

FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW.
(August 24th.)

Though it were eminence enough to be
Enrolled among the apostolic few,
Who, at their Master's call, devotedly
Went forth His self-denying work to do,
This is not all thy praise, Bartholomew:
Thou, for such fellowship wast set apart
By One who saw thee from afar, and knew
Thy spirit undivided and void of art,
And still the portrait which thy Saviour drew
Bears record to thy singleness of heart.
For wide as Gospel-tidings have been spread
Throughout all tongues, o'er continent and isle,
Shall this memorial to thy worth be read,—
AN ISRAELITE INDEED, IN WHOM THERE IS NO GUILT.
—William Croswell.

A LITTLE BOY LED THEM.

Robert Parker was on his return from India. Sixteen years had passed since he had seen his native England, and in one night more he would catch a glimpse of Land's End, and would soon see the friends of his youth.

He paced the deck of the Gravesend in restless anticipation, buried in dreams and morbid fancies.

He is at last aroused from his reverie by the captain breaking in upon the silence of the night by shouting:

To the masthead, quick; now, boy, order the ropes and take a sight!

In obedience to the command, a small boy rushes forth, clambers up the ropes, and is soon lost in the darkness and storm.

It is a strange life these mast boys lead, thought Robert Parker, as he strained his eyes through the darkness to catch a glimpse of the boy at the masthead. At the best, life can be but a burden to them. It has been but little else for me. I must speak to the little fellow. He will need all the encouragement I can give him.

He half-muttered the last words, unconscious of the presence of the object of his thoughts by his side.

Good evening, sir; were you speaking to me? said the mast-boy, as he drew nearer.

I was thinking, said Robert Parker, that the life you lead cannot be a very pleasant one.

Well, I s'pose it's so, said the mast-boy, as he gazed over the side of the ship on the dark waves below, but I am sure that I'm always safe, and that nothing can hurt me.

Why, my boy, you are leading one of the most dangerous life that you can. You are not secure or safe for a single moment.

So they tell me, but I always say He who can hold the waters in His hands, and keep them from coming up over us, can take care of me at the masthead, and the boy drew forth from his waistcoat a faded Bible.

You are foolish to think of such things now, and when you get older you will see that all such ideas are silly, and a sneer upon Robert Parker's lips gave emphasis to his words.

Why, don't you read the Bible? and don't you pray?

No, I do not.

When ma died, she gave me this Bible, and she wrote some verses in it that she wanted me to think about every day. Here it is, and he handed to Mr. Parker the Bible, who read on the fly-leaf the words: In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths, and be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Didn't your ma teach you how to pray? said the boy inquisitively.

Yes, she did, but I have seen more of the world than you have, my boy.

Well, I s' thinking how anybody could give up, praying after they had once learned how. I always pray before I bunk in of nights; and then I say I'm all right; and when I go up the mast, I feel God's taking care of me; and I always ask Him if the ship's to go under, to save all the folks on the ship; but if anybody

can't be saved, let me drown, 'cause I s' ready to go when God's ready to take me home.

Robert Parker turned aside from the boy to his own meditation. His mind went back to days that had long been past, when he knelt at his mother's knee and heard from her sainted lips the words which he had read upon the fly-leaf of the mast-boy's Bible. The religion of his mother was old-fashioned and puritanical, he knew, but did it not truly solve the problem of life? What else could support the mast-boy amid the dangers of a seafaring life? What else had illumined the life of his mother with such a peaceful conscience? His past life seemed a blank. His future seemed to grow more and more gloomy through a starless and hopeless eternity. His heart appeared as a midnight darkness on which had shone no sun. Pride alone prevented his restless and awakened spirit from asking the question:—What must I do to be saved? The waves of the ocean had rolled tempestuously all the night, and with the morning a fog had settled deeply over the water. Through the mist there came an unseen messenger of death. The Gravesend had been struck by the Portsmouth. Water filled the keel of the Gravesend. The passengers rush terror-stricken to the deck, to find the vessel blindly and heartlessly deserted by its crew. Amid the cries and prayers of the passengers, the mast-boy calmly mans the boats, fills them with occupants, and shouts to them:

Take care of yourselves, for God will take care of me!

Robert Parker was among the last of the passengers who had reached the Portsmouth in safety. He found the captain calling aloud for volunteers to rescue the mast-boy from the sinking Gravesend. Without awaiting aid, and before any one could hinder, Robert Parker was struggling with the waves, and directing his boat, with almost superhuman strength toward the deck.

Will he save him? the passengers anxiously asked, as they crowded forward and caught a glimpse of the boy kneeling in prayer upon the deck of the sinking vessel.

Alas! Robert Parker was too late. The new-found object of his affection went down before his eyes. With the mast-boy's prayer, his soul had gone to heaven!

Not one eye was dry as Robert Parker told the simple story of the mast-boy's faith. His death has been life to me. I have been seeking peace in philosophy, and it has mocked my expectation. I have tried pleasure, and found it pain. The mast-boy has led me into the truth, and left me a guide for my life, and Robert Parker opened the faded Bible and read the simple words on the fly-leaf.

What was his name, asked one of the passengers.

I don't know, said Robert Parker, but I know that it is written in the register of heaven.—*St. Louis Evangelist.*

THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE.

A TRUE STORY.

A poor woman was lying very ill in a house by herself. No one had been in to get her a cup of tea, or to say a kind word to her, all the afternoon. Wearying sadly for the sight of a friendly face, great was her joy when the door opened and one of her neighbors appeared.

Anything I can do for you, Mrs. Bruce? said a cheery voice. Poor dear soul, and are you all alone? I should have come to you sooner, but I could not leave my little ones till Milly came from school. I left them with her then, and just ran in to see you. Bless me, if the poor thing isn't in a dead faint while I am talking! Mrs. Jones bustled about and got the smelling-salts, and soon had the pleasure of seeing the invalid open her eyes. A warm cup of tea made Mrs. Bruce feel better, and Mrs. Jones sat on

with her until it began to get dark. The nurse who looked after her always came at six o'clock; so when the clock struck that hour Mrs. Jones prepared to depart.

Thank you kindly, Jane, for coming to see after me, said the sick woman; I'll not be long here now, I know. But God will reward you for all you have done for me. You have the blessing of a dying woman, anyway, you may be sure of that.

Mrs. Jones found her five little girls at tea when she returned home. The youngest, who was about eighteen months old, was sitting up demurely in a high chair beside her eldest sister.

The tea pot was on the stove keeping hot for the mother; and as Mrs. Jones sat down to the table Milly noticed how sad she looked, and made haste to give her some tea.

You have all been very good, I hope, my darlings, and done just what Milly told you.

Oh, yes, mother just as good as gold. I told them how ill poor Mrs. Bruce is. I suppose she is no better, mother?

No dear, no better; nor ever will be. Poor Eliza? she and I were girls together at school.

Baby knelt down too, said Polly, the three-year-old girl, solemnly, her mouth stuffed with bread and molasses.

Baby knelt down? What does she mean? said Mrs. Jones turning to Milly.

Oh mother, it's nothing; but after you had gone, I thought it would be nice to pray for Mrs. Bruce, so I got out a Prayer-Book and found the Service for the sick, and we all knelt down and I said the prayers all through.

And we all said Amen, said Polly, quite loud, just like church.

That was nice, said her mother. How good of you to think of it, Milly darling! There are not many little girls of ten years old who would be so thoughtful.

Milly was much pleased at her mother's praise, and kissing her lovingly said she only wished she could do something more to help.

But Mrs. Jones assured her that she had given the best help possible by taking care of the children.

And I will tell Mrs. Bruce about the prayer, dear, to-morrow. It will be a comfort to her to hear about it.

But Mrs. Bruce never heard about the Children's Service, for she died suddenly that night. She died so suddenly, indeed, that there was no time to send for a clergyman to see her. So the last prayer that was offered for her was the Prayer of Milly and her sisters. But we may feel quite sure that the simple act of devotion was accepted by Him Whose ears are open to the prayers of all, and not least to those of a little child.—*My Sunday Friend.*

DISESTABLISHMENT AND DISENDOWMENT.

At a meeting held in Wadham College to establish "the Oxford Laymen's League for the Defence of the National Church," a speaker said:—

Among the filthiest slums and the lowest haunts of vice and misery, there were laboring HUNDREDS of devoted clergymen, and not a single Nonconformist minister. He said this in no spirit of hostility to Nonconformists, whose zeal, earnestness, and devotion he most fully recognised; but it was simply impossible for the ministers of unendowed societies to work among those who could not and who would not support them. The disendowment of the Church would mean the cessation of all this missionary work; and it would further mean the collapse of half the hospitals, and charitable institutions in the country. The Church, if it fell, would fall like a strong man, and would drag down with it the pillars of society and constitutional government.

There are 500 children of Mormon parentage in the Church Sunday-schools of Utah.