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Wm Bronscombe 30 05

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Adrift.

The picture that appears on this page has set me thinking. I don't know any more than you do how those two children got into their present plight; but I should say that it was in this way: They had often been out before, and the boy could manage a boat very nicely, only the boatman or some other 'grown-up' had always been there. For once comes the chance of a row without annoying oversight. The temptation is too great, and in a few minutes the couple are seated, the boy is pulling

to one of the oars, they make a flag of distress, and with eager faces and straining eyes wait for the coming of salvation.

Now, human life is like a sea, and each one of us has to make a voyage in a little boat. Our Father in Heaven, who knows all about the sea, would not have us go alone. He says: 'I will be with you. If you do what I say, you will not drift out of the right course, and when the storm comes I will give you all the help you need, and bring you to the desired haven.' But because our hearts are sinful we are not well pleased with this. We want to

The Wise Knight.

He was a good and noble King, who loved the right and hated evil. A great sorrow lay on his heart as he looked on many of his subjects and saw how they lived. He had spoken to them, and tried to make them better, but they soon forgot what he said.

'How can I make them to know?' he asked, half to himself, and half to the courtiers who were round him, as he looked from the palace gardens and the far-stretching plains beyond. 'I have given them good laws; I have protected their fields; they have had peace; but how many of them are living for themselves alone, and their eyes never go up to God! How can I make them understand?'

He was lost in reverie till some movement made him look down. And there, bending low before him, a figure knelt, covered and shrouded with gossamer gauze that floated dark but soft as a cloud about him. He was the Wise Knight, who had come from a foreign land; he loved the King, and was faithful to him, and the King knew him to be good and true.

'Speak,' said the King, looking kindly down, and the Knight lifted his face, so dark, but beautiful beyond the power of tongue to tell, and his eyes were like homes of pity.

'By the Shadow, my liege,' he said, 'by the Shadow.'

Then the King bade him stand, and they talked in low tones, looking out on the city and fields at times, and pointing here and there.

Then the Knight from the foreign land drew the filmy cloud of the dark gossamer round him till his face was hidden, and softly glided away.

But the King kept watch from the palace window.

It was a glorious day; the sun was scattering gold everywhere, and the soft breeze was kind. Men and women and little children, with work and play, were making the music to which the world rolls on.

And the Shadow moved among them: the Shadow of a cloud. It moved on and on, and nothing could keep it back. It stepped lightly over the loftiest walls; it went dry-footed all through the streams; it walked from top to top of the trees, yet never a leaf bent under its weight.

It fell on a man who had hate in his heart, and bit by bit the hate passed away, and a strange peace came.

It fell on a woman as the eye of a serpent was fixed upon her, and was drawing her closer and closer: and in the Shadow the jewelled eye grew dull: she saw the serpent and escaped.

It fell on a man who was gathering stones to add to the height of a great house he was building: and the house seemed strange with the Shadow on it, it looked like a tomb; and the man knelt and prayed a prayer he had forgotten for many a year.

It fell on a poor convict laboring in the field with a chain on his ankles, and he wiped his brow, his face grew beautiful, and he lifted his eyes to God.

So the Shadow passed from field to field, and house to house, and land to land, and wherever it fell there was chill and fear, but when



'HOPE SPRINGS UP IN THEIR HEARTS.'

his best, and they are slipping through the harbor-mouth into the open sea. It is delightful at first, and they go farther than they intend. Then the boy tires a little, there is a strong current running the wrong way, he cannot fight against it, the shore is falling back farther and farther, and the two children find to their dismay that they are helpless and 'adrift' at sea. Helpless, did I say? Look! there is a boat coming. Hope springs up in their hearts, and, tying a handkerchief,

save our own way, to row the boat ourselves, to please ourselves rather than to please God. It may seem nice for a time to do so; but later on we find ourselves adrift, with our strength gone, and no hope. Ah! but the ship! Yes, thanks be to God; though we forget him, he does not forget us; and like the ship in the picture comes the mighty and forgiving love which Jesus brings to those who, by reason of sin, are 'without God and without hope in the world.'—'Christian Pictorial.'