

BERTRAND THE VRAIC-GATHERER.

CHAPTER I.—FERME-DU-ROI.

Bertrand! Bertrand! where are you, my boy? called out Farmer Hibert one sunny afternoon at the beginning of August.

Farmer Hibert was a Jerseyman possessing a small grant-built farmhouse, at the back of which were a few acres of ground, where chiefly potatoes and cabbages were grown. The farmer's grave face displayed more intelligence than is often seen in the faces of his class in Jersey. He and his wife and family lived at the Ferme-du-Roi, as their house was called, in the little fishing-village of La Rocque.

Bertrand was a tall, good-looking boy, whose eyes were blue as the August skies, and whose fair hair was blanched by the rays of the sun, to which he was constantly exposed. Jeanne, his elder sister, was a thorough farm-girl, and little more. The little Marie, with her gray eyes, resembled her brother.

The farm-door was open, and in the parlor sat Mrs Hibert teaching Marie to knit, whilst Jeanne was busy settling everything into perfect order. The next day being Sunday, she liked to have everything arranged on Saturday. She was a quiet girl, who knew her duties, and did them faithfully, and in the daily round, and common task, she certainly found means to deny herself. For Jeanne, with her parents and brother and sister, was truly trying to live for God. That was the bond of a common faith which linked the family together, and in which was the secret of their being so happy and united.

As Farmer Hibert stood at the door calling his son, Bertrand came running in from the fields at the back of the house.

"Bertrand, look here, my boy, said the farmer; 'help me take the things out of the cart, will you?'"

"Yes, father," said he. "Was it very hot coming in from town?"

"Hot? indeed it was! The sun was just baking!" And he and Bertrand proceeded to the cart, which was outside the gateway.

The farmer when he went in with the many parcels he had brought from market, after leaving Bertrand to put up the horse, stayed a few minutes to tell them the town news, and then went

round to the stable. Bertrand was so busy rubbing down the horses that at first he did not hear his father enter.

"Well, my boy, what have you been doing all the afternoon?"

"Digging potatoes," said Bertrand; "and, oh, father! I do so wish we had another plot of ground."

"Why, my son?"

"Because then we could sow more potatoes, and grow more cabbages and vegetables."

"The next ground to ours is Maitre Roisin's," said the farmer, meditatively.

"Yes," said Bertrand, pausing

Bertrand listened rather inattentively at first, but presently some words the teacher said told home, and he felt forced to listen.

"We must all of us strive against having a love of money or gain," said the teacher, speaking earnestly. "The apostle tells us that this love for money is the root of all evil, the root of a tree which will bring forth bad fruit."

"But there's no harm in money, is there?" remarked a scholar.

"No harm in itself—certainly not. Money can buy us food and clothing and supply many of our earthly needs. With money we

glish boy, a friend of his, and the latter remarked that their usual teacher was in England.

"Who is this gentleman that took the class to-day, then?" asked Bertrand.

"I don't know his name. He is staying with the Rector; that is all I know," said Ned.

"I have never seen him before," said Bertrand.

"No; I heard Peter say that he was quite a stranger, and had only arrived by yesterday's mail-boat."

It was a strange coincidence, that was all.

Bertrand and his friend soon parted and Bertrand walked slowly along the high road, over which the arching trees made a pleasant shade. The singing of the birds and the murmur of voices in the distant fields were the only sounds that broke the silence. As he walked, the restless mood he was in showed itself. He pulled the wild flowers that grew in the hedges, and then he would drop them as if he did not know what he was doing. He was thinking of the words he had heard that afternoon, and connecting them with a most uncomfortable incident which came back to his memory just then. Bertrand knew that coveting the things of others and love of gain were his besetting sins, and he did try to battle against them, but he was not as earnest in doing so as he had been.

Some Sundays ago his father had said to him as he was going to the Sunday-school, "Bertrand, there is a missionary-box at school, is there not?"

"Yes, father," Bertrand had answered; and to-day they bring it round."

"Then you may put in this shilling. I dare say you will be glad to have something to give."

"Thank you, father," said Bertrand.

But when school-time came Bertrand yielded to temptation, and a penny fell into the box instead of the shilling. He had forgotten to ask God to help him, and when the moment of trial came he failed.

Now the whole circumstance came back to him with fresh force, and conscience began to trouble him. If he could only have prayed, God would have helped him; it was not too late to do the right, but he hesitated, and while he hesitated the opportunity passed, and it became more difficult every day.

(To be continued.)



BERTRAND AND HIS FATHER.

in his work: "I wish it was ours."

"That's coveting," said the farmer, shortly.

The boy's cheeks took a deep flush of red. His father was not given to speaking so plainly unless he found great cause to do so. Bertrand's words had in a way surprised his father, who had not before noticed that his boy had too great a love of gain. The conversation soon changed, but, strange to say, the next day at the Sunday-school the lesson happened to be one in which reference was made to the sin of loving money

can help those poorer than ourselves. It is right to work hard to earn money. It is the love of it that is wrong. The love of it leads to sin; misers get so fond of it that they don't like to part with it. The love of money often leads us to wish for more than we really need, and in wishing for the things of others we break that commandment, "Thou shalt not covet."

Poor Bertrand thought of his words to his father yesterday, and he wondered if the latter could possibly have told the teacher what had passed. He walked a little way with Ned Lane, an En-