

Our Young Folks.

THE STORY OF AFRICA.

"Well, I used to think no one could do two things well at once, but that boy seems to have managed it, and no mistake."

So spoke an English traveller, who was inspecting one of the great cotton mills in the West of Scotland, not far from Glasgow. And well might he say so. The lad whom he was watching—a pale, thin, bright-eyed boy, employed in the mill as a "piecer"—had fixed a small book to the framework of the spinning-jenny, and seemed to snatch a brief sentence from its pages every time he passed it in the course of his work.

"Ay, he's jist a wonder, you laddie," answered the Scotch foreman, to whom the visitor had addressed himself. "We ca' him 'Busy Davie' here, for he's aye read-readin' like ony minister: but he does his wark weel for a' that."

"And does he really understand what he reads?" asked the Englishman, looking wonderingly at the young student's book, which was a treatise on medicine and surgery that would have puzzled most lads four or five years older than himself.

"It's warrant he does that," replied the Scot, with an emphatic nod. "There's no a quicker chiel than Davie i' the haill mill."

And then the visitor passed on to look at another part of the works, and forgot all about "Busy Davie" for the time being.

But he was suddenly reminded of him two hours later, when the mill hands "knocked off" for dinner. Coming back across the yard when his tour of inspection was over, the traveller caught sight of a small figure in a corner by itself, which he thought he recognized.

A second glance showed him that he was not mistaken. There sat "Busy Davie," holding in one hand the big oatmeal "bannock" that represented his dinner, and in the other a soiled and tattered book without a cover, which he was devouring so eagerly that his food remained almost untouched.

The Englishman stole softly up behind the absorbed boy, and glancing over his shoulder at the book saw that it was one written by himself a few years before, describing the most perilous of all his journeys through the wild region beyond the Orange River, in South Africa.

Just as the visitor came up the little student, quite unaware that the author of the book was standing beside him, read half aloud one of the more exciting passages, following the lines with his roughened forefinger:

"The progress of our party was necessarily very slow, as we could only march in the mornings and evenings, and the wheels of the waggons often sank up to the very axle in the loose sand. In some places, the heat was so great that the grass actually crumbled to dust in our fingers. More than once our supply of water ran out altogether, and men and beasts staggered onward over the hot, dusty, never-ending plain, with parched tongues and bloodshot eyes, silent and despairing."

At the thought of these difficulties, which he himself was one day to meet and overcome, as few men have ever done before or after him, the boy's thin face hardened into the look of indomitable firmness which was its habitual expression in after life. But it softened into a smile the next moment, as he read as follows:

"In several of the places where we camped, our chief food was a species of large frog, called by the natives "mattlem-tto," which was kind enough to assist us in our hunts for it by setting up such a tremendous croaking that we could easily find it, even in the dark."

Here the boy turned over a leaf and came sud-

denly upon a startling picture of a man lying prostrate on the ground, with a lion's forepaw planted on his chest, and its teeth fastened in his shoulder, while several negroes, with terrified faces, were seen making off as fast as possible in the background.

"How would you like to travel through a country like that, my lad?" asked the explorer. "It would be rough work, wouldn't it?"

"I wad like weel to gang there, for a' that," answered the boy, "for there's muckle to be done there yet."

"There is, indeed, and it's just fellows of your sort that we need to do it," said the traveller, clapping him on the shoulder. "If you ever do go to Africa, I'll be bound it will take more than a lion in your way to stop you."

The whole world now knows how strangely those lightly spoken words were fulfilled twenty-eight years later, when that boy did actually come alive out of the jaws of the hungry African lion, which had broken his arm with its teeth, to finish those wonderful explorations that filled the civilized world with the fame of Dr. David Livingstone.

A SONG FOR THE CHILDREN.

I'm not afraid of Jesus,
Though I am but a child;
And Ho, the King of glory,
The Lord, the Undeified,
He calls the children to him,
Each little girl and boy;
And in His arms He rests them,
And gives them love and joy.

I'll go and talk with Jesus,
And this is what I'll say—
"Oh, bless and keep me, Saviour,
And over with me stay."
For oh, it must be pleasant,
In times of grief and fear,
To feel His arms around me,
And know that He is near.

I'll go and walk with Jesus,
Along the King's highway;
He'll hold my hand securely,
And help me every day,
And when we reach the city
Whose gates are open wide:
What happiness to enter
With Jesus by my side!

MY FATHER'S BUSINESS.

Are you "about your Father's business"? Very likely you would say, "I do not know how I can be about my Father's business, I do not know what it means." See what it meant for the Lord Jesus, and then you will see what it means for you. When He said these words He was in the temple "hearing and asking questions." You are going to God's temple to-day; will you do as Jesus did? Not sit thinking about all sorts of things, and watching the people and wondering when it will be over; but really hearing and watching to see what your heavenly Father will say to you. There is sure to be some message from Him to you to-day, if you will only listen for it. Do you not wonder what it will be? and will it not be a pity if you not hear it, but miss it because you forget to listen to it? And have you not any questions to ask? Not of learned doctors, but of Jesus Christ Himself? He who once asked questions in the Jewish temple, now answers many a question in His own temple. Think what you would like to ask Him about, and if they are right questions He will answer them. Might you not ask Him to-day to tell you how you too can be about His Father's business? When St. Paul said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" the Lord told him one thing at a time, and promised to tell him what else as soon as he had done that. So if you go this day to God's house, and thus do one thing which He wants you to do, you are sure if you listen, to hear something else which He wants you to do, when you come away.

HEARING THE SERMON.

A little girl used to go to church. She was only between four and five years of age—quite a little girl. But she listened to her minister; she knew that he would tell her about Christ, and she wanted to learn. Once, when she reached home from church, she said, "Mother, I can tell you a little of the minister's sermon. He said, 'Touch not the unclean thing.'"

Wishing to know whether her little daughter understood the meaning of these words, the mother said, "Then if the minister said so, I hope you will take care in the future not to touch things that are dirty."

The little girl smiled and answered, "Oh, mother, I know very well what he meant. It was not that."

"What did he mean," asked the mother.

"He meant sin," said the child; "and it is all the same as if he had told us, 'You must not tell lies, nor do what your mother forbids you to do, nor play on Sunday, nor be cross, nor do any things that are bad and wrong.' The Bible means that a sinful thing is an unclean thing, mother."

A NOBLE CONFESSION.

When J. Coleridge Patteson (usually called "Coley"), afterward the martyr bishop of Melanesia, was a boy at Eton, like many other boys, he was enthusiastically fond of cricket, and not only was he fond of it, but he was also an unusually good player. At the cricket suppers at Eton, it was the custom to give toasts followed by songs, and these songs oftentimes were of a very questionable sort. Before one of these suppers Coley told the captain that he should protest against the introduction of anything that was immoral or indecent. His protest apparently had no effect, for during the evening one of the boys got up and began to sing a song which Coley thought was not fit for decent boys to hear. Whereupon, rising from his seat, he said, "If this sort of thing continues, I shall leave the room." It was continued, and he left the table. The next day he wrote to the captain of the eleven, saying that unless he received an apology he would withdraw from the club. The apology was sent, and Patteson remained; but those who knew how passionately fond he was of cricket knew what a sacrifice it must have been to have risked the chance of a withdrawal. Now that Eton boy, by his conduct, confessed Christ. It was a great temptation to him, doubtless, to be silent, and to allow the evil, ribald thing to pass unnoticed. But silence in such circumstances would have been disloyalty to the Master whom he served; for him, at least, it would have been to deny Christ.

INJURIOUS HELP.

An exchange, in protesting against the habit of unduly aiding children, says. A girl that is never allowed to sew, all of whose clothes are made for her, and put on her until she is ten, twelve, fifteen or eighteen years of age, is spoiled. The mother has spoiled her by doing every thing for her.

The true idea of self-restraint is to let the child venture. A child's mistakes are often better than no mistakes, because, when a child makes mistakes, and has to correct them, it is on the way toward knowing something.

A child that is waked up every morning, and never wakes himself up; and is dressed, and never makes mistakes in dressing himself, and is washed, and never makes mistakes about being clean, and is fed, and has nothing to do with his food, and is watched, and never watches himself; and is cared for, and kept all day from doing wrong—such a child might as well be a tallow candle, perfectly straight and solid and comely and unvital, and good for nothing but to be burned up.