

CHAPTER II

EARLY DAYS

WE all like to read about heroes, whether on sea or land. How real they become to us as we picture them in our minds, and eagerly follow their adventures! We wonder what they did when boys, and if they performed wonderful things then. Nothing is too small to be of importance when once we have a real, noble hero.

William Carpenter Bompas was a hero in the true sense of the word—not one who gained his laurels by fighting on the sea, or rushing forward, even to the bayonet's point, in some great charge. His glory was gained in a far different manner, when he enlisted in the service of the great King of kings, and carried the banner of the Cross over great Arctic regions and grim, snow-capped mountains, to rescue wandering Indians and Eskimo, and lead them to the Master's feet.

There was very little in his early life to show that he contained the stuff of which heroes are made. He was a shy boy, fond of retirement and study. But there was good blood in his veins, and blood will tell. The family, on his mother's side, was partly Royalist and partly Puritan. One member is known to have been private secretary to Henrietta Maria, and was hung by the Parliamentarians for aiding Charles I.; while another at one time was secretary to Hampden. We shall see how the characteristics of these two great parties were in later years remarkably united in William Bompas.

The Bompas family is of French extraction, and there is an interesting tradition which tells how the name was first given.