

dark-skinned boys and girls talk such a funny way. If you heard them you could not understand a word they said, and if you spoke to them, they would say, "Your words to me are not known" in Telugu. Pray that Jesus will help me learn to talk to them, so they can understand. I hope you are well.

Your loving friend,

ELLEN PRIEST.

THE NEXT TIME BAND.

BY MISS S. POLLOCK.

Miss Patience Bright had a Mission Band of "Faithful Workers" as bright as her own name. How earnest her girls and boys were! How prompt to bring their dues! What good meetings they used to have! The secretaries of the Woman's Board called it one of the best Bands in the state, and Miss Patience was always writing to her friend Miss Jones how delightful it was and urging her to form a band of her own.

"I'll have her come here some day and see my Band, and then she'll go home and organize," she said to herself.

This Band was a beautiful fruit-bearing vine, and no doubt the great Gardener rejoiced over it. But from an unexpected quarter one of the "little foxes," as Solomon calls them, began a sly attack, down the root out.

"I forgot to bring my money, but I'll bring it next time," said Frank Evans on a fatal day when the basket was passed.

"Recitation, by Edith Moore," said Miss Patience quickly to cover Frank's confusion.

"Please, Miss Patience, I forgot to learn my recitation, but I'll be sure to remember it next time."

The recitation was a beautiful one, and the most important exercise for that meeting, but Miss Patience quietly passed on and the meeting closed. If Frank and Edith had known what a hungry little fox they had just let in they would have killed him before the next meeting. But it was coasting time, and Frank wanted to re-paint his sled. It made him a little short, so instead of having enough money at the next meeting to pay for two months he was again obliged to say "next time." The third time it was harder still to get the nickels together. Meantime, the younger boys who looked up to Frank, had sleds to paint and skates to mend, and began to say, "I'll bring my money next time," till the receipts fell off seriously. Miss Patience reminded and admonished, but the fox seemed to be so harmless, no one but herself seemed to realize how the vine was being spoiled.

Edith Moore's "next time" had not been unnoticed. Others promised to get their map exercise, or their recitation, or their item of news ready for "next time." The letter sent from the Missionary Rooms to the little secretary was left at home—she would bring it "next time." The meetings grew less interesting because few did their part promptly, and some began to say the Band was "not nice any more," and they would "not go till next time."

Miss Jones had long been thinking she ought to organize a Mission Band. "I'll go first and see how Patience Bright does it," she said to herself. "I sup-

pose she has a model Band, and I may as well begin mine right as wrong."

Now, before the arrival of the "little fox" Miss Patience would have been delighted. As it was she welcomed her friend with a good many misgivings. Her program had been well prepared, all the exercises given out in due season, and all the children urged to be diligent. "Oh if only the little fox would not come!"

But there he was, grown larger since the last meeting. One, and another, and another, had forgotten to do their part, thinking it would do just as well "next time." The meeting was almost a failure. So was the contribution; and Miss Patience went home deeply mortified. "Did she scold?" Oh, no; Miss Patience was too wise to do that.

June came, and strawberry time. From the first organization of the Faithful Workers, each year they had had a delightful afternoon. Miss Patience had invited them to a strawberry festival of their very own, and they filled the afternoon with music, and games, and frolic, and had always gone home thinking that Miss Patience was the "very best band leader that ever did live."

But this year, week after week went by. What could Miss Patience be thinking of? The strawberries would soon be gone! At last they were gone; the summer heat had come: the great shady lawn at Miss Patience's home was growing dry and dusty, but no invitation had come!

Just then something happened which seemed likely to revive the attendance at the Band meetings. It was whispered about that a friend of Miss Patience in China had sent her a wonderful box of curios. There could be no doubt about it, for Nellie Moore had been sent on an errand to Miss Patience the very day the box was opened, and she said there were "butterflies, and funny little cloth dollies, and a boy blowing the fire with his mouth all in a pucker. Yes, and a really, truly live—no, of course I mean a *dead* idol."

Everybody "just knew" Miss Patience would bring all these to the next Band meeting, and everybody turned out and brought their friends. Some even thought that the strawberry festival had been put off on purpose, and Miss Patience would surprise them with something specially pleasant.

Miss Patience came, but neither box nor bundle was to be seen. The exercises went on as usual with a good many "next times," and then the leader said: "My friend in China has sent me a box which I am sure you will all enjoy, but I thought it would do just as well next time. I have noticed ever since January you like to do things next time, and while I do not think it the best way, I have concluded to help you all I can. You have probably noticed that we did not have our festival this summer, but perhaps you all feel that it would do quite as well next summer."

The little fox pricked up his ears. Even Miss Patience was on his side; hereafter he could gnaw the vine as much as he chose.

"Now" continued Miss Patience, "I think we ought to change the name of our Band, and call it the 'Next Time Band.' Then the Woman's Board will know