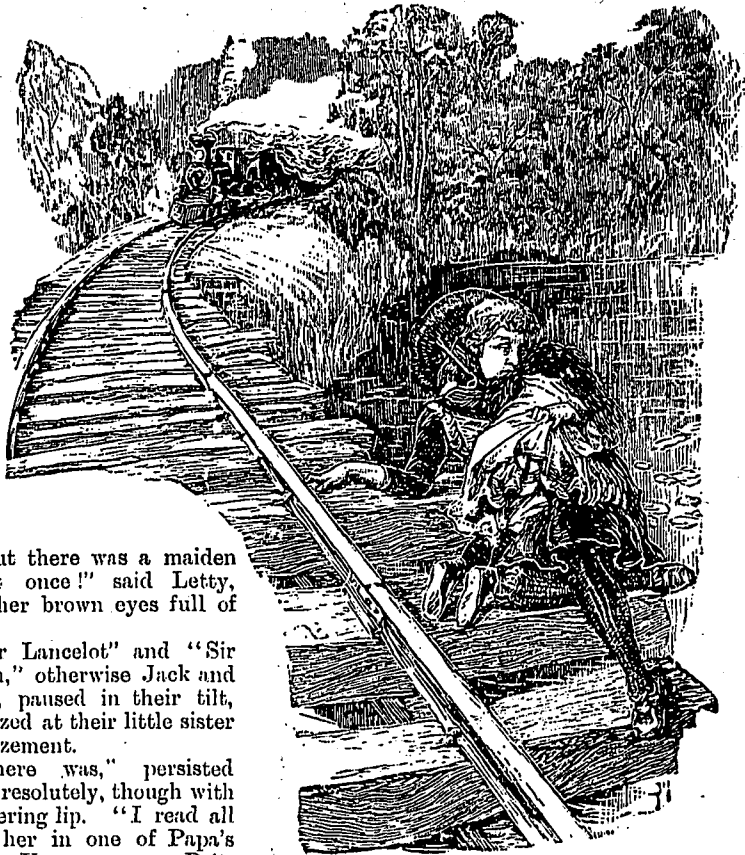


## LITTLE BRITOMARTIS.

BY ALICE MAUD EDDY.



"But there was a maiden knight once!" said Letty, with her brown eyes full of tears.

"Sir Lancelot" and "Sir Gareth," otherwise Jack and Harry, paused in their tilt, and gazed at their little sister in amazement.

"There was," persisted Letty, resolutely, though with a quivering lip. "I read all about her in one of Papa's books. Her name was Britomartis, and she had long golden hair that fell down when she took her helmet off, and—and she conquered everybody."

"Go on and tell us all about it," said Harry, dropping his sword. Letty was always finding entertaining stories in books that neither of the boys would have thought of opening. It was she who had told them about the Round Table, and had set them to reading for themselves the wonderful adventures of Lancelot and Gareth, of Tristram, and Galahad, and Alisander. It was rather hard that she should be shut out from the fascinating games that grew out of these researches into the "Morte d'Arthur," simply because she was a girl. The boys were quite willing that their sister should take the part of the distressed lady for whom they should fight; but sitting on a rag-bag and crying out, "Oh, Sir Lancelot, thou flower of knight-hood, succor a forlorn lady!" were entirely beneath Letty's ambition, and even the more active part of gracefully waving a handkerchief during a tournament, and tying her hair-ribbon about the helmet of the conqueror, failed to satisfy her desires. It was with a decided sense of injury that Letty went on with her story.

"Yes, she conquered every knight that she fought, and she was always helping ladies and everybody that needed her, and she was the strongest and most beautiful knight in Fairy-land."

"Fairy-land!" exclaimed Harry. "Was it just a fairy story? That doesn't count!"

"It was lovely poetry!" said Letty, indignantly, "and king Arthur was in it too, so it counts just as much as anything."

"If it was poetry, it wasn't true," said Jack, conclusively. "I thought it didn't sound very true! Great idea that—of a woman conquering all the knights! I'd just like to see a girl that was braver than a boy! Come, Harry, let's go on playing! 'Gay Sir Knight, wilt thou ride a tilt with me?'" And the boys careered wildly about the garret on their invisible chargers, leaving Letty to amuse herself as she could until school-time.

It was a beautiful May morning. The grass along the roadside was white with daisies, as the children ran to school. Tilts and tournaments were forgotten, under the clear blue sky, with the soft wind tossing Letty's hair, while Jack chased butterflies, and Harry blew off the feathery dandelion-tops to see which way he should go to seek his fortune. They stopped as they passed the railway bridge to look at the lily-pads in the marshy water below it, and to prophesy how long it would be before they could come there to gather the lilies; and then they went on to school as usual. They did not dream that none of the three would ever pass that place in the

same careless way again, nor that the commonplace row of railway sleepers would be made beautiful for them forever after that day by a deed that was finer and fairer than even the snowy lilies which blossomed below it in the summer-time.

They had just reached the turn of the road which passed the bridge, on their way home, that afternoon, when Letty heard a child's cry. A very little girl, not more than four years old, stood in the middle of the bridge looking helplessly from one bank to the other. It was not a long distance across, and the water below was not deep, but the child was evidently frightened, and it was not in Letty's nature to pass any one in trouble without trying to help.

"What's the matter?" she called. "Wait a minute, boys! How did she ever get there?"

"I can't get off," wailed the child. "I'm afraid. Oh, please come and help me!"

"Stand still, then, and I will," called Letty again, beginning to step carefully from one sleeper to another.

Jack and Harry never forgot the next few minutes. It seemed as if a flash of lightning had engraved the whole picture on their hearts, so vividly could they recall it long after.

The railway track made a sharp turn out of the woods across the bridge, and passed them leading down toward the village. The afternoon sun shone through the trees on the farther bank, and flecked with light the little figure of the sobbing child, who was waiting for Letty. She had on a pink apron, and her hair was brown and curly. Jack noticed a great red butterfly over Letty's head as she stepped on the third sleeper. Then a rumbling sound, growing louder and louder, beyond made him cry out in terror, to his sister:

"Letty! Letty! come back! The train! the train!"

There it was, like a great fiery dragon, sweeping around the turn; and there was Letty on the bridge, and the little girl nearer to the opposite shore. It all happened in a moment. Letty gave a great gasp. The boys heard it, and saw her pause as if to turn back, and then, full in the face of the coming train, timid Letty sprang on toward the stranger child, and caught her in her arms, just as the engine, which had slackened speed, but could not stop before reaching them, rolled upon the bridge. Harry screamed wildly; Jack shut his eyes and dropped on the grass with a great sob. There was a rush and rumble, which seemed ages long, a shriek from the engine, and then the place was still again. When Jack opened his eyes he saw that the train had stopped as soon as it reached the shore; that a brakeman, with Harry fol-

lowing, was half-way down the bridge; and beyond them Jack saw Letty herself, but crouched on the sleepers outside the track, with the brown head of the other child lying on her arm. They were both very still. "Dead!" thought Jack, with a sudden wild feeling that he loved Letty dearly, and wanted her to be with him all his life, and that he had not been kind to her that morning in the garret.

"Mamma," said Harry, afterward, "when we got them off the bridge and found they weren't either of them hurt, but only terribly frightened, Jack and I both sat down and cried! But Letty was crying so hard herself that she didn't notice it; and don't you tell!"

That evening, as Letty lay pale and quiet, but very happy, in her bed, whither she had retired much earlier than usual, Jack stole in with his sword in his hand. It was a black walnut sword, with a brown silk cord and tassel on the hilt, and Jack was very proud of it. He sat down on the other side of the bed and held it out to Letty, in an embarrassed manner.

"You're the bravest girl I ever heard of!" he said, hurriedly; "and I'll just own up and say that I never would have dared to do what you did,—and besides, I think so much of you, Letty,—and poetry does count, too,—and you can have my sword and be any knight you please, and I'll never be mean to you again. So there, now!"

"It was to help the little girl that I went," said Letty, with a joyous smile; "and I know you would have gone on, too, if you'd been on the bridge; so you needn't say I'm braver than you are. And I know it will be more fun for all of us if you and Harry let me play with you; and I love you dearly, Jack!"

Jack looked sheepish, but pleased. "I'll dub you knight myself, if you like," he said. "People used to like to have Sir Lancelot dub them knight."

And so, with much laughter and much enjoyment, the ceremony was performed at once; and when Mamma came in, a few minutes later, she found the little maiden-knight lying asleep, with the sword in her hand, and a look of such gladness in her face, that the tears sprang to the mother's eyes as she thought of what might have been.—*St. Nicholas.*

## THE INFLUENCE OF ONE GOOD LIFE.

BY BELLE V. CHISHOLM.

About two-score years ago, a young apprentice, poor and friendless, took up his abode in the great, noisy city of London. He was an entire stranger; but, in spite of his loneliness and poverty, he was rich in a single endowment,—Christian faith. He took lodgings in St. Paul's Churchyard; and the first time he entered his little room he locked the door, and, kneeling down, made a simple prayer of consecration. No one but God and himself knew of the gift he laid upon the altar that night, nor of the peace that came to him as he placed his young head upon the hard pillow when he sought his lonely couch.

Though eighty young men were employed in the same establishment in which he was to work, he felt the solitude of the city; and many lonely hours he spent, even when surrounded by scores of living, breathing beings. A great reformer once said: "I resolved to have no friends by chance, but by choice, and to choose only such as would help me in my spiritual life."

This young apprentice had a like purpose. Finding a few honest, upright men among his fellow-workmen, he chose his friends from among them, and, when well acquainted, invited some of them to join him in holding a prayer-meeting in his room. Those invited brought others with them, and the meetings grew both in numbers and interest. Soon the little room where the consecration prayer had been offered became too small to accommodate those seeking admittance, and the meetings were multiplied. The good begun in the apprentices' boarding-hall could not be confined to the young workmen alone; for God was in the movement, and carried its influence out into the busy city. Young men's meetings for young men became a power among the London trades, and in 1844 they led to the forming of the first Young Men's Christian Association.

The society became a deep religious movement. All through England its in-

fluence was felt. America responded to the good work at once, and parts of Asia and the islands of the sea fell into line as the glad news reached their far-away shores.

Nearly three thousand Associations were represented, or reported, at the tenth annual conference, held in Berlin.

The movement peculiarly meets the wants of colleges, and hundreds of Associations have been formed in colleges and schools of the higher grade.

A few months since, a gentleman, walking along the embankment of the Thames, saw the grand old dome of St. Paul's glittering in the twilight, and recalled to a friend the historic association of the building. "And yet," replied the friend, with his eyes still upon London's crown, "the influence of that church during the present century has, I think, been outweighed by the consecrated work of a single individual."

"Who?" inquired the gentleman. "A mere lad," was the reply. "I refer to the poor apprentice, who, in his humble room in St. Paul's Churchyard, began the glorious work of the Young Men's Christian Association in the world."

It is impossible for us to weigh influences or calculate results; but the gentleman's assertion is inspiring, and suggests lessons to those who do not wish to be idlers in the world, and whose only possession is faith.—*S. S. Times.*

## HOW CHOCOLATE IS MADE.

"Chocolate," said a confectioner, "is made from beans that grow in pods on the cacao tree. These trees are numerous in the West Indies, and it is from there we get our supply. The beans are brought hither in the pod, and put through a regular manufacturing process to produce the chocolate cakes that we use. The first operation is the breaking of the husks and separating them from the kernels by a blast of air. Then the beans are ground with sugar by revolving granite grindstones. The stones are heated, and the oil contained in the bean makes the mass adhere and become a thick paste. This pulp is now partly dried, and the air bubbles are squeezed out in a press, and it is transferred to the cooling tables. Here it is beaten and worked by hand to produce an even texture and a fine grain. Then it is placed in moulds, a blast of cold air is turned on and in a few minutes the beautiful glossy tablets are finished.

"The British government as recently directed that chocolate be served two or three times a week in the army and navy. In confectionery the Parisians exceed us in the number of preparations of chocolate. We use it in its natural flavor only, while they mix essences and other flavors with it, until there is no end to the combinations that they produce. In England much of the chocolate is adulterated. Some recent tests detected flour, starch, potato, lard, chalk, bran and old sea-biscuit in specimens offered for sale."

## A VERY BEAUTIFUL PRAYER.

This is a short but very beautiful prayer that Dr. Arnold wrote for his own use before he went into the school of Rugby every day:—"O Lord, I have a busy world around me; eye, ear and thought will be needed for all my work to be done in that busy world. Now, ere I enter upon it, I would commit eye, ear and thought to Thee! Do Thou bless them, and keep their work Thine; that as through Thy natural laws, my heart beats and my blood flows without any thought of mine for them, so my spiritual life may hold on its course at these times when my mind cannot consciously turn to Thee to commit each particular thought to Thy services. "Hear my prayer, for my dear Redeemer's sake. Amen."

## HOW?

"How shall I a habit break?"  
As you did that habit make.  
As you gathered, you must lose;  
As you yielded, now refuse.  
Thread by thread the strand we twist  
Till they bind us neck and wrist;  
Thread by thread the patient hand,  
Must untwine ere free we stand,  
As we builded, stone by stone,  
We must toil unhelped, alone,  
Till the wall is overthrown.

—John Boyle O'Reilly.