

THE CHORISTER'S LAST SONG

"What a fragile little thing he looked, lying there in the evening twilight, so pale and thin, with his golden curls pushed away from his temples, and his large eyes gazing out of the window! Everybody knew Claude Davenel was dying, he knew it himself, and his mother knew it as she sat there watching him. All the villagers knew it, and many an eye was wet as the name of little Claude was whispered among them.

He was everybody's favourite. He was the pet of the schoolmaster, and of the boys too; he was the clergyman's favourite, and not one boy in the choir envied him his sweet voice.

Claude had taken his illness on a chilly autumn evening, when the choir was practising in church. One of his companions, Willie Dalton, complained of a sore throat, so that he could not sing, and he sat down cold and sick in his own place. Claude took off his comforter and wrapped it around his friend's neck, and when the practising was over he ran home with him, and then put on his comforter again as he went back to his own home.

Willie was sickening for the scarlet fever, and poor Claude caught it too. Willie recovered; but Claude had taken the disease in its worst form, and though the fever had left him, he had never been able to recover his strength, and had grown weaker and weaker, and wasted away.

And so it was that on this calm Sunday evening, he had been drawn up close to the window, to listen to the church bells slowly ringing out and calling people in.

Claude could from his window plainly see the church he loved so well, there in the centre of the village, and towering over the cottages as if it would protect them from every evil. He could see the steeple rising up to the deep blue sky, topped by the lazy weather-cock. He could see the ivy-coloured belfry, with its tiny window peeping out of the green.

The bell stopped, and Claude's eyes grew more wistful as the sound of the organ fell on his ear. That stopped too, and then all was still. He closed his eyes until he heard it again; and then he opened them, listening intently.

"You are sure you are not tired, Claude?"

"Oh, quite sure, mother."

"They will be coming out of church in a few minutes, and then you must go to bed. I think the doctor would scold me if he saw you here."

He put out his wasted little hand to take her, and gently stroked it.

"They are coming out now, mother," he said after a minute's pause. "Lift me up a little, mother dear. I want to see them. I can hear the boy's footsteps on the gravel—lift me a little higher, mother—they are coming this

way. I can't see them, but I can hear them—they are coming down the street. Mother, put your hand out and wave my handkerchief to them."

She did as he desired her, and waved the handkerchief once or twice and then drew her hand in.

The trampling of feet had stopped under his window, and there was a low murmur of voices.

Another moment and there was a gentle tap at the door, and Willie Dalton slipped in.

"Mrs. Davenel, we want to sing to Claude."

The question had been whispered, but Claude heard and caught at it eagerly.

"Oh, do! do! Mother, let me hear them—just once more."

The poor mother nodded her head sadly.

"It can't hurt him, Willie, and he likes it."

The boy cast a loving glance upon his friend, and then went quietly out of the room.

There were a few minutes of silence below, and then the choir-boys sang Claude's favourite hymn:

My God, my Father, while I stray
Far from my home in life's rough way,
O teach me from my heart to say
"Thy will be done."

He listened intently when it came to the fourth verse,

If thou should'st call me to resign
What I most prize, it ne'er was mine,
I only hold Thee what is Thine:
"Thy will be done."

He clasped his hands together and gently began to join in. When the hymn was ended his mother bent down over her son. His head had fallen back upon the pillow; and the colour had fled from his cheeks.

"Mother," he said, "write 'Thy will be done!' over my grave when I am dead."

So the little chorister died. He is buried in a spot near the path to the choir vestry; and till those choir-boys had given place to others, they used to sing each year the same hymn, at Claude Davenel's grave on the evening of the day on which he died.—*Children's Prize.*

DR. BEECHER AND THE WOOD-SAWYER.

THIS wood-saw was a constant companion. When his own wood was sawed he would go out on the street for work. One day he took his saw, shouldered his buck, and went out in search of a job. Soon he met with a man at work on a large pile. "Halloo!" said the Doctor, "you have a large job on hand. I guess I'll give you a lift, as I have nothing else to do." And at it he went with a will. His saw was always keen, and it was always worked as if by steam power. "Why! what a jolly saw you have," said the wood-sawyer. "Yes," replied his unknown helper, "I always keep my tools sharp for quick work."

The conversation was soon turned to the one great topic of the day, namely, the new preacher. "Have you ever heard old Dr. Beecher preach?" said the wood-sawyer. "Oh, yes, frequently," replied the stranger, putting still more vigour into his work. "Well, what do you think of him?" "Oh, I don't think so much of him as some do," was the reply. The conversation at length came so close home,

Dr. Beecher stopped work and said, "I guess I must be going." "But where did you get that saw?" inquired the old man; "I wish I had one like it." "Well, if you wish, I'll swap with you." And so they swapped saws, and the Doctor shouldering his buck started back on a trot through the alley behind his own house. The old sawyer began to cogitate. A new idea loomed up before him. He followed at a safe distance, noted the back gate at which he entered, went round to the front and noted the number, and soon learned that it was no other than Dr. Beecher himself with whom he had been sawing and chatting. From that time that old wood-sawyer was one of the pastor's attendants and adherents. I knew him well, and have often seen him at church, sitting in the front row of the gallery, on the right hand side near the pulpit.—*White's Reminiscences.*

KING WINTER.

NOW in his crystal palace
Far in the frozen north,
King Winter blows his bugle,
And sends his couriers forth!

They rush, a mighty army,
In fleecy garments dressed,—
And every hill and valley
They claim from east to west.

They hang their icy pennons
On shrub and bush and tree;
They spread a snowy carpet
Far as the eye can see.

And under this soft carpet
The flowers will sleep till Spring;
So let us warmly welcome
The snow-flakes and their king!
—*Youth's Companion.*

THE GREAT LONE LAND.

LETTER FROM THE REV. J. McLEAN, DATED
FORT MACLEOD, DEC. 28, 1882.

THE camp fire is burning and the stars shining, as I sit by the bank of the river on the Reserve. Chopping and hauling logs is my occupation for the present; and though tired are my arms and heavy my eyelids, I still find a little time to study Cicero for my final examination paper in the Arts' Course. My comrade, an excellent wood-chopper, is sitting beside me, reading Dr. Wren's "Recreations in Astronomy" which I have lent him. From sunrise to sunset our axes ply, while merrily and lightly our hearts beat time.

A short distance from us Bro. Bettes and his family are snugly ensconced in their prairie home, encouraging their hearts with the ultimate success of the mission in the salvation of many of the Blood Indians. Next Tuesday three men start to the Porcupine Hills to get out logs for my main building. These logs have to be drawn on waggons over forty miles. Difficulties of various kinds press upon us, still we go on determined, by the help of God, to surmount them. The mission premises are being erected in Sun Medicine's Camp, but I am also erecting a school in Blackfoot Old Woman's Camp. There are about four hundred Indians in the latter camp, and a good opening for a school. Could you not give us a lady teacher at once for the school in our main camp, and let the male teacher take this other school which is four miles distant from the mission premises? Our main camp numbers 800 Indians. There is abundance of work, and whoever gains the Indians first will ever

after retain them. A man is needed for the white work, a female teacher for the Indians, a bell for our school, and one thousand dollars for our buildings. Should the necessary help be sent me, I can then devote my time to the spiritual interests of my Bloods, and to the fencing and improving of the mission property, together with the erection of all the necessary buildings. You may think the amount I have stated to be large, but I assure you that three times that sum will not cover the expenses of the necessary buildings and appurtenances of the mission. We are laboring, having faith in God that the money now being expended will be refunded and our mission be fully and nobly sustained. Can you send me the educational help I desire? Speak a word for us, that financial assistance may be sent us by the many friends of missions. Help us, and that right speedily.—*Outlook.*

A PLEASING INCIDENT.

IN a very elegant palace car entered a weary-faced, poorly dressed woman with three little children—one a babe in her arms. A look of joy crept into her face as she settled down into one of the luxurious chairs, but it was quickly dispelled as she was asked rudely to "start her boot." A smile of amusement was seen on several faces as the frightened group hurried out to enter one of the common cars. Upon one young face, however, there was a look which shamed the countenance of the others. "Auntie," said the boy to lady beside him, "I am going to carry my basket of fruit and this box of sandwiches to the poor woman in the next car. You are willing, of course?" He spoke eagerly, but she answered: "Don't be foolish, dear, you may need them yourself, and perhaps the woman is an impostor." "No I'll not need them," he answered decidedly, but in a very low tone. "You know I had a hearty breakfast, and don't need a lunch. The woman looked hungry, aunty, and so tired, too, with those three little babies clinging to her. I'll be back in a minute, auntie; I know mother wouldn't like it if I didn't speak a kind word to the least of these when I meet them." The worldly aunt brushed a tear from her eye after the boy left her, and said audibly: "Just like his dear mother." About five minutes later, as the lady passed the mother and the three children, she saw a pretty sight—the family feasting as perhaps they had never done before; the dainty sandwiches were eagerly eaten, the fruit basket stood open. The eldest child, with her mouth filled with bread and butter, said: "Was the pretty boy an angel, mother?" "No," answered the mother, and a grateful look brightened her faded eyes: "but he is doing angels' work, bless his dear heart!"

A COMBINATION of circumstances have conspired to make the last issue of the *S. S. Banner* late. The month of April begins on Sunday which made it necessary to mail a week earlier than usual. Then Good Friday made us lose a day; and after they were mailed the roads were so obstructed by storms and snow-drifts that a further delay was caused. We have taken measures to prevent delay in the receipt of any of our periodicals in the future.