

HOW THEY CROSSED THE STREAM.

A True Story.

By Elizabeth Preston Allen, in *Sunday School Times*.

"If the fellows are going to do that way," said Guy, in a tone of scorn, "I'm done with the whole thing."

"The fact is," said Mark, "the kids want to have too much to say in this mission-band business. They want to run the machine."

"We will just show them, this afternoon, that we won't go into their schemes; and if they are pig-headed about it, why"—Guy held up his head an extra inch—"our crowd will resign."

The boys were on their way to mission band meeting, and these sentiments were re-echoed over and over as one and another of "our crowd" fell into line.

But when they actually got to the meeting, things took a different turn. I cannot say positively why the big boys got quietly into step with the schemes of the rest, nor why there was no more talk of resigning, but I think it had something to do with a story the leader told at the beginning of the meeting. Perhaps she had heard murmurs of discord among the boys on the way; but I am only guessing so because of this little story.

"When my father was a little boy," Miss MacPheeters said, "he lived in old Scotland, where breakfasts were rather scanty and the Shorter Catechism was plentiful. Along with his brothers and sisters, a goodly number, he walked bare-footed every day, over miles of rough road, to school. About half-way between the home cottage and the school doorstep ran the river Earn, which they had to ford, for there was no bridge. Fortunately, it was not deep; but a sudden fall in the river-bed gave the water an extra swiftness at that place, and, if it had not been for a promise made to their father at the beginning of each term, the younger children might have gotten many a fall and wetting. Can you guess what that promise was?"

No guesses were offered.

"I am telling you about how these little lads and lassies crossed

the river safely everyday," said Miss MacPheeters, "because I am sure that, unless you adopt their plan, this mission band will stumble and fall, and the work that we are trying to do will go to pieces, and drift away hopelessly."

The boys pricked up their ears, but said nothing.

"It was a very simple plan, boys," said the leader. "They simply joined hands!"

A look flashed into the faces of all those boys, which seemed to say, "To be sure!"

"There are as many difficulties in our way," continued the storyteller, "as there are rocks and boulders in the river Earn. Each boy has his own opinion of how things ought to be done, different from every other boy's opinion. This makes contrary currents and eddies, harder to cross than the swirling waters of the stream. There is but one way for all to cross safely. You must join hands."

"I do not ask you to make me any promises, but I want you to think about this matter at your own homes, when you speak alone with your heavenly Father. I am sure that, if my boys will make that silent, secret promise to join hands, our mission band will go forward like an army with banners."

As I was saying, there was no pulling back and no resigning at that meeting, and I could not help thinking that it was because of the picture shown them of our Scotch children crossing the river, hand locked in hand.

THE INFLUENCE OF ONE MAN.

In her sketch of the life and work of "John Eliot, the apostle to the Red Indians," Miss Yonge says: "Eliot's work was not wasted. The spark he lit has never gone wholly out in men's mind."

The modern missionary awakening is largely due to the influence of Eliot. The story of his work among the Indians in Massachusetts was written by Jonathan Edwards, and a copy of it falling into the hands of William Carey, of Bristol, England, fired his heart with zeal for missions. His work in India is a thrilling story. The legend which he uttered—"Under-

take great things for God; expect great things from God"—has gone around the world and stirred many hearts to deeds of courage and faith. Henry Martyn, the scholar missionary, also felt the power of Eliot's example and went to India. The influence of these men and many others who caught their inspiration from the heroic lives of those who were filled with a burning love for souls is the story of missionary enterprise within this century. What a grand story! Eliot inspired Carey and Martyn. Carey and Martyn awoke the sluggish from their indifference, and the roll of saints and martyrs for the faith grew in the Church of England and among Dissenters. The aspect of the Church was changed to zeal for God, and triumphs of faith were recorded such as had not been seen since the Reformation. The names Heber, Selwyn, Patteson, Hannington and others among bishops, of the great Livingston, Judson, Moffatt, Duff, Alexander Mackay and many others, are the joy of the Church. It is of the most profound interest to trace an influence to its source, and humanly speaking the modern missionary spirit took its rise in the devoted life of a missionary among the Indians in New England—*Selected*.

THE VALUE OF DECISION.

Decision is a noble element of character. The vacillating man can never realize greatness. He wastes his impulses and time in hesitancy. He poises too long between opposite forces, and when he moves onward it is with the faltering step of indecision. His faculties are relaxed—they are not condensed into a manly force by a determined will. How many opportunities for doing good in great or small degree are lost by indecision! Whilst we are asking ourselves, "Shall I, or shall I not?" the moment is passed, and the flower of joy which we might have given is withered, and often can be no more revived even by tears of penitence.—*Selected*.

The dangerous thing about saying no to God to-day is that you may have to keep on doing it forever.