

BOYS AND GIRLS

Chris's Copy.

(By K. E. V. in "The Boy's Sunday Monthly.")

A great steamer was about to start from one of the London docks; there was the usual bustle attendant on such an occasion, with the usual groups of sad-eyed people coming to see the last of beloved travellers, while farewell words, spoken brokenly amid the noise and confusion, were perhaps none the less effective.

One boy of about fifteen was standing beside a gentleman, who was speaking to him earnestly: 'Humphrey, I do trust it is for the best, though it is too late to alter now; remember Chris is in your charge, and we depend on you to look after him.'

'I'll try, father.'

'And I trust you, my boy, though just now I cannot help feeling anxious. You know your uncle William thought I ought to have left you both in his charge; it rests a good

Humphrey looked across to where his little brother stood beside their mother. 'I'll do my very best, father.'

'Perhaps you think I am saying little enough about your own conduct, but in helping to keep Chris right, you will keep yourself. He has been kept from learning wrong so far, and, I say it with all meaning, we would rather hear that our little son was lying in his grave than that he should be led astray.'

'Father, you frighten me!' exclaimed Humphrey.

'I don't want to do that, and yet perhaps I do; but we must go on board. God bless and help you, my own dear boy.'

One kiss, and a fierce grip of hands, then Humphrey turned to his mother. She was trying to keep up, but speech was gone, and it was a wordless farewell that she gave. He watched them on board, and a cold little

'yet it was much best to stay with father and mother till the last.'

The boys were going to a school a few miles out of London; all their things had been sent on, and they were to go by themselves.

Chris found the omnibus and train journey rather exciting, though he sobered down when their station was reached, and crept close to his brother. Humphrey felt nervous—this was his first boarding-school—but Chris must not know that he was not quite comfortable.

A porter came to them. 'For Hill House?' he inquired. 'You will find a trap outside; I'll see to the luggage.'

'Well, boys,' said a pleasant voice as they reached the gate, 'so you are my new pupils; jump in, we'll get acquainted as we go along.'

Mr. Trevor was not at all Humphrey's idea of a head-master. He was fair, and rather boyish-looking, with merry blue eyes



'REMEMBER, CHRIS IS IN YOUR CHARGE.'

deal with you as to whether he proves to be right.'

Humphrey's lip curled a little. 'We didn't want to be left to him.'

'I know; but think, Humphrey, what a charge it is. You are seven years older than Chris and it lies in your power to lead him right or wrong; but, as I said before, we are trusting him to you. Don't forget that if it is necessary you are to go to your uncle for advice and help; perhaps he may not quite understand boys, but he is a thoroughly good man, and would help you.'

'No, father,' said Humphrey; but he thought it would take a good deal to send him to Uncle William.

'You will be happy at school, I believe. I have heard nothing but good of Mr. Trevor. Chris is full young, but we didn't wish you to be separated, and, Humphrey, you will give him back to us safe?'

hand stole into his, and so standing the brothers waved their farewells.

They felt very desolate when the great ship had gone, and they had to turn away alone. Chris was crying, and Humphrey's throat felt very strange and choked, but he tried to comfort his brother.

'This time next year they will be home,' he said, trying to speak cheerfully; 'let's think of it that way.'

But at eight years old a year seems almost endless, and Chris was not to be comforted.

'We'll go into a tuck shop,' Humphrey said next, 'you didn't have much breakfast, Chris, then we had better go to school. I think Mr. Trevor will be nice.'

'But it isn't like going home,' said poor little Chris.

'It does seem funny for us to be going away to school like this,' said Humphrey,

that had a great sense of fun in them. Yet they were eyes that could look very stern and indignant, and the boy who had them thus turned on him was not likely to forget it quickly.

Chris straightway fell in love with his master, and when the boys went upstairs to the bedroom which they were to keep to themselves if possible, the little boy's tongue chattered incessantly, and he talked of writing to tell mother how very nice Mr. Trevor was.

'Wait and see,' advised Humphrey, whose spirits went down as his brother's rose; 'we haven't seen him in school yet.'

'But he must be nice there too,' protested Chris; 'I'm quite glad we've come to school.'

'Glad father and mother have gone away?' said Humphrey, rather teasingly; but his