

"Thy Rod and Thy Staff."

BY WILLIAM C. RICHARDS.

Eastwille. I looked across the Valley's border. Where the Death's shadows desolate and drear. And held strange parley with its ghostly warder. While I loved to his domain drew near.

I trembled, in Life's twilight, as I pleaded. That he would spare the idol of my heart; That as my stay and staff my boy was needed. And my half-wearied feet should first depart.

The warder of the vale in voice grew tender. As my wild prayer he answered with a sigh:

"'Twas his obedience to his Lord to render, And the below'd lad's not mine - to die."

On the drear margin of that Valley's dark-ness. I felt amazed, my terror fainter grow; And a soft veil fell o'er the warder's dark-ness. As, in his arms, I saw my darling go.

For the dread shape, less drear, had softly spoken. Or, somehow, to my trance-sense had come.

Across the shadowy edge, a blessed token, That he I'd loved and lost was taken home.

"Thy stay and staff of which Death has bereft thee, Were but ill chosen for thy coming stress. And in their stead my rod and staff I've left thee.

For comfort when thy feet the dark paths press."

And now, I humbly say, or sing, with David. "Though I walk through the Valley of Death's shade, From all its evils and its perils saved - Since God is with me - I am unafraid."

How Jimmy Brown's Prayer Was Answered.

BY WILLIAM NORRIS BURR.

"THERE, mother's gone off into the bed-room to cry. I know it as well as I know anything, and I wish she wouldn't; but then she can't help it. I'll try hard not to let her know that I noticed that tear on her face when she turned away just now, though it does make me feel so badly myself I can hardly keep from crying, too. I wish Oliver'd come home. He ought to be shook for being off, nobody knows where, when mother needs him here so much."

Jimmy Brown twisted about uneasily in the great arm-chair, then carefully placed his bandaged foot in a more comfortable position, and continued his soliloquy: "I don't just exactly understand why the Lord allowed that axe to slip the other day and cut my foot so, when I was trying my best to do everything I could for mother. It's just too bad. I can't do as much as Oliver could if he was at home, but I could do some things to ease up mother's burdens a little before that happened. Now I am nothing but just another burden. Perhaps it's so, as mother says, that the Lord means to take care of us in some way, but there don't seem to be much signs of it now."

Jimmy twisted about again, and then sat a long time looking thoughtfully out of the window.

It is the old story again, my reader, - the story that has been - and the story that will be, because the poor we have always with us. Mrs. Brown was a poor widow who worked and planned and prayed day after day, month after month, and year after

year, for just the necessities of life. Oliver, her older son, like many another poor young man, had gone West to make his fortune, failed in his purpose, and now, with no means to take him back to his eastern home, and too proud to go back penniless even if the way were opened, wandered about the streets of a crowded western city, "picking up a job" occasionally, thus barely keeping himself alive. Jimmy, the younger boy, was a noble little fellow, with a heart full of love for his mother, and it was no small matter with him that he could not now do his part toward obtaining the comforts so much needed. A few days before, while splitting wood for Mr. Cook, the merchant, he had accidentally cut his foot; and here he was, "just a burden and no help at all," as he chose to express it.

"If I had any idea where in the world that Oliver is, I'd send him a letter that would bring him home!" exclaimed the imprisoned boy, after his long look out of the window. Then, at a sudden thought, his countenance changed, and he said more softly: "Well, to tell the truth, I'd forgotten all about it. All this time that I've been fretting about Oliver, the Lord has known just where he is, and might, perhaps, have sent him home if I'd ever asked Him to. I guess 'twill be better to send my message through the Lord, anyway, than it would be to send direct such a letter as I thought while ago I would like to write Oliver. Mother's praying for him this minute, I know, and I'm going to stop my fretting and pray, too."

"Was it as well for all concerned that Jimmy Brown took the Lord into his confidence that day, telling Him all about the home-trouble, and asking His help in the matter? We shall see.

"Well, sir, in one respect I am something like Timothy, for I had a good mother and grandmother; but I've never been much of a Christian myself, though I've tried it two or three times."

"And you think now that you really want to try again - do you?"

"Yes, sir; I've been thinking about the matter for days, and I've thought and prayed, and sometimes I've pleaded most earnestly with the Lord to forgive my sins and send me peace; but somehow, instead of things getting better, I am growing more and more wretched every day. I don't know what to do. I must go now, sir, but if you can come around to my room to-morrow night I'll be glad to see you."

This conversation passed between two young men in the hall of the Young Men's Christian Association in a western city, and the one who seemed to be so earnestly seeking pardon was Oliver Brown.

The next night found the young man to whom Oliver had opened his heart at the room of the letter, patiently endeavouring again to help the wanderer find what he was apparently so earnestly seeking; but all seemed as dark to Oliver as on the day before. At last his friend said to him: "Are you quite sure that you are willing to put yourself into God's hands just as you are, and trust Him fully?"

"Well, sir," returned Oliver, "I may as well make a clean breast of it and tell you the whole story. I came

out West here three-years ago, hoping to make some money, - for I've a poor, widowed mother at home, and I wanted money that I might relieve her from the hard work that she is obliged to do now to keep soul and body together. I've got one brother, but he's a little fellow. Well, sir, I've tried my best these three years, but somehow everything has failed me, and I've just barely made enough to live on myself. Haven't been able to send home a cent. Last week a man asked me to go into a little business with him at the new town up at the end of the road, and I consented, for it seemed like the best opening to make some money I've had yet. Now you see, sir, if I become a Christian, I've got to give this up, because there's liquor connected with it; but it's so certain to bring me the money I so much need that I can't quite make up my mind to give it up. It's just this one thing, I know, that keeps from me the peace I have so longed for."

Long and earnestly the Master's disciple talked and prayed with Oliver Brown that night; but he left him in the same terrible darkness, apparently, in which he had found him.

The next day, however, the two met on the street, and with an eager grasp of the hand, his face beaming a new-found joy, Oliver exclaimed:

"It's all settled, sir, for I just gave up all for Christ last night before I went to bed; and this morning almost the first man I met on the street was an old friend of my father's, who has kindly provided a way for me to return home. I am going to start to-morrow, and I am sure the Lord will help me after I get there to some work that will enable me to lift the burden from my mother's shoulders. Pray for me sometime, sir."

"The Lord bless you, my friend!" exclaimed the young man, fervently; "you, and your mother, and your brother, too. Help that brother all you can to grow up to a Christian manhood."

"Thank you, sir," said Oliver, his eyes filling with tears; and they parted.

"Mother," said Jimmy Brown, one evening, "I really believe we'll hear something from Oliver before many days."

"Why, Jimmy, what makes you seem so sure of it?" asked Mrs. Brown, a little more rapidly than she was wont to speak.

"Oh - because," said Jimmy, with a little hesitation, "I've been praying about it a good deal lately, instead of fretting. Here, I'll bring in the wood to-night, mother. My foot is about well again, now."

Jimmy went out to the wood-pile, and Mrs. Brown continued her work with a strange heart-flutter, such as she had not felt for years. Her mind was so busied with thought that she failed to notice Jimmy's long absence.

After a while he came in without the wood, evidently trying hard to keep back some expression of excitement.

"Why, Jimmy, where is the wood? and what is the matter, child?"

"I told you so, mother!" exclaimed the boy, unable to break the news quietly, as he had intended. At that instant the door flew open, and there stood Oliver.

"What night was it that you decided not to touch that old liquor

business; Oliver?" asked Jimmy, after the wanderer had related the story of his conversion.

"Last Monday night," replied his brother.

"And last Monday was the day I stopped fretting about you, and asked God to take care of the whole matter," said Jimmy, softly.

Heaven.

Beyond these chilly winds and gloomy skies Beyond death's cloudy portal, There is a land where beauty never dies; Where love becomes immortal.

A land whose light is never dimmed by shade, Where fields are ever vernal; Where nothing beautiful can ever fade, But blooms for aye, eternal.

We may not know how sweet the balmy air, How bright and fair its flowers; We may not hear the songs that echo there Through those enchanting bowers.

The city's shining towers we may not see With our dim earthly vision, For Death, the silent warder, keeps the key That opens the gate elysian.

But sometimes adown the western sky A fiery sunset lingers, Its golden gates swing inward noiselessly, Unlocked by unseen fingers.

And while they stand a moment half ajar, - Glimpses from the inner glory, Stream brightly from the azure vaults afar And half reveal the story.

O, land unknown - O, land of love divine Father, all-wise, eternal, O, guide these wandering, way-worn feet of mine Into those pastures vernal.

Mission Facts.

How many inhabitants are there on the earth? About 1,400,000,000.

How many of these are idolaters? About 550,000,000.

How many are Mohammedans and Jews? About 170,000,000.

Of the remaining 335,000,000, how many belong to the Papal Church? About 195,000,000.

How many belong to the Greek Church? About 78,000,000.

How many belong to the Copt, Armenian, and other Oriental Churches? About 7,000,000.

How many are nominally Protestants? About 100,000,000.

How many are members of Protestant Churches? About 20,000,000.

How do the professed followers of Jesus compare in number with the others? They are about one in seventy-five.

How many Protestant Missionary Societies were there at the commencement of this century? Seven.

How many now? Over eighty.

How many Protestant missionaries were there in the year 1800? About seventy.

How many now? About 2,500 ordained European and American missionaries, over 7,000 ordained native preachers, assisted by female missionaries, native assistants, etc., making a total of about 5,800 missionaries, and nearly 14,000 native helpers.

How many native Protestant communicants in mission lands the first of this year? About 540,000.

How many of these were received during 1881? About 24,000.

How much was given last year by Protestants for mission work? About \$8,000,000. - Christian Advocate, Nashville.