

OUR HOSPITAL PET.

BY ELLEN BERTHA BRADLEY.

There was a crush on Broadway, a jostling of waggons, and a shouting of drivers. Then a sharp shriek. No one knew how it had happened, but a child was under the wheels.

"A street Arab," somebody said, as kind hands lifted the unconscious form and laid it in an ambulance. Then the busy tide surged on.

When the boy opened his eyes he was lying on a little cot in a room where there were many such beds. The walls were white and hung with pictures, and the sunshine streaming in through the long windows, filled the ward with brightness.

At first he thought he was dreaming, and closed his eyes in languid contentment. But gradually he became conscious of strange sensations. He tried to move but could not. It seemed as if he were tied fast. Just as he was beginning to realize this, a pleasant voice asked:

"Wouldn't you like a drink?"

Looking up he saw a young woman standing by his bed, with a cup of milk in her hand. She was small and wore a dainty cap perched on the dark curls which clustered on her forehead. She looked very pretty to him, and for a moment he thought she was part of his dream, but he was thirsty, and milk was an unwonted luxury. Drinking it roused him more, and as he gave her back the cup he asked:

"Where am I? Why can't I get up?"

"You have been hurt, and I must still a while. You are where you will be taken care of," she answered evasively.

She knew, too well, the horror which many of the poor feel for hospitals to speak the word till he became accustomed to the thing.

"It is nice here, and you are good," he said, gratefully as she shook up his pillow.

"Can I stay here till I get well?"

"Would you like to?" she asked, knowing that there was no getting well for him.

"Yes: I have no where else to go," he answered.

This, and the fact that his name was Chris, was all she ever learned about him. If he had a history he did not tell it. Apparently he had always been as then, without father, mother or other claimant.

Miss Morgan, the nurse, soon grew fond of him, for there was something strangely attractive about the silent child. Whether patient endurance was part of his nature, or was a result of early hardships, or a benumbing effect of his injuries, it was impossible to tell. But he lay quiet and seemingly happy, watching the frolics of the other children, who were most of them able to be up and about, at least part of the day.

They, too, grew fond of him, and shared with him their toys and games. Indeed, one of the many beautiful things to be seen in a hospital is the kind and gentle sympathy of the patients for each other, and the way they share their few pleasures and luxuries. The generosity of the rich is nothing to that of the poor, for the former give out of abundance, the latter out of poverty.

"What makes you so happy here?" Miss Morgan once asked him.

"It is warm, and I have enough to eat, and you are good to me," he answered, caressing the hand he held.

Accustomed though she was to dealing with misery and suffering, the answer startled her. Had the struggle for existence been so terrible to this gentle boy, that to be warmed and fed were luxuries to be rejoiced over, even though purchased by pain and confinement? Were love and tenderness so unknown to him that he was grateful for that of a hospital nurse? Yet, if she had but known, it was not strange that any one should enjoy her care, for she, like most women who devote their lives to the relief of suffering, brought to her work a heart made tender by sorrow, and ministered for love of ministering, not as a hireling.

His ignorance was no less remarkable than his quietness. It seemed as if there must be something lacking about him mentally, that he had picked up so little in his street life. He knew the name of the city in which he lived, but not of the State. He had heard of schools, but could not tell what was done there. Sunday was to him merely a day when people stopped work and it was harder than ever to get food, and

when people who had good clothes went to church. He had heard the names of God and Christ in oaths, but knew no more of the Christian religion than if he had lived upon the steppes of Asia. Honesty and truthfulness were to him luxuries of wealth. Stealing and lying incidents of poverty. It is a strange comment upon our civilization that such heathenism can exist in our midst.

Miss Morgan was to have an experience rare in this land. She was to teach this boy with his oddly mature and immature mind, those truths of Christianity which are familiar to most children, when scarcely out of the cradle, and to see how the old, old story would seem to one to whom it was altogether new. Religious teaching was no part of her recognized duties, but she was too truly a servant of her Master, to let such an opportunity slip.

Little by little, as the chance offered, she told him the story, beginning with the angels' song and the childhood of our Lord. Most children would have asked questions, but Chris rarely did. He listened as if to a fairy tale. But when she told him of Jesus healing the sick, he started with eager interest.

"Where is He?" he asked. "Would He make me well again?" Then as he hesitated for a reply: "Would I have to go away from here?"

"I am afraid so."

"Then I don't want Him to do it; I would rather stay with you," he said, after a few moments of thoughtful silence.

He listened with bated breath to the tale of the mock trial, the crown of thorns and scourging, but when she came to the crucifixion, he started from his pillow with flashing eyes.

"Curse them! curse them!" he cried. "They killed Him," and he burst into bitter tears.

She was frightened by the storm of grief and passion her words had roused, for to her as to the rest of us, the story had lost its startling force by oft repeating. She tried vainly to soothe him, till it occurred to her that the best consolation lay in the resurrection. On hearing of this he quickly dried his eyes.

"Then He was not dead," he said.

"Yes, He was, but He came to life again, and will never die any more."

Then in answer to his wondering looks she pointed out the meaning of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, explaining that He came to save and purify us from our sins, that we with Him might enter into everlasting life.

We who have heard these things from infancy can have no idea of the revelation they were to the homeless, suffering child.

To him the gospel was truly good tidings, and he received it with joy touching to behold. Even his habitual silence gave way before his desire to share his new treasure with others. A new quality came into his cheerfulness.

What had once been placid contentment became actual joyousness, and even those who were wont to scoff grew thoughtful before the tokens of his simple faith.

Two years passed. The doctor said he might live many more, but could never walk again. As soon as he was able kind friends taught him to read and write and do pretty handwork which might bring him a little income. His cot became the brightest spot in the ward, and the other children gathered about it eagerly while he shared their joys and sorrows, and contributed greatly to their enjoyment. His life was narrow and his opportunities small, but he improved them well, and who may measure the good done by his humble service, or the honor which, in another world, may be awarded to faithfulness in little things?

Loving and beloved, his life was moving peacefully on, when a lady visitor, struck by his sweet face and gentle manners, enquired his history, and learning that he was without claimant took him to her home, which had lately been made desolate by the death of her only son. In heart and household, she has given him her dead boy's place, and means to educate him for the position he is to fill; and we may well doubt whether she in giving, or he in receiving, is most blessed.

But amid his changed surroundings he remains the same gentle, self-forgetting boy, and his greatest happiness is in planning to help and rescue other Arabs of the streets.—*N.Y. Observer.*

"MY MOTHER IS PRAYING FOR ME."

BY REV. PETER STRYKER, D. D.

A very affecting incident was related to me not long since by an eminent Christian lady. She has seven children, and for many years has been accustomed to pray for them individually and particularly. But while she remembers them frequently and definitely before God, she has for each child every week a day in which she pleads for him or her more fully. Her children are now all grown, and they are all professing Christians. Some of them are living far away from the old home. But they are all happy in the knowledge that the dear mother is praying for them, and each one remembers the day especially set apart for him.

One of the sons is an engineer, and, of course, is often exposed to physical danger. At one time, when at the head of a long and heavy train, he saw another train approaching on the same track. He knew a collision was inevitable. What should he do? To leave his post and jump from the train would be perilous to himself and might prove disastrous to the lives and property of others. He concluded he ought to remain and do his best to overcome the evil threatened just then he thought, "This is my day. My mother is praying for me." This inspired him with new courage and strength. He gave the signal for "down brakes," put forth all the energy and skill at his command to stop the train, and awaited the issue. The crash came, and although some damage was done, and all experienced a great shock, no lives were lost, and our engineer was not even bruised. Did it only happen so? Was this a bit of "good luck"? Rather let us believe it was a special providence, and that God watched over that young man and preserved him in answer to the prayers of his mother.

Would it not be well if we had more of this definiteness and individuality in prayer? There certainly can be no impropriety in it. Reason and Scripture are both in its favor. Hannah prayed for a child. She had her answer in the infant Samuel. The early disciples prayed that Peter might be released from prison. They knew that God had heard and answered their prayer when the apostle stood knocking at the gate, and in their surprise and joy they opened it and let him come in. The Bible is full of illustrations.

How could it be otherwise? If we desire a favor from a friend we don't say, "Will you help us?" and stop there. We tell him what we want. We are definite in our application. So should we be when we approach God in prayer. We do well to present our children and friends to him by name, just as the people presented the maimed and the halt and the blind to Jesus individually. And then we should not only cry mightily to him in their behalf, but we should express particularly what we desire for them.

Would it not be well for us, like the dear old mother, to have our special days in which we pray fully and definitely for our children and friends? And when we thus plead for them shall we not present our desires in detail before God and respectfully argue the case?—*Illustrated Christian Weekly.*

THE CHOPPED BIBLE.

"Take it and read!" said the voice to Augustine, as he lay in the garden with a roll of the gospels by his side. He obeyed, and the dissipated sceptic became a Christian preacher.

"The best way to acquire faith in the Bible is to read it. The book is its own evidence. A few years ago a Bible distributor, while passing through a village in Western Massachusetts, was told of a family in whose home there was not even the cheapest copy of the Scriptures—so intense was the hostility of the husband to Christianity.

The distributor started at once to visit the family, and found the wife hanging out her week's washing. In the course of a pleasant conversation, he offered her a neatly-bound Bible.

With a smile which said "Thank you!" she held out her hand, but instantly withdrew it. She hesitated to accept the gift, knowing that her husband would be displeased if she took it.

A few pleasant words followed, in which the man spoke of the need of the mind of

Divine direction, and of the adaptation of the Bible to that need, and the woman resolved to take the gift. Just then, her husband came from behind the house with an axe on his shoulder.

Seeing the Bible in his wife's hand he looked threateningly at her, and then said to the distributor, "What do you want, sir, with my wife?"

The frank words of the Christian man, spoken in a manly way, so far softened his irritation that he replied to him with civility. But stepping up to his wife, he took the Bible from her hand, saying,—

"We have always had everything in common, and we'll have this, too."

Placing the Bible on the chopping-block, he cut it in two parts with one blow of the ax. Giving one part to his wife, and putting the other in his pocket, he walked away.

Several days after this division of the Bible, he was in the forest chopping wood. At noon he seated himself on a log and began eating his dinner. The disordered Bible suggested itself. He took it from his coat-pocket, and his eye fell on the last page. He began reading, and soon was deeply interested in the story of the Prodigal Son. But his part ended with the son's exclamation,—

"At night he said to his wife, with affected carelessness, 'Let me have your part of that Bible. I've been reading about a boy who ran away from home, and after having a hard time decided to go back. There my part of the book ends, and I want to know if he ever got back, and how the old man received him.'"

"The wife's heart beat violently, but she mastered her joy and quietly handed the husband her part, without a word.

He read the story through, and then repeated it. He read on, far into the night. But not a word did he say to his wife.

During the leisure moments of the next day, his wife saw him reading the now-joined parts, and at night he said, abruptly,—

"Wife! I think that's the best book I ever read."

Day after day he read it. His wife noticed his few words, which indicated that he was becoming attached to it. One day he said,—

"Wife! I'm going to try and live by that book; I guess it's the best sort of a guide for a man."

And he did. A strong prejudice against religious truth, growing out of a partial conviction of its necessity, is often followed by a changed life, and such was this man's experience.—*Youth's Companion.*

CONVERSION BY MEANS OF A PICTURE.

A woman at Onitsha, in the Niger Mission, by the name of Ekubie, recently gave up idol-worship and brought her gods to the catechist. She was converted by means of a picture. Once, on entering the mission-house, she saw a picture on the wall. It was one of the cheap German sketches—a representation of Jesus sitting before a table in the attitude of blessing a loaf of bread, which he held in his hand, and a cup before him. The catechist patiently explained who Jesus Christ is—"the Saviour of men, who came to this world and died to take away sins."

"Gradually the woman became interested, and at length she asked, 'Did he die for me too?'"

"Yes," was the immediate reply, "and if you believe in him he will save you."

So the conversation went on until at last the poor heathen woman resolved to give up heathenism and embrace Christianity. Since her conversion none had been more regular at church, and certainly none apparently more earnest than Ekubie.

A PRACTICAL temperance argument was one day very deftly put forth by Prof. Haughton, of Trinity College, Dublin. A friend sitting by him ordered brandy and water with a plate of oysters. Professor Haughton implored him not to ruin his digestion in that way, and sending for a glass of brandy put an oyster in it before the eyes of his friend. In a short time there lay in the bottom of the glass a tough leathery substance resembling the finger of a kid glove and just as digestible.