

"Have you found all your marbles?"

"No, sir," said the child; "there is one I have not found."

"Then," said the minister, "I will try and help you to find it."

So they both stooped down and searched, and they found the marble at last.

"Are you fond of playing marbles, my boy?" was the next question.

"Yes, sir, I am."

"So I used to be," said the minister, "and I think I could play still. I think I could beat you myself if we were to have a game; only I never play on Sabbath."

The poor little boy's countenance expanded, he looked with confidence at the kind man who spoke to him, and who liked marbles, and he thought, "I have found not an enemy, but a friend."

"If you will come with me, my boy," said the minister, "I will bring you to a place where you will see something better than play marbles, and hear something you would like to hear."

He was told it was the Sabbath-school; and after a little hesitation he said he would go, but that he was so dirty that he was not fit to go.

"Then," said the minister, "here is a pump, at which you can wash your hands and face."

"But I cannot pump and wash," said the boy.

So the minister pumped, and the boy washed; and he gave him his handkerchief to dry himself with, which the boy took after hesitating on the ground that it was so clean. He then took the minister's hand, and they proceeded to the Sabbath-school.

When they got near it, the busy hum of voices through the windows startled him, and he was afraid to go in, saying that the boys would laugh at him and make fun of him.

"Another time I will go, sir, but not now."

"I promise you," said the minister, "that if you come in they shall not laugh at you or turn you to jest. Take my hand, and come."

He did so, and the minister brought him to one of the most experienced teachers in the school, and told him the story. The boy was treated kindly. He came regularly afterwards, and learned to read and study the Scriptures. His father and mother were poor, drunken, profligate people, and were glad that the boy was noticed, so they did not object. By-and-by he became one of the cleverest boys in the school, was afterwards apprenticed, and after some time the minister lost sight of him and did not see him again for twenty years.

One day, as he passed along the street, he saw a gentleman-like man, who stopped him, and said:—

"Sir, do you not know me?"

"No, I do not."

"Ah! do you not remember twenty years ago finding a little boy in the street playing marbles, and then speaking to him kindly, pumping for him while he washed, and bringing him to your Sabbath-school. Sir, I am that boy! The world has since gone well me; I have prospered in business, and, through the blessing of God, possess a considerable fortune. All that I am and all that I have I owe, under God, to your kindness, your wise kindness, in laying hold of me by the shoulder that day, and treating me kindly, tenderly; not rebuking me, not being hard with me, but dealing gently with me, in the true spirit of a Christian."