

Our Young Folk.

A BIBLE FOR A PISTOL.

A TRUE STORY.

"SEE, mother, see what I have brought you!" exclaimed a young Brazilian, holding up to view a well-bound, gilt-edged book. "Antonio Marques told me that the priest ordered him to burn it, but he did not like to destroy so good a book, and was afraid to displease the priest by keeping it, so I offered to trade my old double-barreled pistol for it. I thought you might like to have the book, for they say it is all about religion, and you are so religious. It might be of some use when you go to repeat your prayers for people who are dying."

The mother took the book from her son's hands, and slowly reading the title, "*A Santa Biblia*," said: "Ah! this is good; this is the 'Rule of Life,' I am glad to have it." Then beginning at the first of Genesis, she glanced over several chapters until she reached the tenth. "Yes, you are right, my son, here is just the kind of prayer I want. Here is a long list of names, and as they are all in the Bible, they must all be of saints, and some of them will surely help the poor creatures."

The youth frequently found his mother with the book before her when he came in from his work, and had he taken the trouble to look over her shoulder, he would have found her always reading the tenth chapter of Genesis.

The woman, who had the fame of knowing by heart a great many prayers, was often sent for to go even long distances to repeat them for the hope and comfort of the dying; and she was faithfully trying to master the long names, so as to say them off glibly to serve as a prayer.

One day, as they sat taking their noon-day coffee, a messenger came from a neighboring plantation, begging her to go at once to see a young girl who was very ill. With book in hand, she set out, and arriving at the house, a sad, though to her not unusual sight, met her eyes. A girl of about fifteen lay upon the bed, her beautiful black eyes looking strangely bright in contrast with the pale features. The parents and sisters, instead of caring for her, were wringing their hands and wildly crying out, "She is dying! She is dying!" The sick girl feebly stretched out a wasted hand, gasping: "They say that I am dying; teach me quickly how to die; tell me, what must I do?" The old woman gently took her hand, and in a soothing voice, said: "Don't be nervous, dear; if you will repeat after me the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, the prayer to St. Joseph and the rest, and then a new prayer that I have learned from this good book, you need not be afraid."

A sight never to be forgotten by one who knows that there is but the one "name under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved," was this death-bed scene. The old woman, in clear tones, rapidly repeated among other things, "Shem, Ham, Japheth, Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan," and so on through the long list. The dying girl vainly tried to

follow her as her voice grew fainter and fainter, for she was, with all her failing strength, clinging to this false hope, as she passed out into eternity.

Some years later the young man who had gotten the Bible in such a curious way, married and left the old house to live at the wife's homestead. One evening, as the old father sat in his usual place reading, the husband said: "Anninha, what is that book your father is always reading?"

"That," she replied, "is the Bible. He often tells me about what he reads, and it is very interesting. I wish I could read it for myself; but it is a French book, and I can only read Portuguese."

"If it is called the 'Holy Bible,'" said he, "then my mother has it in Portuguese, for I gave it to her long ago. I never read it myself, but she used to learn things out of it for prayers. They never sounded very interesting to me."

"Could you get it for me, José?" she asked.

"Yes, I will go over and ask mother for it to-morrow," promised he.

When the wife got the Bible, she carried it to her father, who was much pleased to find this favorite book in his native tongue, and, opening it at the New Testament, he began to read aloud. The young couple listened, and soon grew so interested that they begged him to go on, till they kept him reading late into the night. Deeply touched by the "old, old story of Jesus and His love," they began to read for themselves. Soon they learned that pardon and peace had already been purchased for them, and that what God required of them was not penances and a bondage to fear through life, and masses and the agonies of purgatory after death, but childlike faith and loving obedience—that godliness which gives promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come.

The son's first wish was to have his mother learn the good news, so he carried back the Bible, saying: "Why, mother, you never got the best out of this book! You only looked for something to die by, and it is full of good words to live by, as well. Let me read you some."

"No, my son," responded she, "I got what I wanted out of the book, and that is enough for me. I do not care to look for more."

"But, mother," pleaded he, "you would be so much happier if you knew the true way to live and to die."

"Hush, José," said the mother indignantly. "Do you dare to hint that I, who have taught so many how to die, do not know how myself? Let me alone, and do not trouble me any more about the book."

The man went back to his wife troubled and disappointed. The more they studied the book, however, the better they understood that it was God's spirit who had opened their eyes, and to Him they must look to perform the same miracle upon their mother, that blind one leading the blind, and for this they are still daily watching and praying.—*Children's Work for Children.*

THE Rhenish Missionary Society is joyful and thankful at having been able to report for the last year double the number of baptisms from among the heathen that there were four years previously.—*Missionary Review of the World.*