BOYS AND GIRLS

DRAFTING THE WILL.

The Last Gift.

('Cottager and Artisan.')

The bequest was made many years ago. Sir William Handford was within a month of his seventy-first birthday. He was suffering from an incurable disease. Dr. Willis had more than once urged upon his patient the wisdom of making his will without delay. But so far his advice had not been acted upon, and should Sir William die suddenly his fortune would no doubt be squandered by his nephew, Walter Brabant, his sister's only child.

But an attack of acute pain, and the weakness that followed, made it clear to the sufferer's mind that no time must now be lost.

Both the baronet's father and grandfather had passed away in their seventieth year. The remembrance of this made a great impression upon him. Tossing without sleep upon his bed, he could think of nothing else but the neglected will. Some voice seemed to urge him: 'It must be done now.'

That morning, as soon as the baronet had taken his breakfast, a messenger was despatched in haste to Mr. Westfield, the family solicitor, in Castleford.

Sir William was downstairs wrapped in his dressing-gown, and seated in the great arm-chair in the old-fashioned dining-room, waiting for Mr. Westfield. During the next hour the two men were busily occupied; the one dictating, the other making careful notes.

Again and again the lawyer paused, quill in hand; looked into the face of his client, and waited for the next item.

The clause in the will which more particularly concerns us was the last, in which Sir William bequeathed £10,000 for the founding of a hospital in Castleford in memory of his wife.

It would be impossible to tell anyone who did not live in that North-country town at the time how beloved was the memory of Lady Handford; and when she 'fell asleep' in Jesus, two years before the making of the will, deep and sincere was the grief of all who knew her. To her husband the loss was so acute that he never really recovered from it.

Lady Elizabeth had been simply devoted to works of charity. The poor had loved her, not only for the help she gave them, but for the kindly way in which she did it. Her desire had been 'in imitation of Christ, to weep with those that weep'; she acted cheerfully upon the Apostle's teaching: 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.'

In course of time the hospital was built, and proved to be a fitting memorial of the noble woman. The principal ward was named the 'Lady Elizabeth Ward.' Over the fireplace there hung two portraits, representing Sir William and Lady Handford in the dress of the period.

Many changes have taken place in the town since the hospital was built. It has become the centre of a great iron industry, and has extended along the banks of the river.

The hospital has been enlarged more than once, and even now is scarcely equal to the number of patients seeking admission. In one of the new wards there is hung in a suitable position a large illuminated text, framed and glazed. It is one of the promises of the Lord Jesus Christ to his disciples a few hours before his death: 'I give unto my sheep eternal life.'

Would you like to know how this 'last bequest' of our Lord enriched a workman who had been injured in the iron works?

Some machinery gave way in the moment of lifting a cauldron of molten metal, about to be used for an important casting. The glowing iron was upset. Robert Watson was assisting. He was dreadfully burned by the liquid metal. So severely was he injured that the hospital doctors gave little hope of recovery. They did, however, their best for him.

In a few days he made such good progress that some spoke confidently of restoration to health.

During these days of suffering his eyes caught the words of the text. One day as his wife sat by his side he said to her: 'I remember learning that passage when I was a boy in Sunday-school. I can recall the teacher, and a lesson about the Good Shepherd. I want to get well, Lottie, for your sake, But if I don't, you will know that I have asked Jesus to give me eternal life.'

The sorrowing wife went home that day with a great fear in her heart. She felt that she had seen her husband for the last time. And so it proved. A relapse came in the night, and before morning Robert Watson had been called to receive Christ's bequest.

The money gift was useful indeed in providing for the relief of bodily pain. But the words of Jesus meet the needs of the soul. And who can say how many reading the text in the Castleford hospital: 'I give unto my sheep eternal life,' have been blessed forever by seeing it hanging in the ward?

A Leader of Men.

(By Caroline Abbot Stanley, in 'Forward.')

As the principal stepped outside the door at the close of the school a volley of oaths met her ear. Profanity was an unusual thing on this playground. She stood still and surveyed the group.

The offender, a colored boy of sixteen, was standing with his back to the door and did not see her. He was facing a white boy, perhaps three years younger, who was doggedly standing his ground.

'You lie!' the negro said with an imprecation; 'you did do it, you'—

He stopped suddenly, warned by the faces of the boys that something was wrong. When he turned he met the steady gaze of the principal.

'You may both go to my room,' she said in the quiet tone they understood. The group began to melt away. When they stood before her she turned to the larger boy. 'What's the trouble, Levi?'

'He was makin' fun of me!' he said, angrily. 'They all make fun of me!'

'I wasn't making fun of him, Mrs. McMillan. He thinks I was, but honest, I wasn't.'

'You were, too!'

'That will do, Levi. Now, Rob.'

'Well,' he began, 'just before school was out Jack McCalmot had a feather and was blowing it up. It lit on Levi's head and stuck'—he giggled in spite of himself at the recollection, and Levi clenched his fist. 'I sit right behind Levi, and I reached over and took it off, because the boys were laughing, and I knew it would make him mad. He turned round and saw it in my hand and he thought I put it there. That's all there is to it.'

The principal looked at Levi. He had softened during this explanation, but was unconvinced still.

'They are always plaguin' me—callin' me "nigger," and everything!' he said, sullenly.

'Is this true, Rob?'

'We—l—l, sometimes. But we don't mean anything by it. We just say:

'"Nigger, nigger, never die,
Black face and shiny eye;"

and then he gets so awful mad that the boys think it's fun. That's what they do it for.'

'Yes, and what else do you say?' Levi demanded. 'You know that ain't all!'

'Oh-h, when you run after them somebody always says:

'"Catch a nigger by the toe,
When he hollers let him go."

But that ain't anything!'

'It ain't!' sneered Levi. 'Well, go on! tell her what you call me!'

'We call you "Naps,"' replied the boy, lifting his head and looking at him sturdily, 'and you call me, "Curly-headed Jew," and Clare, "Babboon," and John, "Red-headed Woodpecker," and we don't care—and it wouldn't do any good if we did!' he added.

The principal interposed. 'This is really all there is of this, Rob?'

'Yes, ma'am.'

'Very well; you may go.'

When the lad had closed the door, she