

But he was at once too loyal and too loving to entertain such an idea.

But at last the day came when Arthur was selected to occupy the post that he longed for. Perhaps his recitation had not been actually the best, and there were some points in his conduct that were far from satisfactory; but he was getting a big boy now, and the master was anxious that he should not be discouraged. The chapter chosen was St. John xv. and that Arthur at last knew it word for word was mainly due to the persistence with which Ernest had "heard" him, prompted him, and helped him. And now, without their knowing it, the beautiful and touching words had become a sacred bond of union between the brothers.

"I've taken a precious long time to learn it, Ern; but now that I know it, I think it will stick to me all my life; and I'm sure there is not a verse in it but will remind me of you, and of the way you taught me," exclaimed Arthur after the final rehearsal.

"They are beautiful words," replied Ernest, "and I'd like to think of us both remembering them when we are far away from each other. We'll be like two wee branches in one big tree; there'll be something to make us feel one-like, something to keep us together whatever winds may blow."

Arthur Hopley gave a short laugh. "Except it be that one branch is rotten, and then the wind breaks it off and blows it away altogether and there is no more seen of it."

Ernest looked bewildered. "Don't say that, Arthur," he remonstrated, "there is no reason it should be like that with— with either of us. He says, 'I am the Vine, ye are the branches.' It's live branches He was talking of—and there is the one life goes right through them all."

The elder boy shrugged his shoulders: "Don't take it so serious, Ern; it was only just a notion that came into my head."

Ernest still looked distressed; but he spoke up cheerfully:

"Well, suppose we promise, both of us, that we'll try and say the chapter over, if ever we are in any trouble or danger; that we'll think about the way He says we are not His servants but His friends, and how willing He is to help us."

"There can be no harm in that; it might be a help to a chap some day," assented Arthur. Shortly after the boys went to bed.

The day that followed was one never to be forgotten. The chapel was crowded; but as Arthur stood waiting for the ranks to close up when all the children had entered, he saw but one face before him—it was that of Ida Withers. It had so happened that it was Mr. Withers's turn to act as one of the presiding governors, and the old gentleman had, as was his usual custom, brought his two daughters with him; for Esther, too, was there, occupying a place between her elder sister and the chair of state in which her father was just seating himself.

As usual the service was rendered in quiet, reverent, and orderly fashion. The collects were read by Ernest Hopley, and though his voice was low and somewhat tremulous, many present were struck by the simplicity and evident sincerity of his elocution. Arthur acquitted



"YOU GOT THROUGH YOUR PART VERY CREDITABLY."
Specially drawn for THE CHURCH MONTHLY by PAUL HARDY.