

The king thought to himself : "When they are a little older, these good-looking boys will make fine servants for me. They shall be taught all the ways of the court."

Then he called one of his chief servants, and told him to teach the boys, and how to feed and clothe them. "Keep them for three years," he commanded ; "then bring them to me."

You may be sure Ashpenaz promised to do all these things, for every one in that land feared to disobey the king.

It was a tempting table of good-tasting food to which the boys were led ; but Daniel saw wine and food that he never had been allowed to eat at his home. He had been taught that it was wrong for boys to drink wine, and also wrong for them to eat certain kinds of rich food, which had been offered to idols.

Here was a time when he must make a choice : should he eat and drink what he knew would hurt his body, what his father had taught him was wrong and displeasing to God, or should he say "No?" Daniel knew what it might mean to refuse the food ; he knew what the king could do. Yet at last he decided for the right.

The chief servant liked the handsome young prisoner, but when Daniel refused the food he exclaimed : "The king sent you this food. I

dare not let you refuse to eat it. If you do not eat, you will grow thin and weak. I am afraid of the king. I will lose my head !"

Then Daniel said to the servant who brought in the food : "Try us for ten days. Give us beans to eat and water to drink. Look at us then and see if we are any less fair than the other boys who eat the king's dainties. Try us ten days."

Daniel's coaxing won : the servant gave him his way for ten days, and the four boys ate plain beans, and drank water. At the end of the ten days, the servant was amazed to see that Daniel and his three friends were fairer and fatter than all the other boys.

God was pleased with the brave, right choice, and he helped Daniel and his friends. They were able to learn their hard lessons easily ; Daniel learned so well and so fast that his teacher was very proud of him.

At last the great day came when they were to come into the king's presence. The king looked at their strong, straight bodies ; he gazed into their fair faces. He was satisfied with their looks.

Then he began to ask them hard, puzzling questions ; they answered them well. Daniel's answers were so wise that the king was amazed, and he gave him one of the best places in all his court.

#### FROM THE PLATFORM

**NO!**

Tell the following story of a boy who was leaving home for the first time, to go and work amongst a lot of rough men. Before he left home, his father warned him, that, before he had been long away, some one would ask him to drink. When the boy came home, after a while, he told his father that the very night of the day on which he had left home, while he was sitting with his new companions, he was invited to join them in drinking. He refused, and never after that night was he again asked to drink. He had said "No !" (Print) to the first invitation and none of his companions ever tempted him again. Impress the lesson that every scholar should learn to say "No !" to every temptation, and especially to the temptation of strong drink.