

Tales and Sketches.

HOW GOD ANSWERED.

"I saw Father Perkins go by this morning; he has made a long trip of it this time," said Mr. Keane, as he pushed back his chair from the dinner table.

"Oh, mother, may I go over and see him this afternoon?" and the sightless little eyes were turned pleadingly toward his mother, unconscious of the pain which the words in which his request was framed gave her.

"Yes," she answered, "and you shall take him a basket of the cakes I fried this morning."

The basket was soon filled, and Davie started off in fine spirits. No one would have thought him blind if they had not seen his eyes, for his foot never stumbled in the way. The country for miles around was as familiar to him as his father's garden; he had learned it by heart in his constant rambles before the terrible blackness had shut it all away from him two years before the time of which we write. Many of these rambles he had taken in company with Father Perkins, as he was affectionately called, who was one of the earliest of the noble band of devoted ministers who left positions of honor and advancement in the East for a life of trial and discomfort in the West.

In one only pleasure did he indulge. His love of botany amounted to a passion, and in his lonely rides he had collected and preserved specimens of nearly all the native plants in several States. This collection of plants was the only valuable thing his cabin contained. And as Davie and we have now reached the cabin we will go on with our story.

"I am glad to see you, Davie. How is the good mother and the other children? So she has sent me some doughnuts, has she? I thank her very much, for I haven't had time to do any cooking since I came home. I have brought home some new flowers with me that I want to show you after I finish sewing this patch on my sleeve. The poor old coat and its owner are growing old together," and the poor man paused with a slight sigh.

"Father Perkins, why don't you buy some new clothes?" Davie timidly asked.

"Oh, my boy, I can't afford to spend money for clothes when I see so many poor and sick people who need it, and the little I have goes such a short way."

"Don't all the money in the world belong to God?"

"Yes, my lad, the silver and the gold are his, and he giveth it to whomsoever he will, to use in making the world happier and better."

"Well, please, won't you ask him to give my father a great lot of it, as much as a hundred dollars? Oh, please, do."

"Why, Davie, what would your father do with all that money?"

"He would make me see."

And when the old man answered sadly that he feared that could never be done, the child eagerly explained how a man had stayed over night at their house a few weeks before, who had said that in the city of Philadelphia there lived a famous doctor who had cured a great many blind people.

"And he believed he could cure me," said Davie, "but it is so far, and the doctor's bill would be so large, that father and mother said he might as well have told them to go to London or Paris. Just think! father says it would take a hundred dollars. But won't you please ask God to give it to him some way?"

"Indeed I will," said the old man, who knew well that God could provide the necessary means for the costly experiment.

"We will ask him now," and kneeling down with Davie, he told the Lord, with childlike simplicity, why they wanted the money, and asked him to send it.

"Do you think it will be there when I get home?" Davie asked.

"I don't know; God answers us in many ways, but he always answers. But now, Davie, it is getting late, and after you have looked at the flowers you will have to start for home or the good mother will wonder what has become of her pet lamb."

It was a touching sight to see the blind child tenderly touching with his sensitive finger tips the pressed blossoms, while the old man, with the enthusiasm of a boy, explained to him their botanical nature and structure, colors and habits of growth.

"There, my boy," he said as he closed the book, "that makes the nine hundred and ninetyeth; I hope I shall finish the thousand this Summer. Ah! many are the years that have gone since I gathered the first one."

"You think more of your herbarium than of anything else in the world, don't you?" Davie said.

"Why, yes, it is the only treasure I have in this world," he answered, looking around at the rude furnishing of the cabin.

Davie went home to dream that a raven flew into the window with a little bag in its bill full of gold dollars, and he was not surprised when, a

few days later, his father brought a letter from the office containing nothing but a cheque for \$100. But though Davie took it as a matter of course, his parents did not, and they tried in every possible way to find out who sent it, but without success.

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"Speaking of herbariums, I have a very fine one nearly a thousand specimens I should like to show you," said Professor Cummings to his guest, a young professor from a neighboring college, who, as he opened the book, read on the first leaf Joseph Perkins.

With a wondering look he turned to Professor Cummings, and asked:

"Where did you get this?"

"I bought it," was the reply.

"From whom?"

"The collector himself. I got it a good many years ago. An odd chap he was, I remember."

"I knew him well, and I wish you would tell me about it, for I cannot think what could have induced him to part with it. I know that he valued it above every earthly possession."

"Well, about fifteen—no, it was seventeen—years ago this spring, I took a trip through Ohio and Western Pennsylvania. One night I stopped with Mr. Perkins, a minister, I believe he was. Our conversation turned on the wild flowers of the region, and he showed me his herbarium. I had just lost a fine one of my own by fire, and I offered him a hundred dollars for this. He at once accepted my offer; though it seemed to give him so much pain that in the morning, before I started, I proposed to take back the money and leave him the book, but he would not consent, saying that it was the answer to a prayer, and so—but, what's the matter; are you sick?"

"Do you know who I am?" was the only reply his young companion made.

"Why, yes, you are Professor Keane, who occupies the scientific chair in T—College, author of a standard text-book on botany and—"

"That will do; now listen. Seventeen years ago this spring, I was a poor blind boy, and had just heard that there was hope that I might recover my sight if I could reach a skillful oculist in Philadelphia. Almost insurmountable difficulties lay in the way of my doing so, principally want of funds. I confided my trouble to our old minister, who prayed with me that the necessary one hundred dollars might be provided. After a few days my father received the money through the post office. I have never been able to find the slightest clew to the human instrument God used in answering our prayers, until your story this evening has convinced me that to the sacrifice of dear old Father Perkins' only treasure I owe the great blessing of my life."

"Well, that is truly an interesting history. How little I ever dreamed that I was connected in any way with your success in life. But what became of Mr. Perkins?"

"I never saw him again, for during my absence in Philadelphia he went to visit a sister in Virginia, where he sickened and died. I have often wondered what became of his herbarium. Noble old man! how much I owe to him—not only sight, but it was from him that I caught the enthusiasm for botanical studies to which I attribute whatever success I have attained."

If you visit the cemetery in Virginia where the Rev. Joseph Perkins sleeps, you will be attracted to a solitary grave, covered with choice flowers, and marked by a neat stone bearing his name and the single line, "There are fairer flowers than Eden's bloom;" and the loquacious old negro in charge of the grounds will talk as long as you will listen of the fine young gentleman who erected the stone and pays him for keeping the grave covered with flowers.—*Advocate and Guardian*.

A BABY IN JAIL.

It was a queer little tot of a girl who put in an appearance at a Philadelphia police-station, and, looking from one officer to another, said, "Did you put my mother in jail?"

The officer stared at the little midget, so small that a policeman had to help her up the steps of the station house, and wondered what she meant. They had arrested a tangle-haired woman who had fought like a fury and stormed at them in three languages, but they did not dream that this little innocent thing was *her* child. But she was, and the mother heard her voice and called for her.

So they swung open the door of the corridor and let the baby in. She trotted up to the cell door, and looking in, said, "Why, mother, are you in jail?"

The mother shrank back, ashamed. The child dropped upon her knees upon the stone floor, and clinging to the cold bars began to pray,

"Now I lay me down to sleep, and I hope my mother will be let out of jail."

There was a strange moisture about the strong policeman's eyes as they led the little thing away. When the case came into court, the Judge whispered to the woman to go home, and for her child's sake behave as a mother should.