

The Little Arm-Chair.

Nobody sits in the little arm-chair: It stands in a corner dim; But a white-haired mother gazing there And yearningly thinking of him, Sees through the dust of long ago The bloom of her boy's sweet face As he rocks so merrily to and fro, With a laugh that cheers the place.

Sometimes he holds a book in his hand, Sometimes a pencil and slate; And the lesson is hard to understand, And the figures hard to mate; And she sees the nod of the father's head, But she sees the nod of the father's head, So proud of his little son, And she hears the word so often said: "No fear for our little one."

They were wonderful days, the dear, sweet days, When a child with sunny hair Was here to scold, to kiss and to praise At her knee in the little chair. She lost him back in her busy years, When the great world caught the man And he strode away past hopes and fears To his place in the battle's van.

And now and then in a wistful dream, Like a picture out of date, She sees a head with a golden gleam Bent over a pencil and slate. And she lives again the happy day, The days of her young life's spring, When the small arm chair stood just in the way, The centre of everything.

—Harper's Bazaar.

PROSPEROUS, RIGHTEOUS, UPRIGHT & CO.

By E. Donald McGregor.

CHAPTER VIII.

A CHANGE had come over the firm of "Prosperous, Righteous, Upright & Co." I don't mean by this that the members of this respected firm suddenly became very good. Rather would I have you know that Tom, Jinks, and Pete, having at last stepped out upon the road to the Place, set their faces determinedly forward. "We'll have to not be like we was," Tom said, as he opened the stall window, the day after Mr. Black's talk. "We'll have to wash ourselves every mornin'," Jinks replied gravely. "How do you know that?" "Oh, 'cause the Chart says so," and opening the Bible Jinks hunted up a certain chapter and read: "'Cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh.'" "Well, I never knowed that was there," Tom said in surprise. "You an' Pete an' Scraps go off to the big fountain now, an' scrub yourselves, an' I'll go after a while." Poor Scraps vigorously protested, when Jinks proceeded to dip him into the basin of the fountain, but Jinks said firmly: "No, Scraps, all the people in our business has to be clean, an' you know you're the Co.; so in you goes." "You're all streaky," Tom exclaimed, when a few moments later he viewed the washed members of the Firm, "at least," he added, "all but Scraps is."

he said, with a smile, "and I'm sure the dark shirts will be all right." As a result of this conversation, Mrs. Andrews entered into a contract to wash and mend for the Firm. In return, her stoves were to be filled, the shop scrubbed once a week, and many little odd bits of work taken in hand by three pairs of willing hands. You will agree with me that this exchange of dirt for cleanliness was bound to make a change in the appearance of Prosperous, Righteous, Upright & Co., but will you see the inward change was as great as the outward? It's harder to get at, but let me show you a bit. After reading Luke 6, 38, the boys decided that a heaped-up glass of nuts was the only right kind to serve out to customers. The nut shell was a new department, and it was most desirable that it should pay; nevertheless it was unanimously agreed to heap up the glasses, and thus follow the Chart. "It makes just ten nuts more every time," Tom carefully calculated, and then he shook down the next tumbled, and piled them high, with fat, brown skinned chestnuts, and paler faced peanuts. "It's payin', anyhow," he announced a few months later, and Jinks said, "Well, so's everything. We've got a heap bigger business than Mr. S since ever thought on." A man turning away just then said to a companion: "And so they ought to have a big business. They're pleasant, and smart as crickets, and not a bit stingy, and their stuff is always first-class. I'll be bound they'll succeed if any one can." About helping other boys, the Firm found a difficulty. They often tried to tell some of their street neighbours how good it was to have the Lord Jesus for a friend, and how splendid the Chart was, but generally they were only laughed at. "They won't listen a bit," Pete said sadly. "They don't believe in us," Tom said abruptly. "If we was to give 'em stuff to eat, I s'pose they'd know we was talkin' straight." This last remark was the foundation-stone of a supper that the Firm gave one day to a dozen of their companions. When the boys had eaten buns and drunk coffee to their hearts' content, one of them said: "What struck you fellers to do this?" "The Chart tells us to do this way," Tom answered cheerily. "Wall, if that's the kind of stuff as is in that there book, I rather guess we'd like to hear some out of it," was the reply to this statement. And very often afterward, you might have seen a rough, but interested Bible-class gathered close round the stall of Prosperous, Righteous, Upright & Co. Mr. Black kept a watchful eye upon the lads, and every evening they came as of old to his shop, and he taught them to write and spell and do simple arithmetic. "You want to be something," said he one night, as he opened a geography, and put it on the table before his pupils. "How be something?" Tom asked curiously. "Why, you want to go out in the world and fill a place; make up your minds what you're going to be, and be it," Mr. Black answered decidedly. The three boys stared at him. Then Tom, after rubbing his hands together a few times, in a thoughtful fashion, said: "Well, if that's the way you do it, I guess I'll be a shop-keeper." "An' I'll be a doctor," Jinks said, "I mean an animal doctor, you know," he added gravely. "An' I'll be a minister," Pete said shyly. Mr. Black didn't smile - he only said, "To work then, and be what you think you ought to be." When the evening's work was over he took a lamp, and turning toward a side door, said, "Come, boys, I have a surprise for you." They followed him wondering out into a narrow hall, with a street entrance, then up a flight of stairs and into a large room. It was all seated with chairs, and there were tables and too. Pretty curtains at the windows, and bright pictures on the walls, made a really pleasant room. "This is my school-church," Mr. Black said, "and I'm going to preach here every night to boys who have never heard of the Lord Jesus. - Will you help me?" "Pete's the only one as is goin' to be a minister," Tom said cautiously. "But I want you all to preach to-morrow night," Mr. Black replied smilingly. "Oh, of course we an' Tom intends to talk 'bout the Lord Jesus, an' the way to the Place, whatever we does fer business," Jinks said emphatically, "only we ain't real ministers an' we can't preach." "But you must really preach to-morrow night," Mr. Black said seriously. "I want a short sermon from each one of you." The boys viewed this plan as decidedly a strange one, nevertheless they did preach.

CHAPTER IX.

THEIR heads were all rough and shaggy, and there were a good many dirty faces. The coats and things were ragged and faded, and scarcely any one looked as though they had ever had quite enough to eat. Still they were a happy crowd of boys. They joked and made merry among themselves, and you would scarcely have guessed that they had seen in their short lives, much of sorrow, and misery and sin. When Mr. Black stood up to speak, they were inclined to be rough and boisterous, but his firm, kindly words soon silenced them into a very orderly, attentive audience. He told them of his plan to teach them to read and write, and be men after the Lord Jesus our pattern. And then he introduced Tom, and Tom began to preach. "I'll start at the beginnin'," he said, "an' tell you about Grannie, an' Primrose Court, an' how we found the way to the Place." A good many of the ragged boys were inclined to make fun of the youthful preacher, but when they saw that Tom intended to tell his story in spite of everything, they became quieter, and very soon the room was quite silent. Tom's sermon was interesting. He told them about the Chart, and the stall, and Mr. Black, and when he said earnestly, "I'm the Lord Jesus' boy now, an' I'm makin' straight for the Place," a big boy right at the back called out, "Why don't you ax us to go 'long?" and another said, "Yes, pard, we'd like to strike a place where no one's ever hungry." "I do ax you to come," Tom said simply, and then it was Jinks' turn. He began by describing the morning when he first saw Tom and Pete. "I never reckoned then as we'd be pardners in a coffee-stall," he said, "but somehow we're stuck together, an' now we couldn't manage no other way." Just at this point in the sermon, Scraps grew unusually restless, and Jinks had to pick him up and administer a stern reproof. "He don't take to such a crowd of strange folk," he said, laughing; then running his hand down the rough hair of the little animal, he said fondly: "I think a heap of this little beast." "Where'd you get him?" several voices asked. This gave Jinks a chance to tell the story of Scraps' rescue from the hands of his tormentors, and you may be sure that he told it well. "No one can get into the Place who aint good to animals," he said decidedly. "You don't mean cats an' birds, now?" an incredulous boy asked. "Yes, I mean cats, an' birds, an' right down to flies, an' anythin' as can crawl," Jinks said warmly. This statement made a real sensation in the audience, and several boys poked a little quiet fun at the speaker. "The Lord Jesus won't have nothin' to do with you if you plagues his beasts," Jinks continued solemnly, and then he read his verse, "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast." Pete then stepped into the preacher's place. At first the poor wee laddie was quite frightened, but as he got into his story, the fear all ran away, and instead came a great earnestness. What was his story? Why, the story of Christ's life on earth, and he told it in a fashion that made his ragged audience cry. As he stood on the little platform, his cheeks flushed, his eyes bright, and a mass of short yellow curls falling round his forehead, more than one child said fervently: "Aint he beautiful?" The little preacher heeded them not. He seemed to have forgotten everything but the story he was to tell. Stretching out his hands, he said pleadingly: "You're all black with sin: won't you let him wash you, an' fix you up so as you can belong to him?" "Yes, tell us 'bout it!" voices all over the room replied. "Oh, he's just lookin' right down now," Pete said; "ax him quick." "Wash us, Lord Jesus - oh, do it quick, do it now." Voice after voice was heard in the audience, and boys who seldom cried wept out loud as they thought of their soiled hearts, and the wonderful love of Him who had promised to wash them and make them clean. Mr. Black only said a few words. He felt that Pete's first sermon had reached many hearts, and he wanted them to go away remembering the pleading, earnest words. "Come every night," he said heartily, and the boys went very quietly out to the street. Before the last one had left the room, a gentleman said: "I saw the boys, and I wanted to see what good work was going on here." He came slowly to the front, glancing at the pictured walls and the window hangings. Then suddenly he started forward. "Why surely I know those eyes - is it, can it be Arthur Black?" "And can it be Harry Raycroft?"

Mr. Black grasped the stranger's hand and for a moment neither spoke. It was Tom who really broke the silence. "Why, sir," he began excitedly, "it was you as gave me the Chart a year ago; don't you remember?" Mr. Raycroft looked puzzled. "The Bible, sir, just 'fore you took a car one night." "Sure enough, I do remember," and then Tom pulled out the Chart from his coat pocket, and everybody stood and looked surprised. They talked too, you may be sure. First of all of the Chart, and the people whom it had helped into better and truer lives, and then the boys crept away to the little corner of the shop which Mr. Black had curtained off for them, and Tom dreamed that he was travelling to the Place with a great pile of Charts strapped on his back. Mr. Black and Mr. Raycroft talked longer, and when they too went off to dreamland, they saw schools and colleges and coffee-stalls and boys, but I must not tell secrets. The bells of the city are ringing midnight, and all the people of this story are fast asleep. Shall we tip-toe out and leave them? Tell you first of the church-school! Why, it grew and flourished, and Mr. Black often said that he loved the work. Mr. Raycroft? bless you, he had been the minister of a church, not quite a mile from Mr. Black's, for years and years, so of course he was a near neighbour, and Mr. Black and the boys walked every Sunday to hear him preach. And now I expect you are going to ask me about the merchant, and the doctor, and the minister. Suppose I make you guess? If you wanted a merchant, a doctor, and a minister, what would you make them out of? What! you give it up? Well, if I wanted a merchant, a doctor, and a minister, I could easily carve them, and have a few "Scraps" to spare, out of the Firm of "Prosperous, Righteous, Upright & Co."

THE END.

BUSY WORKERS.

BY M. K. H.

JAMES and Allen are cousins. James lives in the country on a farm and Allen in the city. Their friends used to say "If Allen were only more rugged, he and James would be the image of each other." At the close of school last summer, Allen looked so pale and thin that his uncle said to his father and mother, "Let Allen spend his vacation with me this summer. I am sure that I can bring the roses to his cheeks. James is lonely and will be delighted to have him. It will do them both good to be together." Allen added his plea to that of his uncle's, and so his father and mother went to the seaside without him. At first it was very hard work for Allen to get up so early in the morning as his uncle's family did. He had always been accustomed to lying as late as he pleased, but James kept at him until finally he awoke and arose of his own accord, and when breakfast time came he was as hungry as he could be, something that he had not known for a long time. He shared all James' work with him, and I will say right here that these cousins never disagreed. The only time they came near it was, when one or the other wanted to bear the greater part of whatever they were doing. In a few weeks you could scarcely have told them apart, for Allen had grown so rosy and rugged. So greatly had his appetite increased that he could scarcely wait for meal time to come. James and he were as busy as bees all day long. If any of my readers have ever been upon a farm, they will know how many things are to be done between sunrise and sunset. Although they had work to do they still found time for many pleasant tramps through the woods, for fishing, and all the sports that boys love so well, and they enjoyed them all the more because they had earned them. It is true that "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," but it is also true that "All play and no work makes him a mere toy." God has given us something to do. What has he given you?