

The Two Villages.

BY HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.

OVER the river, on the hill,
Lies a village white and still;
All around it the forest trees
Sliver and whisper in the breeze,
Over it sailing shadows go
Of soaring hawk and screaming crow;
And mountain grasses, low and sweet,
Grow in the middle of every street.

Over the river, under the hill,
Another village lies still;
There I see in the cloudy night;
T'winkle stars of household light;
Fires that gleam from the smithy's door,
Mists that curl on the river's shore;
And in the woods no grasses grow
For the wheels that creak to and fro.

In the village on the hill,
Never a sound of smith or mill;
The houses are thatched with grass and
flowers,

Never a clock to tell the hours,
The marble doors are always shut,
You may not enter at hall or hut,
All in the village lie asleep,
Never a grain to sow or reap,
Never in dreams to moan or sigh—
Silent, peaceful and low they lie.

In the village under the hill,
When the night is starry and still,
Many a weary soul, in prayer,
Looks to the other village there;
And weeping and sighing longs to go
Up to that home, from this below—
Longs to sleep by the forest wild,
Whither have vanished wife and child;
And heareth praying the answer fall,
"Patience! That village shall hold ye all!"
—*The Lamp.*

The Sacrifice of Isaac.

AFTER Hagar and Ishmael were gone away, God called to Abraham, and said, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, and offer him for a burnt-offering, upon a mountain which I will show thee." Did God wish to make Abraham unhappy, and to kill his son? No; God only wished to try Abraham's faith—to see if Abraham would be obedient, and if he loved God more than his dear child. Abraham obeyed directly; for he knew God's command must be right, and he believed that God had power even to raise Isaac to life again after he was dead. All God does is good and right. When he sends us pain, or sickness, or sorrow, he does it wisely—for good, not for evil. We cannot know why, but God knows. Let us ask him to make us obedient to his will, as Abraham was.

Abraham rose in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two servants with him, and Isaac, and wood for the burnt-offering, and went to the place God showed him. As they walked along, and Abraham thought what he was to do to his dear son—his good, obedient child—he must have felt sad; but Abraham loved God more than he loved Isaac, and God gave him strength willing to obey his command. After three days they saw, afar off, the mountain where Isaac was to be offered. Then Abraham said to his servants, "Stay here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." So the

servants stayed, and Abraham and his son went towards the mountain.

As they walked along, Isaac said, "My father, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt-offering?" For Isaac did not yet know that he was to be the lamb. Abraham said, "God will provide a lamb, my son." So they went on, and came to the place of which God had told Abraham. And then Abraham built the altar, and put the wood upon it, and bound Isaac, laid him upon the altar, and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven, and said, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, for now I know that thou fearest God, because thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from him." Then Abraham looked, and saw a ram, caught in the bush by the horns, and he offered the ram for a burnt-offering instead of Isaac. And the angel called again unto Abraham, and said, "Because thou hast done this thing, in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thee; and all nations shall be blessed in thy seed."

The Lord Jesus Christ was the seed of Abraham, who came to save sinners, to be a blessing to all people. "God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."—John iii. 16. Abraham gave his son to God; God gave his Son for us. "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."—John iv. 14.

A Truly Brave Boy.

BY F. W. FLEUBET, D.D.

Boys have sometimes very false ideas of courage, bravery. To be able to go into battle without a tremour, to lead a column into the thickest of fight, to enter a burning building and rescue some of its inmates, to ignore danger, this means to some boys courage, bravery. Some are even foolish enough to think that they are brave if they climb into dangerous places, lead where wiser boys will not follow. Daring foolhardiness they confound with bravery. In actual fact the boy who maintains his principles, who stands firm to what he believes to be right, in the face of ridicule and strong temptation, is the boy who is truly brave.

One day about the middle of the late war, there came to the rooms of the Christian Commission, at Camp Convalescent, near Washington, a little drummer boy, and asked to join the temperance society we had there. I have often wondered what became of that boy, for his story was full of interest. His name was Willie Baker. He was only about twelve years old, but he was a drummer boy in one of the New York regiments, while his father was a soldier in a Pennsylvania regiment.

This little boy of twelve did two

very brave things. After one of the battles in Virginia he was separated from his regiment, and lost his way. Wandering through the woods, he suddenly came upon one of the enemy's pickets. The soldier called out "Halt! Who are you?" "A friend!" replied the boy. The soldier had been drinking, and had placed his gun against a tree. The boy drew nearer gradually, and when he reached the gun he took it up, pointed it at the soldier, and bade him "March." The picket hesitated, but the boy was in earnest and had the advantage. He marched, and the boy kept behind him till both were taken in charge by one of our own troops. The boy captured his enemy with his own gun.

But Willie Baker did a braver thing than that. When he left home his mother said to him, "Willie, I want you to promise me not to drink intoxicating liquors, not to gamble, and not to swear." He promised; and amid all the temptations of army life, he kept his promise.

The colonel of one regiment told me only a few days ago he stopped drinking wine. The officers of his regiment had a re-union soon after the war, and sixty were present. Seven years afterwards eighteen of that sixty were dead, and every one but one died from the effects of strong drink. Against such a current of fashion as this indicates Willie Baker stood his ground, because he loved his mother and had made her a promise—and keeping his word was a principle with him.

We cannot imitate Willie Baker's first example of courage, but in his other example we have occasion almost every day to follow him. Good, brave boys! I trust he is still alive; but, living or dead, may his example teach us to be brave in keeping our promises to our parents, and obeying the commands of our Father in heaven.

Study of Usefulness.

Be useful where thou livest, that they may
Both want and wish thy pleasing presence
still:
Kindness, good parts, great places, are the
way
To compass this. Find out men's want
and will,
And meet them there. All worldly joys go
less
To the one joy of doing kindnesses.
—George Herbert.

Frances Ridley Havergal.

In the vine-clad rectory at Astley, Worcestershire, England, this noble woman first saw the light, December 14th, 1836. Here her father, William Henry Havergal, went out before his people for more than a score of years. He was a poet and a musician, and after his death his mantle fell on his youngest child, Frances.

Outwardly her childhood was one long summer day, but underneath this smooth surface there ran a current of unrest—a desire to possess the peace that passeth all understanding. These

unsatisfying thoughts were often called forth by a sermon, a book, or more frequently by a lovely sunset, a gentle breeze swaying the boughs in the forest, or even a delicate violet peeping through the shadow-mottled grass.

The one great sorrow of her life was the loss of her mother, when only eleven years of age. Into the darkened chamber of death she crept many times during those sad days. Drawing aside the curtains, she raised tear and kisses upon the dear, cold face, half expecting to see the lovely eyes open and smile upon her, or the pale cheek grow warm under the caresses lavished upon it. It was not until she saw the funeral procession wind slowly out of the rectory gate and turn into the churchyard, that she realized that she was indeed motherless. "Oh, mamma! mamma! mamma!" she wailed.

In that desolate heart there was no room for any word but that one—"mamma."

Though the earnest longings after something better than earth could bestow were ever present, it was not until February after she had completed her fifteenth year that she found that blessed rest for which she had been striving.

So great was her passion for unselfishness, that her sweet Sabbaths of rest only came when she was confined to her couch by sickness.

When, by the burning of a large publishing-house, she lost her appendix to "Grace and Glory," she recognized that God had a "turned lesson" for her to learn, in resignation, doing old work instead of taking up new.

"Thy will be done!" was to her "a song" and not "a sigh."

Often there would be a stop put to her work by the withholding of the gift of song. She says: "The Master has not put a chest of poetic gold into my possession, and said, 'Now use it as you like;' but he keeps the gold and gives it me, piece by piece, just when he will, and no more. My King suggests a thought, and whispers me a line or two; then I look up and thank him delightedly, and go on with it." "Tell it out among the Heathen" came to her like a flash, being suggested by the title hymn of her prayer-book. "Consecration Hymn" was written in a thrill of rapturous thanksgiving, when dear friends, for whom she had been praying, came trembling to the mercy-seat.

Year by year she came to realize more fully her closing words, "Ever, only, all for Thee!" Her wish, "to glorify him every step of the way," found abundant fulfilment in her peaceful endurance of the intense sufferings appointed her, as well as in the triumphant death that crowned her victory over the last enemy.

More than her consecrated life could have wrought, her precious memory will accomplish in all the long years to come. She, "being dead, yet speaketh."