

LITTLE DICKIE'S WORK.

BY AUNT MAY.

"If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it."



"GO to bed children, go to bed, you are tired and sleepy, and mother must finish this," and Mrs. Field turned once more to the soiled linen in her washing-tub.

"Can't you read, mother?" It was little Dickie who spoke, and Dickie was just eight years old.

"No dearie, not to-night"; then, seeing the child's disappointed look, the mother went on, "Well, yes, I will read, dears"; for she thought within herself, It may be that the Lord will speak by me to the little ones He has given into my keeping.

Bessie was very, very sleepy, but John, Harry, and Joe were wide enough awake, and little Dickie sat close and leaned fondly on his mother's knee. I think that it must have just begun to dawn upon his childish mind how weary a place this world is at times. It was a sad thing for him to know, but then his father was a drunkard, and his mother always sad, and besides her load of care, she had to work hard to keep her children from actual want, and little Dickie knew it. Poor little boy; it had all come to him out on the common that bright golden afternoon; the sun seemed glad, and the flowers were gay and beautiful, but along the road a man had shuffled slowly with a downcast look upon his face, and Dickie, who had been glorying in the sweet sunlight, grew suddenly very miserable, and then all seemed to grow dark for him, and his clothes appeared more and more worn, and his boots more tattered and torn even as he looked. Still, he was very ready to take his little part in life, this sad little boy with the tender heart. Oh! he did wish so much to do something for his gentle mother; and in the greatness of his thought for her and her cares, he forgot his own misery on the common upon that golden afternoon.

"If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." Dickie knew well whose name it was, and the verse was so simple that he knew also its full meaning. After that his mother's words as she read on were all unheeded by him, for his whole heart, as it were, had gone out to that sweet, gracious promise. Presently the reading was over, and then a great stillness seemed to have fallen upon them all, till Dickie—

true, simple, little Dickie—climbing on to his mother's knee and laying his curly head upon her bosom, asked tremblingly, "Mother, have you ever asked in His name?—about father, I mean."

"Oh, many and many a time, my darling"; and she bent over her little boy and wept.

"But mother, He meant it, didn't He?" and Dickie stroked the bowed head lovingly with his tiny fingers.

"Yes, oh yes!"

"Then, mother, we'll ask Him again to-night—you and I, and all of us; and oh, mother, it seems that I shall love Jesus all my life if He'll only make poor father good." So they prayed, and Jesus heard—aye, and one other heard too, heard little Dickie's words and the mother's prayer. He was half tipsy at the time, but what of that? God caused the whole to sink deeply into his heart. You see, dear children, God's time was come for the answer to be given, and in silence the work was done. I cannot tell you now of the good times little Dickie had after that, but this I can say, that the whole of his life was as a glad song of praise to the good God who had done so much for him; and up in heaven there is the record of many a faithful prayer from God's little ones, and down here there are many glad little hearts besides Dickie's, who have obtained the very petition they have desired.

If only this world of ours were a real praying world, things would be very different with us all. Dear children, your prayers are as strong with God as those of a big man, only, like little Dickie, you must believe that God means what He promises. Pray for yourselves, and for each other, and if the answer does not come at the first, pray again, and again, for God sometimes tries His people to see if they really believe in Him, or whether they will presently grow tired of asking and forget Him. Remember—

"Thou art coming to a King;
Large petitions with thee bring,
For His grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much."

THE HIGH-PRESSURE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

BY REV. ALFRED TAYLOR.

ANYTHING for excitement. Fuss and feathers, gold lace and brass buttons, drums and trumpets, compose the leading idea on which this enterprise is urged onward. It goes as steamboats on the Western rivers go when they are running races. All the steam is raised that can be carried on. All available material is used for fuel, even that which is sufficiently valuable to be used for other purposes. As the steamboat so pushed to a high degree of speed sometimes distances all other competing boats, so does our Sunday-school get ahead of the other schools of the neighbourhood. As the boat boiler sometimes finishes its career by exploding with an inglorious smash, so is the high-pressure Sunday-school in danger of collapsing, to the injury of its scholars, and to the disgrace of the cause of religion. The tremendous amount of energy which is expended in getting up extra steam, would be better spent in industriously carrying on God's work in a plainer way.

The ordinary teaching exercises of the school are allowed to be subordinate to the interests of a speechday, which occurs once a month, and which is called the missionary afternoon, or once a year, and is called the missionary day. Not that the missionary cause receives any substantial benefit at any of these times, but that "missionary afternoon," or "missionary day," is a name which has a reputable sound. Teaching and monthly speechifying are as nothing, compared with the grandeur of the anniversary exercises, the crowning glory of the year, and the great event which the children regard very much as children in the satin and bespangled walks of fashionable life regard the biggest party or ball which it may be their privilege to attend during the winter.

The missionary day would seem to suggest some idea of an interest in the heathen. This, however, is not an inevitable consequence of the recurrence of that monthly festival. Messrs. Tom, Dick, and Harry, the noted Sunday-school speakers, are present, having been invited for the occasion, or having dropped in, in case they should be asked to make a few remarks. They are heard from, and the "remarks" prove to be whatever was uppermost in the minds of those gentlemen; perhaps the history of George Washington and