

## AN EVENING PRAYER.

I come to Thee to-night  
In my lone closet where no eye can see,  
And dare to crave an interview with Thee,  
Father of love and light.

If I this day have striven  
With Thy blest Spirit, or have bowed the knee  
To aught of earth in weak idolatry,  
I pray to be forgiven.

If in my heart has been  
An unforgiving thought or word or look,  
Though deep the malice which I scarce could  
brook,  
Wash me from this dark sin.

If I have turned away  
From grief or suffering which I might relieve,  
Careless the "cup of water" 'e'cm to give,  
Forgive me, Lord, I pray.

And teach me how to feel  
My sinful wanderings with a deeper smart,  
And more of mercy and of grace impart  
My sinfulness to heal.

And now, O Father, take  
The heart I cast with humble faith on Thee,  
And cleanse its depths from each impurity,  
For my Redeemer's sake.

## Our Story.

## "MISS HANNAH'S BOY."

It was a cold, dark afternoon, and Miss Hannah Reed drew her shawl more closely around her as she came down the school-house steps. She was a teacher in the public school, and since her father's death, had found urgent need for all that she could earn. Miss Hannah's strength was not great, and her work pressed heavily, so that often when night came she was too tired to read.

The day had been a trying one, and Miss Reed felt unusually weary; the Sunday before she had given up her Sunday-school class, because her week's teaching generally ended in a severe headache. Thinking over this fact, Miss Reed gave an audible sigh, and said half aloud:

"Well, well, there is no use in my trying to do anything but earn a living; I have time and strength for nothing else."

At this moment she found herself opposite a locksmith's shop, and, remembering that she wanted a key altered, entered the shop. The master was out, but a pale, not very attractive looking boy sat at work, and he said that she could have the key by the next day. As Miss Hannah turned to leave, a weary look in the boy's face caught her eye, and she said in a kindly way:

"Do you like this work, my lad?"

The boy looked up surprised, but seeing a look of interest in her face, said timidly:

"I like it pretty well, ma'am, but I get very tired; I'm not used to be shut up so much."

"What have you been used to do?" said Miss Reed.

"I lived on a farm," said the boy; "but father didn't need us all to help him, so he said I had better come to the city, and I found this place."

"Do you earn enough to live on?"

"I only get about enough to pay my board, and have very little left."

"Where do you board?"

"Not far from here; there are six other fellows that board in the house."

"What do you do in the evening? Do you sit with your landlady?"

"She don't often sit anywhere, I think, for she's working most of the time, and we don't say much to her, except when we pay our bills. When I can earn a little extra, I go to the minstrel; it's right jolly there!"

"Do you ever go to church?"

"No, ma'am, I don't know much about the churches, and my clothes are not good enough to go."

"Do you ever read?"

"Not much; there are not many books at our house; one fellow takes a newspaper, and he lends me that sometimes."

It was getting late, and Miss Reed, after learning that the boy's name was Joseph Steele, said pleasantly: "Well, Joseph, we have had quite a talk, haven't we?"

When she went home, two voices seemed to be speaking to her; one voice said: "Here is a friendless boy, with no good influences around him, can you not help him a little?" The other said: "I wouldn't trouble myself about him; you have enough to do." The first voice must have been the strongest, for the next day, when Miss Reed called for the key, she said to Joe:

"Wouldn't you like to go to Sunday-school with me next Sunday?"

Joe looked reflective, and said: "I don't care much about it, but if you want me to go, I will."

"I would wish you to go once, and see how you like it," said Miss Reed; "and if you call on me at two o'clock next Sunday, we will go together."

When Sunday came Miss Reed had a headache, and almost hoped that Joe would not appear; but as the clock struck, he came, looking quite clean and neat, and they soon reached the school. The room was a very attractive place, and Joe gazed curiously around. The superintendent shook hands with him very kindly, and then placed him in the class of a very earnest, faithful teacher. After school, Miss Reed found a chance to tell Joe's teacher a few facts about his new scholar, and then she walked some distance with Joe, and was delighted to hear him say that he liked that teacher first-rate, and he meant to come next Sunday.

This was the beginning of new things for Joe. Miss Reed never did anything by halves, and her interest in the boy did not wane. In a few weeks she was rejoiced to discover Joe Steele, dressed in a new coat, sitting in the church gallery. He smiled as he caught her eye, and, after church, he told her that his teacher had helped him to get the coat, and to please him he had come to church. Before long the good teacher invited his whole class to spend the evening with him. Joe told Miss Reed that it was the best evening he had ever spent; he said that they had "nuts and oranges, and the teacher's sister played on the piano, and the boys hardly wanted to go home when the time came."

A good many times Miss Reed purposely passed the little shop so that she might give a kindly nod to Joe as he worked, and it always seemed to Joe that he could work better after she passed by. Another ill-fitting key took Miss Reed again to the shop. And this time she invited Joe to come and see her some evening; and Joe ventured to call, a little scared at first, but greatly pleased. Miss Reed shewed him the pretty things in her parlor, and exerted all her tact to draw him out. She was pleased to hear him speak quite intelligently of his farm life, and showing him her stereoscope, and treating him to fruit, it was time to go. Joe remarked that he had enjoyed himself wonderfully, and then Miss Reed lent him an interesting book, and after promising to come again, Joe took his departure.

Miss Reed felt very tired when her guest had gone, but to the boy the evening had been worth more than gold. The thought that any one in the great city cared anything about him was a great stimulant in his better nature. The contact with a refined, educated lady had given him a glimpse of a different life from that which he had known. Henceforth, Miss Reed became a synonym for all that was good and wise in the eyes of Joe.

The Reed household began to be interested in Joe, and they fell into the fashion of calling him "Hannah's boy." Even Mrs. Simmons, the old lady in the next house, became interested in him, and when he passed her window, she would nod at him and say, "There comes 'Hannah's boy; what a deal of pains she would take for that lad; well, well,

it may do him good," and then her thoughts would wander to her own boy far away, and she hoped somebody might care for him.

One day Miss Reed met Joe coming out of a beer-shop, and as she came up, he looked a little confused. "Why, Joe," she said, "do you need to drink beer?" Joe said that he generally got thirsty by noon, and liked to take one glass, and did not see any harm in that. "I don't know as there is," said Miss Reed; "but, Joe, many who begin by going to a beer-house, end by taking something stronger, and I would be glad if you never went again." Joe looked very grave as she passed on; but he told her afterwards that he was not going any more.

As the time passed on, a gradual change was visible in the locksmith's boy. Joe's coat was neatly brushed; his hair was smooth, and both language and manner changed for the better. Potent influences were at work, and there came a look of intelligence and resolution into his face which it did one good to see. Some time after this the locksmith had to give up his shop, and Joe was without work; but his Sunday-school teacher succeeded in finding a situation for him in the large house in which he himself was employed, and Miss Reed was delighted at this good fortune, for though she saw Joe much less frequently after this she knew that he was going steadily on, winning the good opinion of his employers. Whenever she met Joe, the pleased look in his face shewed that she was still a dearly valued friend.

Two years have slipped away; and if you had been in Dr. G.—'s church last Sunday, you would have seen a pleasant sight. Six young men walked into the church, and took their stand as true servants of God. Among them, with gentlemanly bearing and reverent face, stood "Miss Hannah's boy." Could that young Christian soldier be indeed the same boy? Yes, for in her pew sat Miss Reed, and as she looked at him, sacred joy shone in her face. The good teacher was also there, and as he and Miss Reed shook hands with Joseph Steele after church, there was a light on their faces akin to that which the angels wear when a soul is delivered from sin.

Miss Hannah Reed is still teaching, and is often weary; but in the better country her rest will be sweet, and to her the Master will say: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, ye did it unto me." Are there not many in our great cities who, like Miss Hannah Reed, might help one boy or girl to a better life?

## WHAT WE NEED.

When I go to the house of God, I do not want amusement. I want the doctrine which is according to godliness. I want to hear the remedy against the harassing of my guilt and the disorder of my affections. I want to be led from the weariness and disappointment to that goodness which filleth the hungry soul. I want to have light upon the mystery of providence; to be taught how the judgments of the Lord are right; how I shall be prepared for duty and for trial; how I may fear God all the days of my life, and close it in peace. Tell me of that Lord Jesus "who himself bore our sins in his body on the tree." Tell me of His "intercession for the transgressors," as their "advocate with the Father." Tell me of His Holy Spirit, whom they that believe in Him receive to be their preserver, sanctifier, comforter. Tell me of His presence and sympathy and love. Tell me of the virtues, as growing out of His cross, and nurtured by His grace. Tell me of the glory reflected on His name by the obedience of faith. Tell me of vanquished death, of the purified grave, of a blessed resurrection, of the life everlasting, and my bosom warms. This is gospel; these are glad tidings to me as a sufferer, because glad to me as a sinner.

## Boys and Girls.

## THE CHILD AND THE FLOWERS.

## A PARABLE.

The storm was raging with unusual force. The wind had risen so high as to threaten to blow down the cottage where little Margaret lived. And as she lay in her little cot and listened to the blasts which shook the casement near which it stood, it seemed to her as if the trees were moaning in their despair at being unable to stand against such a terrible power. She heard them creaking as they bent before the gale, and every now and then a large branch would fall off with a startling crash.

"Oh, my poor flowers!" the child said to herself. "What will they do? They will all be killed."

She was so fond of flowers. She took great care of them, and only the day before she had been amongst them and put her little garden in order—though it scarcely needed it—because papa was coming home, and she wanted him to see it at its best.

It did seem very hard to her that the pitiless storm should come, and the wind and the rain sweep over those pretty little fuchsias and geraniums and roses just as they were looking so gay, and papa was coming home.

She was just falling asleep when she heard the garden gate open, and her father's step upon the gravel.

Presently he came up-stairs to see his little girl.

He had no other children now. Four little green mounds in the churchyard told where the others were. So little Margaret, or Daisy, as he called her, was especially dear to him.

"What! Daisy, not asleep yet? darling, how is this? and crying too! Why, what is the matter with my pet?" and so saying he kissed the tears away as he bent over the cot.

"Oh, papa, papa!" sobbed the child, as she threw her arms around his neck, and returned his kisses, sobbing as she did it, "my poor, poor flowers! they will all be spoiled. I did want them to look nice for you, and now this naughty wind and rain will kill them all, and I shall never see them again;" and she cried still more bitterly at the thought of her favorite roses exposed to the rain which came in torrents against the window.

"Don't cry about it, dear," said Mr. Grant; "the wind and the rain do not come of themselves, they are sent by One who knows much better than we do what is good for us and for our flowers too. Don't you remember what we were reading about last Sunday, the lilies and how they grow, and God cares for even the little sparrows which hop about the garden? Go to sleep, my little Daisy, and in the morning you will see that your flowers are not dead; God will take care of them."

And so he left her, and the little maid sank into a quiet sleep which lasted till the storm had passed over, and all was still again.

After breakfast Mr. Grant said, "Come along, Daisy, let us go and look at your garden. I want to see how nice you have made it look since I have been away this time."

Little Margaret put on her garden-hat and they went out into the pleasant old-fashioned garden of Rose Cottage.

Here and there they came across traces of the storm of the night before—branches of trees lying across the path; fruit, still unripe, shaken from its hold, and some of the taller flowers bending very low, from the force of the wind, or the weight of the rain beating upon them.

But when they came to the sheltered nook where Margaret's garden was, you would scarcely have known there had been a storm at all.