

"Come in, Jack, and sit down, why, you look so nice this afternoon, I scarcely knew you at first."

No words could have pleased him better. He wanted to be as unlike his old self in appearance as possible.

He did not, however, sit down as invited, but stood looking at his nosegay, and thinking how to ask the favor he came for. At last, finding there was no other way he could think of, he dashed into his petition at once.

"Please I want to learn to read, and I came to see if Miss Mary would teach me, now as I've got to be clean and tidy. I've no money to pay with, but I can bring plenty of flowers every day; and when the whortleberries are ripe I will gather you as many as you like."

"Oh, mother, do let me teach him," here broke in Mary; "I am sure he would soon learn. I know how to, for I sometimes teach the beginners at school."

Mrs. Naylor did not require much persuasion. A few questions to Jack showed her how he was longing for the advantages enjoyed by other children of his age, but from which he was shut out. She soon also drew from him the history of his personal transformation, which showed how resolved he had been to remove all hindrances in the way of his being taught. She had always pitied the child, but she and his aunt had not a feeling in common, so there had been no intercourse between them; slovenly, untidy ways were as distasteful to Mrs. Naylor as they were natural to Susan Law. Jack could not have taken a surer method of winning her heart than by showing a desire to reform in these respects.

"Mary shall teach you, Jack," she said; "but you must promise always to come as clean as you are to-day, and that you will do your best to learn."

Jack's white teeth grinned forth his delight, and he faithfully promised that no soiled face or fingers should ever be brought to the reading lesson.

"And when shall we begin, mother?" asked Mary, who had run to the shelf and taken down an old spelling-book, on which Jack's eyes fastened themselves with an eager look: "I could finish my work afterwards."

"Which means you think the present time is the best," said Mrs. Naylor, smiling. "Come, Jack, put down your cap; give me those pretty flowers to put in water, and sit down here with Mary."

And so, then and there, Jack Harold received his first lesson in the art of reading, and it was easy to see that he was a pupil likely to do Mary credit.

It was settled before he left that he should come every day at that hour, and see whether she were at liberty to attend to him, which was likely generally to be

the case; for Mary was as anxious to teach as he to learn, so no unnecessary obstacles were likely to be put in the way by either child.

Nor did their perseverance relax as the first novelty wore off. Every evening found them as interested in their work as the preceding one, and the consequence was that Jack's progress was rapid, and he could read words of one syllable in as short a time as most boys would have been in learning their letters. He never appeared without an offering for Mary, either in the shape of flowers, or a rush basket full of whortleberries, or water-cresses fresh from the stream. And he won Nellie's favor for ever by bringing her a young kitten. The child had long ceased to shrink from him. Perhaps the greatest reward he ever had for keeping his face so clean, was when she first climbed on his knee and kissed his cheek.

He continued to spend his mornings and afternoons chiefly in wandering about the fields and woods, but now always with his spelling-book in his hand. The birds and squirrels got much less

of his attention than they used to, though still he would constantly lie and puzzle his brain over the reasons of things, and wonder whether he should find out in books all he wanted to know. Above all, he longed to learn more about other countries. There was a colored map of the world hanging in Mrs. Naylor's cottage. It was a large one, on wooden rollers, and though it occupied an inconvenient amount of room, she would not take it down, because it had been given her by the young ladies of the family in which she had been a faithful, valued servant. Jack was never tired of standing on a stool and examining it. Mrs. Naylor had explained it to him as far as she was able, and Mary knew all the different countries, and could even tell him anecdotes about the various nations, and how some were one color and some another. Her reading-book had enlightened her on many of these points, though she did not care much about them. Stories were more in her way; but for Jack's sake she sought out all the

chapters she could find on geography and the history of the world, and read them to him. Dull as she thought them at first, they acquired an interest when she saw what a charm they had for her listener, and what a pleasure it was to him to go afterwards to the map, and with her help hunt out the countries about which she had been reading.

One of Jack's subjects of thought used to be, how extremely he should dislike having to go and work in the quarries when he got a little older. He would so much rather be a schoolmaster than a quarryman, and have to do with books rather than hew away at blocks of stone.

He would sometimes indulge in a little castle-building on this subject, which of course fell to the ground as soon as reared, for he knew well that to the quarries he must go. His aunt was always talking about the time when he would be old enough.

Another and a more manageable desire was to learn to write. He had not liked to say anything to Mary about it, because though he was sure she would teach him, he did not know how to get pens

the most willing child of Jack's age to earn threepence a week.

Scheme after scheme he planned and rejected, and day after day passed on, and still he schemed and planned and found he could do nothing. He consulted old Jenny, to whom he never failed to carry a bundle of sticks every evening—no longer by way of payment for her work, but because he had begun to love the good old woman, and was glad to save her the trouble of stooping to pick them up for herself. But Jenny could not help him in this matter. She sympathized with him, and encouraged his wish to learn, because she said she believed learning was a good thing; she always, however, ended with the same words:—

"God will help you, boy, if you help yourself where you can. Trust Him to do all that is best for you. Keep on learning to read, and leave the rest till you see your way before you."

And so, Jack who was learning many a lesson of wisdom from old Jenny's lips, tried to be patient, and to be willing not to go to school if no way seemed to be opened for him to do so. Perhaps he found, as many others have done before him, that it is a harder and more irksome duty to have to practise patience, than to be endeavoring to overcome obstacles by energy and activity.

It is generally easier to work than to wait, but we must ever remember that, be our age and our lot in life what it may, we cannot form our own plans. It is God who leads us on, step by step, in the path that He knows to be best for us. What Jenny said to Jack applies equally to us all: "Trust Him to do all that is best for you."

(To be Continued.)

#### QUIETNESS.

I would be quiet, Lord,  
Nor tease, nor fret;  
Not one small need of mine  
Wilt Thou forget.

I am not wise to know  
What most I need;  
I dare not cry too loud  
Lest Thou shouldst heed;

Lest thou at length shouldst say,  
"Child, have thy will;  
As thou hast chosen, lo!  
Thy cup I fill!"

What most I crave, perchance  
Thou wilt withhold,  
As we from hand unmeet  
Keep pearls or gold;

As we, when childish hands  
Would play with fire,  
Withhold the burning coal  
Of their desire.

Yet choose Thou for me—Thou  
Who knowest best;  
This one short prayer of mine  
Holds all the rest.

Julia C. R. Dorr, in Sunday Afternoon.

The eternal God is thy refuge,  
and underneath are the everlasting arms.

DEUT. 33: 27.



RIDEAU HALL, OTTAWA.

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and copy-book, and he was not a boy who liked to be troublesome. Then there was arithmetic, and geography, and other things that the boys and girls learnt at school. If he could only be taught like them!—but threepence a week was the sum to be paid, and even if it were a penny he knew his aunt would not give it.

He had surmounted several difficulties; but this one of going to school was of a magnitude that would have discouraged most boys situated as Jack was.

It seemed, though, as if his disposition was one that could not be daunted, and past success emboldened him to hope on. He had by his own exertions gained a great deal: why should he not in some way or other earn money to go to school, at least for the winter?

But how? To a boy in town this would have been a less difficult question, but in a country village it is not an easy matter for