

An Eastern Parable.

BY MRS. SIOURNEY.

Once in a shop a workman wrought
With languid hand and listless thought,
When, through the open window space,
Behold, a camel thrust his face!
"My nose is cold," he meekly cried,
"Oh, let me warm it by thy side!"

Since no denial word was said,
In came the nose, in came the head,
As sure as sermon follows text
The long and shaggy neck came next.
And then, as falls the threatening storm,
In leaped the whole ungainly form.

Aghast, the owner gazed around,
And on the rude invader frowned,
Convinced, as closer still he pressed,
There was no room for such a guest;
Yet, more astonished, heard him say,
"If thou art troubled, go thy way,
For in this place I choose to stay."

Oh, youthful hearts, to gladness born,
Treat not this Arab lore with scorn!
To evil habit's earliest wile
Lend neither ear nor glance nor smile!
Choke the dark fountain ere it flows,
Nor e'en admit the camel's nose.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, MARCH 4, 1899.

"HE SAVED OUR LIVES."

One of the terrible trials of India is famine. The principal food of the natives is rice, and if that crop fails they starve unless relieved from outside sources. They themselves live from hand to mouth, and never think of laying up a supply of food against the day of famine. Some years ago this terrible trial came upon the Karens of Burmah. The war between England and their Burmese masters had just ended. Their stores of rice had been burned or stolen, their cattle driven off, thus leaving them without seed to sow or buffaloes to till the ground. The scarcity of food brought shipments of rice from Calcutta to Rangoon. But its price rose 700 per cent. above that usually asked, and thousands of the Karens had not a rupee.

The Karen missionary, the Rev. J. H. Vinton, lived at Rangoon. He began giving out the little store of rice which he had laid in for the mission-school. The news spread—"There is rice at Teacher Vinton's."

The Karens flocked to his house. Stalwart men came hundreds of miles, carrying a basket or bag, hoping to receive rice for their families. Some fell fainting at the missionary's door, others died in the streets, exhausted by their long journey, during which roots and herbs were their only food. When Mr. Vinton had given out his last bushel of rice, there were thousands of starving Karens who looked to him for their next meal.

Going to the rice merchants, he said, "Will you trust me for a ship-load of rice? I cannot pay you now, and I do not know when I can pay you. But I will pay you as soon as I am able." Their answer showed that these native merchants, shrewd, calculating heathen, who could see their countrymen die and yet raise the price of rice day by day, considered the missionary's word the best sort of security.

"Mr. Vinton," they said, "take all the rice you want. Your word is all the security we want. You can have a dozen cargoes if you wish."

The missionary filled his granaries and out-buildings with rice. He fed native Christians and heathen. He tried to keep an account with each applicant. But they came by thousands, and the account book was thrown aside.

"You are ruining yourself," remonstrated his friends. "You don't know the names of half the people to whom you are giving this rice. How do you expect to get your pay?"

"God will see to that," replied the man who had learned to do his duty and trust God.

"Every cent of the money expended was refunded," writes his daughter, Mrs. Luther.

After the famine was over Mr. Vinton went out among the Karens in their jungles. Even the heathen gathered round him, bringing their wives and children to see the man who had saved them from starving.

"This is the man who saved our lives!" cried crowds of heathen Karens. "We want his religion," and down on their knees they dropped and would have worshipped him, had he not sternly restrained them.

To-day, though he has been dead more than twenty years, "the name of Justus Hatch Vinton is a talisman through the jungles in all that country. The Karens speak it with moistened eyes and bated breath. They still say in hushed tones, 'He saved our lives.'"

WHAT ONE BOY DID.

BY ANNE GUILBERT MAHON.

They were just sitting down to the table, twelve boys, their faces bright, their eyes sparkling with the anticipation of the dinner that was before them. It was Clifford Ray's birthday, and his mother had said he might invite eleven of his friends to a dinner party.

Clifford was an only child and an only grandchild, and, strange as it may seem, he was blessed with three grandmothers. The way he came to have more than his share of grandmothers was that his mother had married again, so there was her mother, his father's mother, and his step-father's mother; stranger yet, they lived together, to all appearances in peace and concord, and vied with each other in petting and spoiling Master Clifford.

The boys lost no time in starting on the good things, and they ate as only healthy, growing boys can eat. They did not talk much at first, they were too busy for that; but they enjoyed themselves thoroughly, which made Mrs. Ray and the three kind old grandmothers who waited on them beam with pleasure.

After they had got fairly started, Mrs. Ray unlocked the door of a little cupboard, built in the wall, and said smilingly, "Now boys! I'm going to give you your choice of some very fine wine. I have all kinds here, and you can take your choice, in honour of Clifford's birthday."

"Oh, that's fine, mother!" exclaimed Clifford. "Come, boys, what kind will you have?"

No one answered, so Mrs. Ray turned to the boy at the head of the table, George Warner, the biggest of the twelve, and the most popular; George usually took the lead in everything.

As Mrs. Ray turned to him, he answered politely, but without the slightest hesitation, "I won't take any, thank you, Mrs. Ray."

The boys looked at him in surprise, and Clifford's mother said, "What! Not any wine? Oh, you are not so particular! Of course it wouldn't do for boys to make a practice of drinking it; but this is something extra, and a glass won't hurt you; it will make a man of you."

George was tempted to reply that he knew just what kind of a man it would make of him, he had seen men like that; but he did not like to say anything rude to Mrs. Ray, so he answered politely but as firmly as before, "No, thank you. I really can't take it. Please don't urge me!"

"Come, now! You won't refuse a lady, I'm sure!"

All eyes were turned on George. He coloured slightly as Mrs. Ray poured out a glass of the sparkling beverage and set it before him, but his resolve was not shaken, and he repeated, "I'm sorry to have to refuse you anything, but, indeed, I can't take it."

Mrs. Ray was evidently annoyed. "Well, I won't press you, if it's against your principles to drink it," she said, and turned to the next boy with, "Well, you'll take it, Harry Clark?"

George's refusal had given Harry cour-

age to act. He knew his mother would not want him to take the wine, but he would not have been strong enough to refuse if it had not been for his friend's example, so he said, "I don't believe I'll take any, either, Mrs. Ray."

Frank Miller, who sat next to Harry, said the same, and so it went all around the table until it came to Clifford.

"You'd better shut up the cupboard, mother, I don't believe any of the fellows want it."

Then they went on eating their dinner, and were soon as merry as if the interruption had not occurred. The incident was seemingly forgotten.

But there was one who did not forget it. In the next room there was a listener of whom none of the boys were aware. Mrs. Ray's brother had long been a source of trouble to his family. It was the old story of bad company and then all sorts of dissipation. He had tried one business after another, to make a failure of all. At last he had gone away, and his family hoped that the separation from his old companions might reform him; but he came back an utter wreck and failure.

Howard Morse had come in while the boys were at dinner. He was sober then; but he intended going out later in the evening with a number of boon companions, and "making a night of it" as usual. The door between the dining-room and the library, where he had thrown himself down on the divan, was open, and he heard his sister's offer of the wine and George's refusal.

It reminded him of the time when he took his first glass of wine, and then he thought of the events which followed. Like all drunkards, at times he would have given anything he possessed to break the awful bondage, and he now wished heartily that when he had been offered his first glass he had, like George, had the courage to refuse. Then the thought came to him, "Am I going to be outdone by a boy twelve years old? What he can do, I can; it isn't too late yet. If God will only forgive me and help me, I'll never touch another drop."

A few minutes later the boys and Mrs. Ray and the three grandmothers were greatly surprised to see Howard Morse walk into the dining-room and greet them cordially. Since he had started on the downward path he had kept taciturnly to himself when he was at home, and avoided meeting any of the people who visited there. This was a new Howard, surely!

After dinner, instead of hurrying out of the house, he joined the boys in the library. He was so entertaining, instituting new games, and telling thrilling stories, that no one could believe the clock right when its hands pointed to the hour for leaving.

Reluctantly the boys went home, after bidding "Uncle Howard" a hearty good-night.

As George was going Howard caught his arm and drew him aside.

"I want to tell you, George, that you have saved me to-night."

George's eyes opened wide in astonishment. "Saved you? I?"

"Yes; it was your example in refusing the wine that set me to thinking, and I resolved never to touch another drop of liquor or have it in the house. I would like to join your temperance society. I want to help save others who have been as low as I was."

George was very happy that night, and when he prayed to his heavenly Father he did not forget to thank him for the privilege which had been given to him, to save a soul by his example.

Howard Morse kept his word. He not only joined the temperance society, but later on the church, and was well known throughout the community as an earnest worker.

Some years afterward he started out as a temperance lecturer and was the means of leading many from the "broad way that leadeth to destruction." And in all his lectures he never failed to give credit to the boy who had stood firm for his principles, and by his example, pointed him to the way in which he was now walking.—Union Signal.

ALWAYS PRAISING.

A man was converted, writes Mr. Moody, and he was just full of praise. He was living in the light all the time. He used to preface everything he said in the meeting with "Praise God."

One night he came to the meeting with his finger all bound up. He had cut it, and cut it pretty bad, too. Well, I wondered how he would praise God for this; but he got up and said:

"I have cut my finger, but, praise God, I didn't cut it off!"

If things go against you, just remember that they might be a good deal worse.

A Methodist Soldier

BY

ALLAN-A-DALE.

CHAPTER X.

A BLOODLESS VICTORY.

Out of that turmoil we came victorious. Mr. Ullathorne, despite his ducking in the river, seemed to have the strength of six men. Laying a grip of iron on the collar of the man who fought with my father, he brought him over on his back with such a tremendous jerk that I thought he must have well-nigh broken the villain's neck.

There was a quick movement in the hedge above as Mr. Ullathorne performed his doughty deed, and the same voice which had encouraged the assault called again: "Run, Bill! run. You can't beat the parson."

The man addressed as Bill scrambled to his feet, and was about to start down the path when, my blood being now fairly boiling, I rushed for him. But the big fellow knew more about the business than I, and with a ready, back-handed blow, which nearly toppled me into the river, he dodged and then plunged onwards, barely missing in his haste the still prostrate form of the man who had first fallen.

Well content was I to see the villain run, knowing by the movement in the hedge that our unseen antagonist had gone also. There now remained only the man of whom I had disposed so luckily. Turning to see what damage had been done to him, I found that he also had risen to his feet and was going off limping and swearing in the darkness.

But Mr. Ullathorne, still bending over my father, and I were now more concerned to know what injury had befallen him than to attempt any pursuit of our assailants.

"Is he hurt?" I said, more than anxiously.

"Nay, lad, I think not," said Mr. Ullathorne.

As he spoke my father raised himself on his elbow, gasping a little as though the breath had been knocked out of him.

"It's—all—right, isn't it, Jim?" were the first words he said. Though they came slowly I thought the words were the most welcome I had ever heard.

"Aye," said I gleefully, "we've beaten 'em."

He put his hand to the place where he had fastened his wallet, within his leather belt. He was now sitting up and panting a little, but in the pale starlight I could see a smile on his face as he felt and found it there.

"They didn't get it, after all, did they?"

"Get it?" I said, a sudden light dawning. "They were after the money, were they?"

"What else, Jim? D'ye think they throw me in the river for fun?" Mr. Ullathorne answered my question, laughing in spite of the situation. "But help me get your father to his feet. He may be hurt more than he thinks."

Needing scarcely any assistance, my father straightened himself, and in a moment or two declared himself all right and able to go on. "We must get to the city as quickly as we can, Mr. Ullathorne, and find you a dryer suit of clothes," he said. "But how did you and Jim manage to rid us of them? After I saw the first send you into the river I suppose I got a crack over the head from behind. At any rate, I remember no more."

As we walked slowly and cautiously along we put our several stories together and came to an understanding of the manner in which the attack was made. Then for some minutes we were in momentary expectation of another attack, not thinking they would be so easily baulked. But happily we were not further molested. We soon reached the outskirts of the city and then the streets, which, dimly lighted with lamps though they were, enabled us to breathe more freely.

And so to our lodgings, where, when we came to examine ourselves, we found we had all met with some damage, though none of it serious. Mr. Ullathorne was wet; my father had the side of his head bruised, and I had a lump on the back of mine which made my first soldier-cap a queer fit for a few days. Altogether, we were glad to have got out of the scuffle so lightly. My father, thinking not of the coin but of the purpose to which it was to be put and the price he had paid for it, was especially thankful to find that the bounty money was safe.

The question remained, who were our assailants? On account of the darkness we could not say, with any certainty,