

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

LITTLE STAR.

Good-night, little star!
I will go to my bed,
And leave you to burn,
While I lay down my head

On my pillow to sleep,
Till the morning light,
When you will be fading,
And I shall be bright.

SAFE WITH GOD.

Something round which it may twine
God gives every little vine.

Some little nook or sunny bower
God gives to every flower.

Some green bough or mossy sward
God gives every little bird.

Night and day, at home, abroad,
Little ones are safe with God.

HAL AND HIS SISTER ALICE.

"WELL, my man, what can I do for you to-day?"

The question was asked in a kindly tone by an old gentleman looking through a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles at a young boy on a narrow cot bedstead in a hospital ward.

The boy looked up, saying sadly—

"I reckon there ain't nothin' to be done now."

"Is it so bad as that?"

"Doctor says I can't get well."

"Wouldn't you like me to send for some of your friends?"

"There ain't no one but my sister Alice, and I reckon she don't want to come."

"Why, don't she care for you?"

"Yes; but I struck her yesterday."

"Struck her! I am sorry to hear that."

"Yes, and I was sorry after I did it, for I never did that before; but I didn't tell her so. And when I went out and got my papers, I jumped for a car, and slipped—and here I am; and the doctor says I'm going to die. I reckon I've always been pretty bad, and that I'll never see Alice when she dies; for she's good and kind, and she won't go where I'm going. You see I smoke, and swear, and go with bad boys; but she don't. You don't happen to be a minister, do you?"

"No. Would you like to see and talk to one?"

"I reckon it's too late for that. But I want some one to be kind to Alice, and some one that's good. I reckon you look so. Would you mind going and telling her all about it after I'm gone? And tell her I'm sorry I hit her, and I'd never hit her again, if I wasn't going to die."

"Suppose I go and find her now," said the old gentleman. "She may be wondering where you are. Wouldn't you like to see her?"

"Reckon I would! and you may go if you like."

After receiving directions for finding Alice, the old gentleman left; and the invalid boy closed his eyes wearily, only to open them suddenly on feeling a light touch on his cheek. It was the kiss of a little girl.

"You see I brought her sooner than you thought I would," said the old gentleman, with a smile; "but I found her just outside your door."

"Tom Brady told me all about it," said the girl, "and I came last night, but they wouldn't let me in. Won't you soon be well enough to come home again? It was awful lonesome last night; and Mrs. Brady was cross because you had got hurt, and she was afraid she would lose her rent. Don't you believe they'd let me stay here with you till you got well? I've got a whole dollar that I've saved, and I won't eat much."

The poor boy, failing to swallow a sob, turned his head, that his sister might not see his distress; but she put down the basket she had brought on her arm, and leaning over him, with tears in her eyes, said kindly, "Does it hurt very, very much, Hal?"

"It don't seem to hurt at all," said the boy; "but the doctor says I'm going to die."

Alice sprang up, and looked wildly at the old gentleman, as if in hopes he might contradict the boy, but he only answered her by rubbing his spectacles, and lowering his eyes. "O Hal!" she cried, throwing her arms around the boy, "I love you so!" Then she wept convulsively for a moment, when she controlled herself sufficiently to ask the old gentleman if he did not think the doctor could do something to make him well.

"I am afraid not, my dear. But he is in the hands of a good God, and you can ask Him to let him stay as long as possible."

"Hal," said the child, "won't you let me go and ask the minister to come and pray to God to let you live a little longer?"

"I reckon if you pray like you do some nights when I'm in bed, and you think I'm asleep, it'll do."

"But I don't know much except 'Now I lay me,' and 'Our Father.'"

"Say 'Our Father' like you do at home, with something else at the end."

With a tearful face the child knelt down, regardless of her surroundings, and with folded hands and closed eyes, repeated simply and touchingly that beautiful prayer first used by our Saviour; then she added sweetly, "Dear, good Lord, I don't know how to ask you hard and strong like a minister; but I want you to let my dear brother live. It's so lonely when he's away; and I guess, if he dies, I'd like you to let me die too; for there won't be anyone to take care of me and love me when he's gone. Amen."

The old gentleman had occasion to put his handkerchief to his eyes more than once during the child's prayer; but he kept close watch of the boy, who, when it was over, turned sadly to his sister, and said—

"Reckon you don't know that I am sorry for what I did yesterday."

"O Hal!" said the girl, colouring, "I knew you were sorry for that right afterwards. But," lifting up the basket, as if to turn his thoughts from herself, "see what I brought you! I took some money I had saved, and brought it all cooked, because I knew you would like it so much."

"Bully for you," said Hal, raising himself suddenly; but as suddenly did he fall back again, while the expression of his face changed to one of intense suffering, and became deadly pale.

As soon as he was able to speak, the old

gentleman questioned him closely as to the nature of his sufferings; and when he had described them, he said, with a faint smile, "If I'd been a girl, I reckon I'd have screamed when it struck me so quickly; but you see I couldn't do it well, because I'm a boy."

"Humph!" murmured the old gentleman, as he turned away, "I think he has the right kind of stuff in him if he could be managed well. Hope it's all right now."

When he returned, Alice was holding her brother's hands in her own, and they were in earnest conversation; but he had brought a physician with him, and they were disturbed to give way to a second and minute examination of the injured boy. Poor Alice, forgotten by those about her, stood a little apart, the tears running down her face as she saw the suffering on her brother's.

When the physician turned to go he nodded to the old gentleman, and said, "It's all right."

Whereupon the old gentleman went to Alice and whispered something in her ear.

She ran to her brother, and opening her eyes wide, said joyfully, "O Hal! he says you are going to get well after all. Isn't that splendid! and don't you think God is very good? I guess we'd better thank Him right away for it."

As simply as she had asked for his life, she now gave thanks for it.

"Dear, good Lord, you can look right down in our hearts, and see how glad we are, and how much we want to thank you for letting Hal live. Please let him get well right soon. Amen."

The old gentleman, too, gave thanks before retiring that night. It was the first time for years that he had attempted to approach the mercy-seat, but it was by no means the last.

He had been unaccountably attracted by the boy when he saw him fall, and followed him to the hospital. He was not in the habit of doing such things; but he went the next morning to see him, and it proved one of the greatest blessings of his life. He spent the most of his time for weeks at the hospital, until Hal was able to be moved. Hal suffered very much at times, but displayed a great deal of patience and courage through it all. He would always be slightly lame, the doctor said; but Alice seemed more distressed over that than Hal did himself; though, when she first saw him use his crutches, she had a bright smile on her face, lest he should feel sad.

The old gentleman took them both away from their old associates, and gave them a home where they would find comfort and happiness. They both looked up to him with reverence and gratitude as their benefactor. And he—yes, he considered them his benefactors, for through them he had been led back to the throne of grace, where alone he could find happiness for the future.

As for Hal, he loved his sister with a strong, unchanging love that never varied, and the two simple, childish prayers she had offered at his bedside became the sweetest memories of his life.

"I wonder you didn't hate me," he would say. "But oh, suppose you hadn't come!"