

For the Sunday-School Advocate.

THE NEW ACQUAINTANCE.



UNLIGHT has burst into that darkened hut where for long years not one gleam of joy, or hope, or love for a moment entered. A footpath is made to the door, and a fine pile of cut wood lies beside it. A fire burns brightly upon the hearth, and the snow and the dust of many months' gathering is swept from the floor. Many an old cobweb that for years hung undisturbed from the blackened ceiling and broken windows has been carefully brushed away, and several panes of new, bright glass have been substituted for pieces of board, old rags, and mildewed papers in the windows. Some clean white linen is placed upon the bed, and a warm new blanket and tidy bedspread supply the place of the covering it has worn.

In a large arm-chair near the fire sits "Old Nan." It is indeed she, though you would scarcely recognize her for the miserable wretch you saw upon that tattered bed only two weeks ago. Her face and hands are clean, and her shining gray hair is smoothly combed back from her forehead and gathered beneath a tidy cap. She wears a new calico dress, and a soft woollen shawl is thrown over her shoulders.

By her side stands a bright-eyed girl, with beaming face, holding a cup of coffee and a plate of toast.

"I never made any toast before, Aunt Nannie, but I have seen mamma make it, and I did just as she does. I hope you will like it."

"I shall like anything you make, Alice," said the feeble woman as she took the simple food, "for you are the first one who ever wanted to do me any good. When I was almost dying that awful morning, and I thought everybody would be glad when I was gone, what sent you and your father in here? I thought you had come to punish me because I stole your lamb. Why didn't you do it, Alice? What made you come to help me when I was so mean?"

"It was my father, Nannie, who made me come at first. I told him I did not want to, because you were wicked and killed my pretty Frolic. But he said it was not the Golden Rule to love only those who did us good, and you had no one to bring you food. And then when I came in and saw how sick you were, and you told me you had never had any one to love you, I forgot all about my lamb, and only wanted to make you comfortable and happy."

"What do you mean by the Golden Rule, Alice? I never heard it," said old Nan.

"Did you never read it in the Bible?" asked Alice.

"I have not any Bible, child, and I could not read it if I had. I never went to school a day in my life nor to church. And I never learned anything good, and I never did anything good. I am sorry I killed your lamb. I was hungry and too lame to go after food, and that came into my door one morning bleating and stumping around my room. I hated it because it was loved so much and I was never loved, and I said, 'It shall make me happy once.' So I killed it and broiled its flesh to eat. But it did not make me happy; no, it made me miserable, for I knew I was wicked and I never loved to live. Will you forgive me for killing your lamb, Alice?"

"O, I have forgiven you, Nannie, and I do not want to think any more about it. But if you will let me, I will bring a Bible when I come to see you again, and I will read you what it says about loving one another, and a great many verses that mamma calls precious promises."

"Bring it, child," replied the old woman thoughtfully, and after Alice had gone she murmured to herself, "Precious promises! I wonder if there can be any promise of good to such a wretch as I am!"

Winter with all its cold, and frost, and snow passed away. Spring, too, with its buds and birds, came and went, and summer followed with its flow-

ers and fruits. Still the haggard form of the village terror was not seen as before wandering about the town to beg or pilfer food. The sufferings of cold and hunger during that severe winter had left their chilling power upon the system of old Nan, and she was yet only able to move carefully about her little cottage, sometimes on a warm afternoon venturing upon the green before her door. Yet she needed no comfort that could be supplied. Nimble little feet ran every day to do her errands, and tiny hands assisted in making all her labor light. The old walls of her cottage resounded every day with merry laughter and sweet songs of childhood, mingled with the bird-voices that rang out from the shady elm.

Alice did not forget her promise to bring the Bible in one of her earliest visits. And now, every day for many months, have its cheering truths been read to the lonely and ignorant old woman by the artless voice of the child. Strange indeed has been the change it has wrought in that darkened heart. Hatred has been supplanted by love, and hope has lifted the veil of dark despair.

Neither Alice nor her old friend are able fully to comprehend the meaning of all that they find in that wonderful book, yet every day they return with more pleasure to its perusal.

"Nannie," said Alice one day as they sat thinking of what they had just read, while the book lay open upon her lap, "Nannie, I wish you could go to Church with me to-morrow, and to the Sabbath-school, for you would learn there about heaven and the Saviour so much better than I can tell you."

"If I had only been taught before the way to live I might have gone, Alice; but now I am too feeble. I shall never be able to walk so far as the church again, and I shall never hear about these holy things except what you tell me and read to me from this precious book. But O, Alice, if I could only know that God would forgive me for all my wicked life I would ask for nothing else," and tears of penitence fell fast from those eyes dim with age upon the blessed Bible.

Alice threw her arms about her neck and said, "Don't cry, Nannie; didn't Jesus say he loved those most whom he forgave most? and you know I just read to you that he forgave a thief when he was dying. And he says if we ask anything in his name he will do it."

"Alice, wont you ask him to let me go to heaven when I die and wait there until you come? For I shall die soon, Alice, and O how can I go before him alone? If you could go with me, Alice, I almost think the Saviour would let me enter. But no one but you ever loved me, or will ever believe I am trying to do better."

"The good Jesus knows it, Nannie, and he will love you better than I can; and O I am sure he will let you go to heaven. Yes, I will ask him, and I will tell my Father to ask him. And after Sabbath-school to-morrow I will take my father here with me to tell you all about it."

The next afternoon as they returned from church Alice remembered her promise, and her father went with her to fulfill it. The door was open, and the sun was falling cheerfully into Nannie's little room. She sat in her arm-chair just where Alice had left her the day before. The Bible lay open upon her lap, and her thin hands were clasping it with fondness as her dim eyes wandered over its pages.

"Have you learned to read, Nannie?" said Farmer Willis cheerfully.

She answered in so feeble a voice that Alice started with fear, and then they saw that Nannie was very pale and sick.

"I cannot read myself," said she; "but this dear child has read me such precious words from this holy book that I love to look at it, and I feel happier when I have it near me; so I begged her to leave it in my lap when she went away last night, and I have not felt able to rise with it since."

"And have you sat here holding it all night?" said Alice; "O how sorry I am! Let me take it now, and papa will lay you on your bed to rest."

"No, Alice, no; let me keep it," she whispered; "I want to hold it when God's messenger comes for me, and I want to point him to the words of Jesus, 'Father, forgive them; they know not what they do.' He is almost here," she added, "Alice, where are those words? Kneel by me once more and read them to me and show me where they are."

Farmer Willis turned away to hide his tears as the darling child turned rapidly the leaves of the sacred volume, and in a clear and artless voice read the story of the Saviour's death. When she had finished, she looked up for the accustomed smile and grateful word, but the eyes of the aged sufferer were fixed upon the passage she had just read, and the thin, withered finger pointing to the precious words moved not. Alice spoke to her, but there was no reply. The dark-winged messenger had come to bear Nannie over the river of death, and Alice had read to him her passport to the world of rest beyond.



WIND AN EMBLEM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.—John iii, 8.

Did you ever see the wind? Of course not, sir? But you have often heard and felt it, haven't you? Of course you have, eh? So then you have no doubt that the wind blows. Very good. By the same rule you may know that the HOLY SPIRIT moves on your souls. What makes you feel sad when you sin? It is the Holy Spirit. What is it puts thoughts of God in your hearts? The Holy Spirit. What makes your heart desire to be like Jesus? The Holy Spirit. What is it that helps you do right? The Holy Spirit. What is it that helps you understand God's holy word? The Holy Spirit. What fills your heart with peace when you pray? The Holy Spirit. What makes the hearts of praying children new and good? The Holy Spirit. Pray then, my dear children, for the gift of the Holy Spirit that you may be holy and happy children.

THE CANADA SUNDAY-SCHOOL ADVOCATE,

TORONTO, C. W.

THE CANADA SUNDAY-SCHOOL ADVOCATE is published, on the Second and Fourth Saturday of each month, by ANSON GREEN, Wesleyan Book-Room, Toronto.

TERMS.

For 1 copy and under 5, to one address, 45 cents per vol.				
" 5 copies	" 10,	" 40	" "	" "
" 10 "	" 20,	" 37½	" "	" "
" 20 "	" 30,	" 55	" "	" "
" 30 "	" 40,	" 32½	" "	" "
" 40 "	" 50,	" 80	" "	" "
" 50 "	" 75,	" 28	" "	" "
" 75 "	" 100,	" 27	" "	" "
" 100 "	" 200,	" 26	" "	" "
" 200 "	" and upward,	" 25	" "	" "

Subscriptions to be paid invariably in advance.

The year begins with October, from which time all subscriptions must date.

All packages are sent to the address of some individual or school. In such cases names are not written upon the several papers. Persons subscribing should therefore make arrangements for the proper distribution of the papers on the arrival of the package.

The postage is prepaid at the office of publication and included in the above terms.

All communications to be addressed to REV. DR. GREEN, Wesleyan Book-Room, Toronto.