

"REMEMBER YOUR TEXT."

BY NELLIE HELLIS.

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"Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God."

That was Millie Raymond's text, and in reply to his mother's questioning look, Edgar repeated the words—

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

Every morning before they left home the children said the texts that, on five days in the week, were again repeated after prayers at their respective schools. They were allowed to make their own choice, and Mrs. Raymond generally talked to them a little about the lesson that was certainly the shortest and easiest they had to learn. But on this particular morning they had been later at breakfast than usual, and she had only time to bid them carry the words in their hearts as well as in their memories.

"Who knows, dears," she said, "whether your texts may not stand you in good stead before the day is over?" And then she stood at the door, and watched them as they went down the garden path, and passed through the gate into the high road.

Mr. Raymond lived a mile and a half from Sidbury, where his two children went to school. On wet days they were driven into the town, but on fine mornings it was no more than a pleasant walk. Then they generally had Charlie West's company. He lived very near the Raymonds, and as Millie and Edgar approached the house he was almost always to be seen waiting for them in the road, with his books under his arm.

Though he was a little older than Edgar, and much quicker and cleverer, the two boys were in the same class. The fact was, Edgar, though slow, was very patient and plodding, and did not mind how much trouble he took so that at last he had mastered his lessons, whereas Charlie would do little more than glance at his books, trusting that when school-time came his good memory and ready comprehension would help him through to the satisfaction of his master.

That bright summer's day passed as many others had done. The children dined at school, and at half-past four Edgar and Charlie found Millie waiting for them as usual at the end of the street. Very soon they left the town behind them, and then Millie lingered a little to gather some forget-me-nots and other flowers to take home to her mother. Thus it was that she did not hear the beginning of a talk that grew more and more angry as it proceeded.

"Well," said Charlie, breaking a silence, and with a sulky look on the face that could be so bright and attractive, "I never knew you to be good at dates before, and it isn't easy to remember just how all the battles in the Wars of the Roses come, or Jim Bryant wouldn't have got out in it. Then who would have thought we should have that question? Why, it hasn't anything to do with the period we are learning."

"That's just why I'm so glad I happened to look over those particular dates last night," said Edgar. "Twas strange I should have done it, for I'd no idea they would be wanted to-day."

"Very strange, I must say, that you should fix upon the very thing that was asked for."

There was something in Charlie's voice that made the blood rush into Edgar's face.

"You don't believe I'm telling the truth?" he asked, quickly and hotly.

"Oh! come now, there's no need to get into a rage," said Charlie, with most provoking coolness.

"But you don't believe me; I can see that."

"Well, it seems odd that you, who never can remember a date, should say off a whole string just as if you were reading them out of a book," rejoined Charlie, with the same peculiar emphasis with which he had spoken before.

"Reading them out of a book!" exclaimed Edgar. "Do you mean that I was reading them out of a book?"

For a moment Charlie paused, but he was still smarting with wounded vanity that the boy whom he thought "slow and stupid" should have gained a higher number of marks than himself, and consequently taken a place above him, and he would not listen to the still, small voice within which told him that what he was about to say was a slander on the truthful, straightforward character Edgar Raymond bore.

"One can't help wondering," he said, "how Jim Bryant came to pick up a scrap of paper that wasn't so small that it wouldn't hold all the names and dates of the battles between the Yorkists and Lancastrians."

"Why," said Edgar, with eyes that flashed with passion, "it came out of my desk when I was putting it tidy in play-time. I wrote it at the beginning of last term, and it must have lain there ever since. Do you mean to say you don't believe what I'm telling you now?"

"I don't say anything," replied Charlie, "except that it's the oddest affair I've heard of for many a day."

"Then we'll fight it out," said Edgar, as he flung down his satchel and tore off his coat. "That is," he added, "if you're not too much of a coward."

Charlie had turned suddenly pale; but it was not from fear, and at the word "coward" he, too, flung down his hat and books. Then, standing opposite Edgar, he put himself in a position to strike, but before either had given a blow, a cry was heard, and with a bound Millie threw herself between them.

"Oh, what are you doing?" she exclaimed.

Charlie's, and there was that in the clasp of each which spoke well for the future friendship of the boys.

"Oh, Millie," said Edgar, when the brother and sister were alone, "I am so glad you reminded me of my text before it was too late. But I shall never be so good as you are. I shall never remember without being told."

"Neither do I, generally," she replied; "but when I saw you throw down your books, I was afraid you were going to fight, though I could scarcely believe it. And then my text darted into my mind, and I prayed I might be in time to stop you. Edgar, let us both try harder for the future to remember our texts, and act upon them."

"We will, dear Millie," he said; and it was a resolve that was kept as well as made. —*Children's Friend.*

EXCUSES.

No sooner does any one begin to preach the Gospel than men and women begin "to make excuse." It is the old story. There



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ed. "I called out, but you were talking so loudly that you didn't hear me. You can't be going to fight. Oh, Edgar, Edgar, remember your text."

It flashed across his memory as Milly spoke, and he stood as if turned to stone. Then, as his hands slowly dropped, the angry light faded from his eyes, and tears took its place. Had he not been so blinded, he would have seen how ashamed Charlie looked at Millie's half-pleading, half-reproachful voice. But now it was wholly pleading as she said—

"I am sure you aren't really angry with each other. It's just some misunderstanding, and if you had only explained, you wouldn't have quarrelled over it."

"You're right, Millie," said Edgar.

"Charlie, I'm very sorry."

But Charlie had also had time to think, and he, too, saw his error.

"No, no," he said, "it was all my fault. I did believe you, but I was angry and ill-tempered, because I had lost my place in class. Edgar, can you forgive me?"

For answer Edgar put out his hand and took

is not an unsaved person but has got some excuse. If I were to ask you why do you not accept God's invitation to the Gospel feast, you would have an excuse ready on the end of your tongue; and if you had not one ready, the devil would be there to help you make one. And if they could be answered he is ready to make new ones. He has had six thousand years' experience, and he is very good at it; he can give you as many as you want.

Do you know the origin of excuses? You will find it away back in Eden. When Adam had sinned, he tried to excuse himself. "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." He tried to lay the blame on God, Eve tried to lay it on the serpent, and down to the present time, men and women, with one consent, begin to make excuse.

Remember that these men Luke tells us about were not invited to a funeral, or to hear some dry, stupid lecture or sermon; they were not invited to visit a hospital or a prison, or a madhouse; to witness some

terrible scene or execution—something that would have pained them. It was to go to a feast. The Gospel is represented in the Bible as a feast. In the evening of this dispensation there is going to be the marriage supper of God's Son. Blessed is he that shall be at the marriage supper of the Lamb. If I know my own heart, I would rather be torn limb from limb, or have my heart taken from my body this moment, and be present on that glorious day, than have the wealth of the world rolled at my feet, and miss that wonderful banquet at the marriage of the Lamb.

Let us take up these three men who, "with one consent, began to make excuse."

What did the first one say? "I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it." Some one has said, Why did he not look at the ground before he bought it? If he had been a good business man, he would have seen his ground first; he could not make the bargain any better by looking at it now. And now that he has got it, he can go and look at it at any time; the land will not run away! It was not that he had made a partial bargain and might withdraw, or that someone might step in ahead of him and get the ground from him. He did not even have that excuse. He had bought the land; there was no fear that he would lose his title to it. Yet he must needs go and see it. Strange time to go and see ground—just at supper-time! On the face of it, it was a downright lie. He did not want to go to the feast, and so he manufactured this excuse to ease his conscience. That is what people make excuses for. The devil gets men into that cradle and rocks them to sleep in it. What did the second man say? "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them. I pray thee have me excused." Why not prove them before he bought them? It was no time to prove oxen after they were bought. And now that the bargain was closed he could prove them at any time. Why not let them stand in the stall till he had accepted the invitation? Do you not see that was another lie?

The third man's excuse was the most ridiculous of them all. "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." Why did he not take his wife along with him? Who likes to go to a feast better than a young bride? He might have asked her to go too; and if she were not willing, then let her stay at home. The fact was, he did not want to go.

Eighteen hundred years have rolled away, and they tell us the world has grown wiser; they say it has improved wonderfully during these years, but tell me, have men got any better excuses? Young lady, can you give a better excuse? Have you got an excuse that will stand the light of eternity, have you got an excuse that will even satisfy yourself? Men try every kind of excuse, but the man does not live who can give a good one. Let some terrible disease lay hold of a man, let death come and look him in the face, and his excuses are gone in a moment. My friends, your excuses will look altogether different when you come to stand before the great tribunal of your Judge.—*D. L. Moody.*

GROWING PLANTS FOR MISSIONS.

The leader of a Mission Band in Oregon City says:—

Our Mission Band is doing very nicely. We try to have a Missionary Concert every three months on Sunday evening, at which we take a collection. The attendance is always large. It has been our custom for two years to have a missionary plant sale, and we contemplate having another this fall. Our plan is to ask all the children and grown folks too to start plants, we usually do this in April or May, so as to have them growing nicely by September or October, and at the time of the sale they are all brought in, prices marked upon them, and placed upon tables ready for buyers. The sale takes place in the evening after a missionary concert. As our church has a basement, we have the concert in the audience-room and the plants below. The admission fee which is ten cents includes both. Last year we cleared \$50 and there was very little work and no expense. We try to have something very attractive in our programme which will draw those who are not interested in mission work. Last year we had a dialogue by several little girls, dressed in costume, representing the different nations.