

A STORY FOR BOYS.

BY MIST MAY.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord.



UNCLE PHILIP once told me the story of how he came by a broken leg when he was a boy, and so, my dears, I tell it now to you:—

"John," said my mother one morning as we all sat at breakfast, "the branches of that tree by the door must be lopped off. I couldn't sleep last night through the wind blowing them against my window."

"Very well, dear," said my father; "Sam has nothing to do to-day, so I'll go for him presently and set him at work at it. Philip can bind the twigs into bundles for the fire."

"I could do it all, father," I hastened to say; but no, father would hire Sam, the odd man of the village, and he gave me strict orders to obey him, and not to mount the ladder at all. Now, May, my wish—aye, it was more than a wish, for I felt entirely set upon it—was not to disobey my father, but to cut off myself some of the very topmost branches of that tree. For awhile, however, Sam was careful, and outwitted me; but at the last somebody else wanted him for a few minutes, and it was with a great feeling of relief I heard the cry of "Sam! Sam!" and saw him go off at once in obedience to the call. A moment more, and I had my foot upon the bottom round of the ladder; conscience said, "Don't, you are disobeying"; but I said that it would be a cowardly thing for me to be afraid of mounting. And so it would, supposing there had been any good to be gained by it. If there had been a fire, and I had gone up the ladder to save some poor little child who could not save itself, or even supposing father had told me instead of Sam to cut off the branches, I say it would have been all right; but as it was, it was a great sin—the sin of disobedience.

I was up and chopping away at the lower limbs, when Sam returned, and as he began to tell me how wrong I was, I stopped him short by saying, "You carry away the wood, Sam, for I'm tired; so I'll just do this for a change." My mother came to the door, but I told her that it was only the lower limbs I was cutting off, and as she had been busy with the tea-pouring I hardly think that she noticed my father's

express command to myself. Mother went in, and as Sam seemed to be a long time gone, and nobody else was near, I climbed still further up, and set myself at the task I had been coveting all the morning long. I was safe, and I laughed at Sam for his long face when he came back and saw what I was about—I laughed, and stepped boldly, with one foot on the ladder, upon the very bough I meant presently to cut off. Crash! crash! but one foot was on the ladder. I was falling!—no, I was not! I—I clutched at the bough, for I had been jerked so that I was tottering—tottering! no—falling! And I remember no more till I lay on my bed, enduring, oh, such pain, for my leg was broken, and the doctor was setting it.

I lay on that bed for a long, long time, and when at last I grew a little used to the quiet and pain and lying still, I thought it all over. I knew that I had sinned, and that this was my punishment; and I grew to thinking of the words, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord."

"In the Lord!" Yes, dear boys, Uncle Philip was right; for the Lord cares to have little things attended to as well as the great matters of life. He sees the warning look of mothers and fathers when they fear their children will go wrong. He sees, too, if the look is obeyed. "Johnny, don't go sliding on the pond," I heard a mother say to her little boy; but the boy went, the ice broke, and he was drowned. That boy did not obey his parent nor the Lord either.

If God spoke we should all attend—so we think, at least. But, dear children, God does speak; the warning voices of those around who are older and wiser than ourselves are to us as the voice of God, even as the Bible is His Word, and the letters we receive from friends are their very thoughts and feelings. God is not face to face with us as yet. He does not speak to us as Adam, because of sin; but He does speak to us in many ways—by our parents, the still, small voice of conscience; His Sabbaths, which are to remind us of the great and holy rest above; by His Word, which tells us what to do. Oh, children, never forget to obey the voice of the Lord.

HINTS TO WRITERS.

WILLIAM C. BRYANT once gave the following sensible advice to a young man who had offered him an article for the *Evening Post*:—

"My young friend, I observe that you have used several French expressions in your letter. I think, if you will study the English language, that you will find it capable of expressing all the ideas that you may have. I have always found it so, and in all that I have written I do not recall an instance where I was tempted to use a foreign word, but that, on searching, I have found a better one in my own language.

Be simple, unaffected; be honest in your speaking and writing. Never use a long word when a short one will do as well.

"Call a spade by its name, not a well-known oblong instrument of manual labour; let a home be a home and not a residence; a placenota locality, and so on of the rest. When a short word will do, you always lose by a long one. You lose in clearness, and, in the estimation of all men who are capable of judging, you lose in reputation for ability.

"The only true way to shine, even in this false world, is to be modest and unassuming. Falsehood may be a thick crust, but in the course of truth will find a place to break through. Elegance of language may not be in the power of us all, but simplicity and straightforwardness are.

"Write much as you would speak, and speak no coarser than usual; if with your superior, speak no finer. Be what you say, and within the rules of prudence. No one ever was a gainer by singularity of words or in pronunciation. The truly wise man will so speak that no one will observe how he speaks. A man may show great knowledge of chemistry by carrying bladders of strange gases to breathe; but one will enjoy better health and find more time for business, who lives on common air."

Sidney Smith once remarked: "After you have written an article, take your pen and strike out half the words, and you will be surprised to see how much stronger it is."

Habit is the deepest law of human nature. Truth is violated by falsehood, and it may be equally outraged by silence. There is no friend to man so true, so kind, so real, and so good as a good woman.