he is a great favourite in his father's house.

Now, my dear children, this is a riddle, or a parable. The soul was the child. His body was the prison. His eyes were the two little windows. His mouth was the door. His father in another country is God. The letter he sent him is the Bible. His going out of prison was death. And when he died he went to live with God and angels; and them he loves, and is beloved forevermore.—*Vi. Chronicle.*



EXTRACTS FROM RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

TRICKS OF THE MONKEY.—Monkeys have every evil quality and not one good one. They are saucy and insolent; always making an attempt to bully and terrify people, and biting those who are most afraid of them. An impertinent curiosity runs through all their actions; they never can let things alone, but must know what is going forward. If a pot or kettle is set on the fire, and the cook turns her back, the monkey whips off the cover to see what she has put into it—even though he cannot get at it without setting his feet upon the hot bars of the grate. Mimicry is another of the monkey's qualities. Whatever he sees men do, he must affect to do the like himself. He seems to have no rule of his own, and so is ruled by the actions of men or beasts; as weak people follow the fashions of the world, whether it be good or bad. No monkey has any sense of gratitude, but takes its victuals with a snatch, and then grins in the face of the person that gives it him, lest he should take it away again; for he supposes that all men will snatch away what they can lay hold of, as all monkeys do. Through an invincible selfishness, no monkey considers any individual but himself—as the poor cat found, to her cost, when the monkey burned her paws with raking his chestnuts out of the fire. They can never eat together in company without quarrelling and plundering one another. Every monkey delights in mischief, and cannot help doing it when it is in his power. If anything he takes hold of can be broken or spoiled, he is sure to find the way of doing it; and he chatters with pleasure when he hears the noise of a china vessel smashed to pieces on the pavement. If he takes up a bottle of ink, he empties it upon the floor. He unfolds all your papers, and scatters them about the room, and what he cannot undo he tears to pieces; and it is wonderful to see how much of this work he will do in a few minutes when he happens to get loose.

Everybody has heard of the monkey whose curiosity led him to the mouth of a cannon to see how it went off; when he paid for his peeping with the loss of his head. In a ship where a relation of mine was an officer, while the men were busy fetching powder from below, and making cartridges, a monkey on board took up a lighted candle, and ran to the powder-room to see what they were about; but happily was overtaken just as he got to the lantern, and thrown out at the nearest port-hole into the sea with the lighted candle in his hand. Another lost his life by the spirit of mimicry; he had seen his master shaving his own face, and at the first opportunity took up the razor to shave himself, and made shift to cut his own throat. When the wild monkeys have escaped to the top of the trees, the people below who want to catch them show them the use of gloves, by putting them on and pulling them off repeatedly; and when the monkeys are supposed to have taken the hint, they leave plenty of gloves upon the ground, having first lined them with pitch. The monkeys come down, put on the gloves, but cannot pull them off again: and when they are surprised, betaking themselves to the trees as usual, they slide backwards and are taken.—*Sharp's London Magazine.*

PLAIN STORY.

A planer was once planing a plane, when the plane with which he was planing was plainly discovered not to be a plane, but so uneven and rough that he could never make plain what was made for a plane. The planer of planes then complained with plaintive complaints that his plain neighbour, to whom he had some time before loaned his plane, had misused his plane and made it unplain. This plainly appeared not to be plain dealing in his neighbor, who, had he been an upright man, would have plainly told him when he returned the plane to the planer of planes, that he accidentally injured the plane while planing something that he wished to make plane. It now appearing plain to the planer of planes, that the plane with which he had been planing what he intended for a plane would never make it plane, he took another plane he had been using to plane out the new plane, and after planing that plane, he was able smoothly to plane the new plane.

Let no one complain that it is plain that the word plane is so often used that the sense is not plain; for on examination it will plainly appear that the meaning is plain, though it plainly requires some pains to see how plain that meaning is.

INJURY.

A little wrong, done to another, is a great injury done to ourselves. The severest punishment of an injury is the consciousness of having done it and no man suffers more than he who is rined over to the pain of repentance.—*S. W. Raleigh*

Handwritten notes on the right margin: 3-12-6, 1-2, 3-13-8, 30, 52, 1-2.