

## A VEXED QUESTION.

BY ELLA JOHNSON KERR.

I went in the school-room one morning;  
My two little girls were there,  
And over their atlas bending,  
Each with a puzzled air.

Mary glanced up as I entered,  
And said, with an anxious look:  
"Mamma, perhaps you can help us.  
It says here in this book,

"That we bought Louisiana  
From the French. Now that seems  
queer,  
For Nellie and I don't understand  
How they could send it here.

"Whoever brought the land over,  
Must have taken so many trips.  
Nell says they put it in baskets;  
But I think it must have been ships."

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## Sunbeam.

TORONTO, MAY 16, 1903.

## BOBBIE'S WOLF.

"What was the text to-day, Bobbie?" asked Aunt Kate.

"I hope you don't expect a little chap like Bob to remember or understand the text we had to-day?" laughed Bobbie's father.

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves," repeated auntie, giving Bobbie an encouraging nod.

"There isn't any wolves in this city," said Bobbie, complacently.

"Oh, yes, there are," said mother, as she took him in her lap, and explained

the meaning of the words as well as she could.

Bobbie was restless, and hummed a tune softly once while she was talking, because he "forgot." Once he interrupted her to ask whether wolves, when they dressed up like sheep, said "Baa!" On the whole, even mother was afraid Bobbie would get little help from his lesson.

It was three o'clock on the afternoon of that day when Bobbie sheltered himself from the wind in the corner of his father's house, and listened to John Walker while he coaxed.

"It's just a little way—not more than two blocks from here; and I shouldn't think your mother would be afraid to have a big boy like you go down there, specially with me; and it's a great deal warmer there, because it's on the sunny side of the street. I don't believe but what if your mother was here she would want you to go, so as to get out of this ugly east wind."

Bobbie looked curiously at John Walker. At last he spoke:

"You're a wolf, Johnny Walker! As true as you live, you're a wolf!"

"Don't you go callin' me names!" said John, his face growing red. "I am three years older than you and I won't stand it."

"But I can't help it, you see, because it's in the Bible. Our Lord said, 'Beware of 'em;' that means, 'Take care that you don't do a thing they say, because they are only makin' b'lieve be good.' You're makin' b'lieve my mother wants me to go down to Court Street, when she told me not to go; and I know you're a wolf, because mother told me 'bout it this mornin'. I'm a-goin' in now; I don't like to play with wolves."

And wise Bobbie trudged away into the house.

I think Bobbie understood the text pretty well, don't you? And, better still, he did exactly what it said.

## FORGIVENESS.

One day a minister found a young man who was leading a sinful life, and was feeling very unhappy. He had left his home some months before, and every day was getting deeper into sin. "Oh!" he exclaimed, "If only I were at home once more! But my father will not receive me; he cannot love me now; he will never forgive me; I have lost his love for ever."

The minister said, kindly, "Have you ever tried him?" "No; I dare not." "Does your father know where you are now?" "No; I have not written to him since I left home." "Then, I will write for you." "It is of no use, sir," said the young man. "Well, we can try," replied the minister.

The letter was soon written and prayed over. By return mail came an answer, and this is what it said: "Indeed, I am

ready to forgive my wandering son. My heart has ached to know where I could find him, and I have earnestly prayed that he might be willing to return. Let him come back at once. I will forgive him all freely, and love him still."

So we see that the father was always ready to forgive his boy, even when the boy was not willing to seek forgiveness. So God is always ready to forgive us.

When we truly say: "I have sinned and want to be forgiven," we are sure to you can trust yourself wholly to me and to pardon us.

## HOW HE USED THE PIECES.

Many years ago there lived and worked in Italy a great artist in mosaics. His skill was wonderful. With bits of glass and stone, he could produce the most striking works of art; works that were valued at thousands of pounds.

In his workshop was a poor little boy whose business it was to clean up the floor and tidy up the room after the day's work was done. He was a quiet little fellow, and always did his work well. That was all the artist knew about him.

One day he came to his master and asked, timidly: "Please, master, may I have for my own the bits of glass that you throw upon the floor?"

"Why, yes, boy," said the artist. "The bits are good for nothing. Do as you please with them."

Day after day, then, the child might have been seen studying the broken pieces found on the floor, laying some on one side, and throwing others away.

He was a faithful little servant, and so year after year went by, and saw him still in the workshop.

One day his master entered a store-room little used, and in looking around came upon a piece of work carefully hidden behind the rubbish. He brought it to the light, and, to his surprise, found it a noble work of art, nearly finished. He gazed at it in speechless amazement.

"What great artist can have hidden his work in my studio?" he cried.

At that moment the young servant entered the door. He stopped short on seeing his master, and when he saw his work in his hands, a deep flush dyed his face.

"What is this?" cried the artist. "Tell me, what great artist has hidden his masterpiece here?"

"Oh, master," faltered the astonished boy, "it is only my poor work. You know you said I might have the broken bits you threw away."

The child, with an artist soul, had gathered up the fragments, and patiently lovingly, wrought them into a wonderful work of art.

Do you catch the hint, little people? Gather up the bits of time and opportunity lying all about, and patiently work out your life mosaic—a masterpiece, by the grace of God.