

The Little Ones He Blessed.

BY MARGARET E. HANGLER.

I WONDER if ever the children
Who were blessed by the Master of old
Forgot he had made them his treasures,
The dear little lambs of his fold,
I wonder if angry and wilful
They wandered afar and astray,
The children whose feet had been guided
So safe and so soon in the way.

One would think that the mothers at evening
Soft smoothing the silk tangled hair,
And low leaning down to the murmur
Of sweet childish voices in prayer,
Oft bade the small pleaders to listen,
If haply again they might hear
The words of the gentle Redeemer
Borne swift to the reverent ear.

And my heart cannot cherish the fancy
That ever those children went wrong
And were lost from the peace and the shelter,
Shut out from the feast and the song,
To the days of gray hairs they remembered
I think, how the hands they were riven
Were laid on their heads when he uttered,
"Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

He has said it to you, little darling,
Who spell it in God's Word to-day;
You too may be sorry for sinning,
You also believe and obey.
And 'twill grieve the dear Saviour in heaven
If one little child shall go wrong,
Be lost from the fold and the shelter,
Shut out from the feast and the song.

A Boy Hero.

THERE was a boy, whom we will name Luke Varnum. He was fifteen years old, and he was lame of his left foot. So, when every other boy in No. 5, and every man, old and young, shouldered his firelock and marched off to join General Stark, and go and fight the Hessians at Bennington, Luke was left at home. He limped out, and held the stirrup for Lieutenant Chittenden to mount, and then he had to stay at home with the babies and the women.

The men had been gone an hour and a half when three men galloped up on horseback, and Luke went down to the rails to see who they were. "Is there anybody here?" said one of them. "Yes," said Luke; "I am here." "I see that," said the first man, laughing; "what I mean is, is there anybody here who can set a shoe?" "I think I can," said Luke. "I often tend fire for Jonas. I can blow the bellows and I can hold a horse's foot. Anyway, I will start up the fire."

So Luke went into the forge, and took down the tinder-box and struck a light. He built the fire, and hunted up half-a dozen nails which Jonas had left, unintentionally, and he had even made two more, when a fourth horseman came slowly down on a walk.

"What luck," said he, "to find a forge with the fire lighted!"

"We found one," said Marvin, "with a boy who knew how to light it."

And the other speaker threw himself off the horse meanwhile; and Luke pared the hoof of the dainty creature, and measured the shoe, which was too big for her. He heated it white, and bent it closer to the proper size.

"It is a poor fit," Luke said, "but it will do."

"It will do very well," said her rider; "but she is very tender-footed, and I do not dare trust her five miles unshod."

And, for pride's sake, the first two nails Luke drove were those he had made himself; and when the shoe was fast, he said:

"Tell Jonas that I het up the forge and put on the shoe."

"We will tell him," said the colonel, laughing, and he rode on.

But one of the other horsemen carried a minute, and said, "Boy, no ten men that left you to-day have served your country as you have. It is Colonel Warner."

When I read in the big books of history how Colonel Warner led up his regiment just in time to save the day at Bennington, I am apt to think of Luke Varnum.—*E. E. Hale.*

Musical Fishes.

THE fishes are supposed to have no voice at all; and, indeed, this is the case with most of them. But there are exceptions to every rule, and so it is with the fish. One fish utters a cry when it is seized. There is another which wails like a child when it is taken from the water. Another fish makes a sound as it swims—that is, at one season of the year; all the rest of the year it is silent. But what do you think of a fish that sings?

There is a little white fish, with blue spots on its back, which lives in America, and which can actually make a sound like music. A traveller was one day lying on the beach resting himself, when suddenly he heard a sound; it was like music in the distance. He got up and looked about him—but nothing was to be seen. A boatman was close by, and he asked him if he had heard anything.

"Yes," said the boatman, "I heard a fish singing."

The fish was called by some people the "siren;" by others, "musico," or "musician." The traveller pushed off in a boat to hear the music better. He heard a number of voices singing together. It was like a concert in the water. The sound was a little like an organ playing in the distance.

The musical fishes are said to begin to sing at sunset, and keep on singing during the night. They are not very timid, and will continue their music if people are standing by to listen.—*The Sea and its Wonders.*

I Can't Help It.

A MINISTER was sitting in his study, very busy with the preparation of his sermon and a multitude of other affairs, when, without any notice of his approach, save the heavy sobs caused by a pinched finger, his little boy entered the room. "Look, papa, how I hurt it!" said the child, as he held up the maimed member. With a hasty glance the father saw the boy, and somewhat sharply replied, "I can't help it, sonny." The little fellow had expected some kindly word, and as he went out of the room, he said, in an undertone, "Yes, you could; you might have said 'Oh!'"

There is no doubt that even such a simple sign of sympathy would have aided very materially in bearing the pain; and it certainly would not have cost the parent much to give it to his wounded child. No one can sell the worth of a kind word, as it often lifts the loads which we all have to carry, or may make them seem lighter, because we know another is sharing them. It does not appear to be much to say "Oh!" and yet to the sufferer it comes as a relief in the midst of pain. Let us always seek to alleviate the woes of others by such deeds of love, giving a smile or the shake of the hand to cheer a fellow-traveller along life's rough road. The expense will never ruin anyone, but will enrich a great many.

I have often felt very unable to show much sympathy with certain sufferers, and all that it has amounted to has been an "Oh!" after all.

"The heart knoweth its own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle." We may do our

best to talk comforting words, but we cannot take away the ache or bear a part of the pain. When our time comes to pass through similar trials, we shall be only too thankful for even the "Oh!" of sympathising friends.

Our Lord is "touched with a feeling of our infirmities," and so becomes a ready succourer in all times of need. There is no sympathy to be compared to that of the Saviour, for he can not only speak a word of comfort to help to bear the burden, but he can also remove it by a word. When all other friends fail in their efforts to bring solace to a wounded spirit, then a tender Jesus supplies all the comforts of his sweet love, and the broken heart is healed. May grace be given to us ever to "bear one another's burdens;" and when we cannot share the griefs of others, tell them to him who will carry all cares for them if they only cast them upon him.

He Hears.

"Of all that I brought with me from the home of my childhood into the world," said a leading business man in the West, "the most valuable possession was the habit of kneeling to ask God's blessing, night and morning. Often it was a mere mechanical form. At times, when I was in desperate straits, my prayer was a single inarticulate groan for help. But it kept alive in me the idea that there was a Power stronger than I, than money, or business, or life itself. That idea saved me."

An African explorer, one of the first to venture into the Dark Continent, wrote: "In all the dangers through which I passed, in the long fever, and even in the criminal excesses to which I, a young man, and far from home, was a half-consenting witness, one thread kept me from sinking and utter ruin. It was the knowledge that on the other side of the globe an old gray-haired woman was praying for me. No man can go utterly to destruction as long as his mother keeps one hand on him and the other on God."

"Archimedes," says a great teacher, "only wanted a lever long enough, and a place to rest it on, to move the world. The lever is prayer. It rests upon the promise of God."

It is stated that John Wesley was first brought to the consideration of religious truth by the prayer of a poor servant for him. If this be true, that prayer was the lever which lifted not only one man's soul, but ultimately the whole Christian church into life and activity.

In one of our seaboard cities is an immense building, which is lighted by electricity. At the touch of a knob in a closet, the countless lamps and huge chandeliers flash into radiance, and all the vast audience halls glow with light. A sick child, the daughter of the janitor, usually presses the knob with her little finger, and is made happy by knowing that she has given light to thousands of people.

The poor woman in her closet, the invalid on his bed of pain—praying for God's blessing on others—put their hands in faith on that Power that controls the world. They do not see the result; they may even die without knowing the light that they may have caused to shine in dark places; but they have the sure promise that the Infinite wisdom and pity heeds their summons, and does not turn away from their pleadings.

A MINISTER who had preached in a vacant pulpit was handed five dollars as compensation, and then profusely complimented on his discourse. "Oh," said the preacher, "say nothing about that sermon; you ought to hear one of my ten-dollar discourses."