

Children's Treasury.

THE APOSTLE JOHN AND THE ROBBER.

"He restoreth my soul."—Ps. xxiii. 3.

You have often read about John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," who leaned upon his bosom, and loved him so warmly as his God and Saviour. He lived to be a very old man, long after all the other apostles had gone to heaven. I think he must often have desired, like Paul, "to depart and to be with Christ" before his long life was ended. But God had much work for him to do on earth, and it was a very great blessing to the Christian world that he was spared to so great an age. He took a general charge of the churches in Asia, and used to travel from one place to another, teaching and directing both ministers and people.

In one of his journeys he was led to feel a strong interest and affection for a young man, whom he recommended to the particular care of the elders of the church in the place where he lived. For some time the youth behaved well, and seemed likely to be all that John had hoped and expected for him. But, alas! he was led astray by evil companions; and at last, when the apostle returned to the city, and enquired for his young friend, he heard the sad news that he had gone from one sin to another, and was now the leader of a band of robbers among the mountains.

John was greatly distressed. He asked where the robbers usually roamed about, and then, like the true disciple of the Good Shepherd who came to seek and save the lost, he went to the place alone. I suppose he told no one, for the good Christians would never have allowed their beloved father to run such a risk. The robbers soon came up to him, and took him prisoner. He made no resistance, but desired to be led to their captain.

The young robber captain knew his

old friend at once. He was overcome with shame, his conscience was awakened, and he tried to escape by running away. John followed him. "My dear son," he said, "why do you fly from an old, unarmed man? Believe me, Christ has sent me to seek for you, and to bring you a message of mercy." The robber stood still, he trembled, he wept. John prayed with him, exhorted him, brought him back to his Christian friends, and did not leave him till he had reason to think that his soul was really restored by the grace of God.

This is a beautiful story, and we all feel, as we read it, that John did just what we would have expected *him* to do. How much the young man, in after years, must have loved the venerable friend who had willingly put his own life in danger to save his soul! But I hope he would love still more the Saviour who had filled the heart of John with such holy compassion. How much *we* should love him! If any of us are now within the fold, it was He who sought us and brought us there at first. And those of his people who have lived even a few years after their conversion, must remember the times when they were going astray, and when he brought them back again. So they sing thankfully with David, "He restoreth my soul."

"While I wandered, Jesus sought me;
This was love, was love indeed;
To his fold the Shepherd brought me,
With his sheep to live and feed.

While the Shepherd was pursuing,
Still the foolish sheep would fly,
Bent upon its own undoing,
And that foolish sheep was I.

Yet the Shepherd, constant ever,
Came and bore the sheep away;
Happy sheep! but never, never,
From the Shepherd henceforth stray."