

A LITTLE BUILDER.

NED had been to a missionary meeting at which he heard a great deal about the churches which were needed out West. It was something quite new to Ned; he had always supposed that there were churches in plenty, if only people would take the trouble to look for them. And as he listened he began to wonder if there was anything that he could do to help along, and came to the conclusion that there wasn't. No, the pleasure of giving was for those who had money.

But somehow, after the meeting was over and Ned went swinging down the pretty village street with his hands in his pockets and a little tune whistling itself from between his lips, he could not get rid of the thoughts of those churchless congregations.

It was the early springtime and everything was green and beautiful, and, as Ned, hardly thinking what he did, walked out of the village and along the road past a pleasant farm, thinking and thinking, he suddenly heard his name called. He looked up then with a start, and found a man in one of the fields waving to him as he called. Ned stopped and leaned on the fence. "Well, Mr. Watkins, what is it?" he called back.

"Come over here, will you?" came the answer. So laying his hand on the top rail of the fence, Ned vaulted over and was soon at the farmer's side.

"Any spare time, these days, Ned?" he asked.

"No, sir;" Ned answered with a shake of his head; "why?"

"Thought you might like job Saturday mornings till school was out, and two or three times a week during the vacation, I'd give you fifty cents each time you come. But if you haven't the time—"

"Thank you;" said Ned, "but vacation's awful precious, you know; goes before you know it, anyway."

"Yes, I know;" said the farmer good-naturedly. "Well, that's all; but I'm sorry, for I saw you several times cleaning away the snow from your mother's front door yard last winter, and the way you did it made me wish I could get you at my weeds now and then. 'Tisn't every boy I'd trust at my weeds. What's going on in town to-day."

"The ladies are having a missionary meeting at the church—" and then Ned stopped so suddenly that the farmer looked up from his work, to which he had returned when the

matter of the weeding was settled, and asked him what "had took him."

But Ned was too busy thinking to answer; too busy fighting, I might say. And he looked it, too, with his clenched fists and tightened lips; so much so, indeed, that the farmer rested his hands on the top of his hoe and stood looking at him. I suppose it wasn't such a long time, but it seemed so to him, before Ned gave a deep breath, squared his shoulders, and lifting his head said: "I've changed my mind, Mr. Watkins; I will come on Saturdays and as often as you want me during the vacation."

"You will," exclaimed the farmer in surprise. "Well I'm right glad of that. But what changed you? Want the money more'n the vacation?"

"Yes," said Ned, with a deep breath, "that's it." But there was something more behind that, farmer Watkins saw, so he asked again: "Mind telling me what you want of the money? I've been a boy myself and know what giving up holidays means."

Yes, Ned did mind telling very much; boys don't like talking about such things; they'd rather not, bless their dear hearts! But the farmer was waiting, and he had no good excuse to offer. So digging into the soft, dark earth with the toe of his shoe, he told his reason in as few words as possible. "Oh!" was all the farmer said as he finished. "that's it, is it?" And then he let Ned go with the injunction to be on time on Saturday.

"Like as not he won't keep it up, and I won't blame him much if he doesn't. But if he does—"

The spring passed away and the summer followed suit, and day after day, when requested, Ned was found in his place. Many were the excursions he was obliged to forego; many the plans to give up, but he did it. "I told myself that I'd give money if he had it," he used to say now and then, "and it would be as good as telling a lie if I didn't take it when I could get it. And so the weeks went on and at the last the weeding came to an end, and for the last time Ned stood, with thrilling, happy heart, to take his well-earned money.

Farmer Watkins laid it in his hand; but as Ned was turning from him with a "thank you, sir," he detained him. "I've been watching you, young fellow, all summer long;" he said, "and you've taught me something. Here, take this to the ladies, and tell them if they send out many more such builders as you, it won't take long to get all the churches that they need."

"This," was a bill of fifty dollars; and it was the first cent that Farmer Watkins had ever given to Home Missions.—*The Mission Field.*