



THE BOY WHO WAS ASHAMED TO P R A Y.

Early one morning in the month of September, 184—, Mr. Ward's family was assembled around the family altar for prayer, to implore the blessing and protection of their heavenly Father in behalf of their only boy, who was about leaving his home for a distant school.

Thomas, a boy of about twelve years, was deeply affected by the solemn services; and as he rose from his knees, his eyes filled with tears, thinking, perhaps, that he might never be permitted to enjoy that delightful privilege again. His father prayed particularly that God would take care of his boy, during his absence from his parents; that he would preserve him from all dangers; that he would be near him in all temptations, and, if they should not meet again on earth, that they might all—father, mother, and son—meet where the “wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.” He endeavored to impress upon his mind the necessity of prayer, and that he should never neglect it.

The striking of the clock announced that in a short time he must be off. The most trying point had now come,—he must bid his parents farewell. Claspings his arms round his mother's neck, he said, “Oh! my mother, my mother! shall I ever see you again!” and with a kiss to each, bade his affectionate parents adieu, and, valise in hand, walked hastily to the station.

Having procured his ticket, he seated himself in the carriage, and in a few moments left the affectionate home of his childhood for the P—H— school, at B—. His heart was sad, as he thought of the many happy hours he had spent “at home” with his kind parents, and a tear

stole silently down his cheek. These sad and melancholy thoughts, however, were soon banished from his mind by the magnificent scenery of the country through which he was passing.

He thought “the country,” as it was called in town, was the loveliest place he had ever seen. Thomas's mind became so much engaged with the picturesque scenery—mountains, lakes, and valleys,—that he reached his destination ere he supposed he had travelled half-way; in fact, he had gone one hundred miles in five hours.

He met the school principal at the station awaiting his arrival, and in a few moments they were on their way to the school. Nothing of interest occurred during the remainder of the day, with the exception of the boys laughing at Thomas, and calling him “town-boy,” etc., “initiating” him, as they termed it. When the time for retiring to rest drew near, and one after another of the boys fell asleep, Thomas was surprised that not one of them offered a petition to God, asking Him “to take care of them during the silent watches of the night.” He knelt beside his bed, and attempted to offer a short prayer; but his companions were laughing and singing, and he rose from his knees, wishing that he was at home, where he could, in his quiet little chamber, offer up his evening devotions. Some of the boys were actually so rude as to call him “Parson Ward,” and ask him “if he intended holding forth next Sabbath?”

The next night Thomas felt so ashamed that he determined not to pray, and laid his head on a prayerless pillow,—a thing he had not done since he was able to say, “Gentle Jesus, meek and mild.” The last words of his father, “Don't be ashamed to pray,” came to his mind; thinking about them as little as possible, he soon fell asleep.

In a short time Thomas became the ring-leader of the gang in all that was bad, and soon learned to curse and swear worse than any of his companions.

One beautiful Sabbath morning, instead of going to church, he wandered off, and finding nothing to engage his thoughts, determined to take a bath. He had scarcely been in the water five minutes, when he was seized with cramp, and sunk to rise no more. The last words that lingered on the lips of the drowning boy were, “Oh! my mother!” The awful death of Thomas speaks for itself. May it serve as a warning to those who violate God's holy commandments, and are ashamed to pray.