

LITTLE FOOTPRINTS.

BY HOWARD GLYNDON

It was a sultry August day,
There was no wind to stir the corn;
The mowers had not forked the hay;
In long, brown scorch'd swathes it lay;
The heat was deadly since the morn,
And yet, at noon, I could not stay;

For I must measure many a mile
Along a shadeless, dusty road
My feet were blistered all the while,
My head ach'd so I could not smile
As on my burning way I strode,
And nothing could my pain beguile.

I almost curs'd the brassy sky,
I almost curs'd the parched field,
When in the road I saw aigh
A sign that steers in a man's heart to try,
To burst the fount of tears long sealed;
And I grew gentle; this was why:

The tracks of two bare little feet
Ran just alongside of my own,
And I forgot the savage heat,
The cruel sun that on me beat—
These were too small to go alone,
And yet, the message was so sweet!

For if upon a weary way
So brave by such small feet could I go,
How could I have the heart to stay,
And loitering, almost answer 'Nay!'—
How could I dare to murmur so
Upon that sultry August day?

ABOUT OYSTERS.

BY F. H. STAUFFER.



PASTER Charlie Brown stood beside the window watching a man opening oysters at the rear of his wagon, as it stood beside the sidewalk.

The man was clad in a warm blouse, and occasionally stamped with his feet, to keep them warm; for he was standing in the slush, and there was a sharp wind blowing.

Mr. Brown, Charlie's father, was reading beside the open grate. The room looked very comfortable and cheerful, with its rich carpet, bright wall paper, handsome paintings, and cosy furniture.

"Papa," Charlie suddenly asked, "where do oysters come from?"

Mr. Brown closed his book, and glanced toward his son. He understood the importance of fostering inquiries, and of satisfying them, if within his power.

"Principally from Virginia and the tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay," he replied. "The oyster beds of Virginia cover 640,000 acres; 2,000 boats and 5,000 men are employed, averaging 500 bushels to a man during the season. Canning oysters is quite an industry at Norfolk, last year's operations amounting to about 200,000 cans."

Charlie took a seat near his father, quite sure that he was to be entertained.

"But why does not the supply run out?" he asked, showing that he had a tolerably fair comprehension of the magnitude of the figures named.

"A very natural question that," rejoined his father. "The powers of multiplication which oysters possess are so wonderful that the banks or beds which they form occupy portions of the sea, extending for miles, in shallow parts. In some places particularly along the alluvial shores of Georgia, walls of living oysters literally counteract the otherwise resistless force of the tide."

Charlie's face widened with interest.

"Living oysters!" he replied. "Papa, oysters are not alive?"

"Oh, yes," and his father smiled.

"They are 'animals.' A baby oyster

is not bigger than the head of a pin at the end of two weeks; at the end of three months it is about the size of a split pea; in a year it will become as large as a half penny, at the end of four years it is fit for market."

Charlie stated, a little dazed.

"Do they eat?" he slowly asked.

"How else could they live or thrive?" interrogated Mr. Brown. "They open their shells to subsist on food, but can easily distinguish an enemy, whereupon they immediately close their shells."

A musing look crept on Mr. Brown's face. Then he resumed:

"I once read about a mouse that thrust its nose between the shell of an oyster, attracted by the prospect of a good meal. The oyster at once closed its shell, and did not open it until the mouse was dead."

"And you believe that story?" asked Charlie, an incredulous look on his face.

"Most assuredly. I have had them fasten themselves upon my finger. The sea-crab is more cunning than the mouse. He thrusts a stone between the shells with his claw. The shells are thereby kept open, and he devours the occupant at leisure."

Charlie laughed heartily.

"How much can be learned by observation!" he said.

"Very much. Nearly all of our knowledge is derived from observation and experience."

"And experiments," added Charlie.

"Which are generally suggested by the other two."

"How ugly an oyster is!" commented Charlie.

"There are some oysters, the shells of which are very handsome," remarked his father. "The Coxscomb oyster is almost triangular, and has strong folds on the border of the shell which fit into each other. It is very rare, and is found only in the East Indies. Neptune's Box is one of the most handsome. It is cinnamon-colored, dotted with white and blue, and with ribs which radiate toward the margin like the sticks of a fan. It propels itself with much ease in the water, and is found in the West Indies. The Pecten Sicoba, or St. James' Cap, resembles Neptune's Box somewhat, but is larger. In the early times, it was worn as an ornament by pilgrims to the shrine of St. James di Compostella, whence its name."

"Where is the pearl oyster found?" asked Charlie, with increasing interest.

"In the Persian Gulf, in the seas surrounding Ceylon and Japan, and on the coast of Morocco. The yearly revenue of the Pearl fisheries of Ceylon is \$100,000."

"How does the pearl get into the oyster?"

It is supposed to be formed by a grain of sand, which having accidentally found an entrance into the shell, has become changed into a pearl by the same operation of the secreted fluid which acts upon the shell, rendering it nacreous and beautiful. This opinion seems to be sustained by the fact that pearls are not found in every oyster. In twenty oysters brought up from the depths of the sea by the diver, very often not a single pearl is obtained; on other occasions twenty pearls may be found in a single oyster."

Charlie stared at the carpet, still anxious to push his inquiries.

"Has the oyster been an article of food for many years?" he asked.

"Oh, yes. In old times the Roman

epicureans imported their oysters from the British coast; but the British epicures of the present day are looking to us for their favorite delicacy. We regard a green-colored oyster with suspicion, while in Paris it will sell for thrice as much as a white one. They have 'greening ponds' there, in which oysters are made to assume a green color. I have seen oysters grow upon trees."

That statement seemed so marvellous to Master Charlie that he sat bolt upright.

"Oh, papa!" he exclaimed, in a decided tone of unbelief, "you are joking fun at me."

"No, my son," and Mr. Brown could not restrain a smile.

"Where, papa?"

"In the mangrove woods of Cuba. The mangrove is one of the very few trees that thrive in salt water. I have seen miles of trees, the lower stems and branches of which were literally covered with oysters."

"Were they good to eat?"

"Certainly. You simply place the branches over the fire, and when the oysters open, you have only to pick them from the shell with a fork or pointed stick."

"How do the oysters get there?" asked Charlie.

"These peculiar shell-fish are indigenous in the lagoons and the swamps of the coast, and as far as the tide will rise or the spray fly, they will cling to the lower parts of the mangrove, sometimes four or five deep."

"Like barnacles to the bottom of a ship," suggested Charlie.

"And barnacles are oysters," added his father.

That was too much for Charlie. Such a comical look came to his face that his father laughed.

"The ship-worm, or *teredo navalis*, is a genus of deep-sea mollusks. It is classified by Martin, like the oyster, among the mollusca, and he says that they are eatable. It has no proper shell, but it lines its excavation with calcareous matter as hard as a shell.

The Acorn Shell (the popular name for the *Balanus*), is the barnacle proper, perhaps. Its shell is composed of many pieces, and thus, capable of enlarging to the wants of the animal enclosed. They affix themselves to marine bodies, and their peduncles are sometimes a foot long. Their growth is exceedingly rapid. A ship going out with a perfectly clean bottom will often return, after a short voyage, covered with them."

Mr. Brown resumed his book, and Charlie understood that the conversation was at an end.

KO-SAN-LONE, a converted Chinese, when in America on a visit, was deeply impressed with the little difference he saw between the style of living of many professing Christians and the people of the world. Adverting to the matter on one occasion, he said, making at the same time a large sweep with his arm, "When the disciples in my country come out from the world, they come clear out."

—A nephew of Mr. Baggs, in explaining the mysteries of a tea-kettle, describes the benefits of the application of steam to useful purposes. "For all of which," remarked Mr. Baggs, "we have principally to thank what was his name?" "Wait was his name, I believe, uncle," replied the boy.

LED BY THE SAME HAND.

DIVINE mercy follows human souls and shapes their history. Sometimes it seems as if it separated friends who are no benefit to each other, for their own good, to bring them together again purified.

A soldier in the Confederate army, J. H. Reed, by name, was taken prisoner in 1862, and lodged in the barracks on Johnson's Island. As he was of a social nature, he was soon on intimate terms with the other prisoners, but there was one among them for whom he conceived a particular liking. The two became fast friends.

Their identity of political sentiments, and the similarity of their tastes, habits, and views of life, made them congenial companions. When the order for their release finally came, though freedom was welcome indeed, they were sorry to separate.

After celebrating their liberty as soldiers too often do, they went their different ways. The world was wide. They lost sight of each other. Though friends still in heart and memory, they were enemies to themselves. But divine love had not lost sight of them.

For ten years Reed neither saw his old prison companion, nor heard from him. By the end of that time his appetite for strong drink had obtained such control over him that he was sent to the Washington Home for Inebriates in Chicago.

One of the first persons he met there was his old friend of Johnson's Island. Both men were under treatment for *delirium tremens*. They had survived to renew under pitiful circumstances their intimacy again. Again they separated, to pass years without mutual note or sign.

Neither of them kept his promise of reformation, for neither had pledged himself by a higher strength than his own.

Reed pursued a downward course, till one day in Chicago, happening in at one of Mr. Moody's meetings, he heard the message of Christ, and was led to live Him in whose love alone he could find help and resolution to overcome his insatiable appetite.

He then obtained employment as a travelling salesman. Called occasionally, by his business, to Boston, he always sought the rooms of the Young Men's Christian Association in that city, and attended their meetings.

At one of these meetings he saw a familiar face, and at the close greeted with joy his old friend.

"Are you a Christian?" was the first question.

"Yes; a Christian six months old."

"And I, two years ago, accepted Christ as my Master," and the two men embraced each other. Mr. Reed told to the surprised bystanders the story of himself and his friend—now book-keeper in a St. Louis wholesale house.

"When we first saw each other," said he, "we were in prison together; then, after ten years apart, we were in *delirium tremens* together; and after nine years' separation again, now we are bound together by a new tie, that I trust no temptations of earth can sunder, and that will find its blessed fruition where temptation and sin shall have passed away forever."