



BISHOP HANNINGTON.—See page 138.

"They're light, you know. Perhaps we could manage it."

"We'll get 'em the first thing to-morrow after school," said the boys in a chorus of delight. "The very best we can find."

"And may we write him a letter?"

"Yes."

This was the letter:

"DEAR MR. BRAND,—Me and Ted and Tommy is all sorry to hear about your church burned to the ground. We're awful sorry. We wish we had lots of money to help you build another church. We haven't got a cent. When we get big and can earn money we're going to send you some the very first minit. Cause we can't send any money we're going to send you a barrel of pine cones, the kind you used to like to see 'em when they burn. Their good ones, and they'll snap and fizz and sizzle and shine like everything. We want 'em to cheer you up cause we can't send any money to help build your church. We're awful sorry.

"Your friends,

"Jack and Ted and Tommy."

It was a long letter for Jack to write, but he did it well, and all three, not to speak of mother, were very proud of it. It was mailed on the day which saw the cones shipped. Jack almost hated to let it go out of his own safe keeping. "I s'pose we're sure it'll go all safe and right?" he said, questioningly, to his mother.

"Such an awful long way," said Ted.

"Wish they could 'a' gone both together, the letter and the barrel," said Tommy. "I think that would 'a' been the best way."

Both letter and barrel proved the safe handling of trusty officials, as shown by the early receipt of an answer from Mr. Brand. Mother read it aloud:

"My Dear Boys,—As I write the light of the pine-knots is dancing and glancing in my room, carrying the light of good cheer and the warmth of loving sympathy straight from your hearts to mine—"

"Ho! ho!" screamed Jack, in a perfect whirl of delight.

"Read that again, mother—"

{ Mother read it again.

"Doesn't it take him to know how to put things! Go on, mother."

"Perhaps it would be scarcely right to say that it is worth while to suffer misfortune in order to bring out such expressions of affection—"

"Ah-h-h! He means that letter," said Jack, while three boy faces beamed with a delight far warmer than could ever be given out by pine-knots.

"But it is certain that they are full of a purer gold than comes in the shape of money."

"'Fraid it wouldn't build churches, though," said Ted, with a worldly-wise shake of the head.

"As I know my little friends away up in the pine woods are most sincere in their desires to give help in our loss—"

"Yes, he knows," with grateful nods of tow-heads.

"I will suggest to you that a good friend of mine has been enjoying with me the brightness of the pine-knots—"

"Glad of that," put in Ted.

"Sittin' close by the fire," said Jack, with a mental picture of his far-away friend and his friend's friend.

"He is from the city not far from me, and tells me that a supply of the pine-knots would be very acceptable to some rich friends of his who would like to brighten their hearts as you have brightened mine—"

"Shinin', sizzin', sputterin' and snappin'," interjected Jack, with a chuckle of exceeding enjoyment.

"So he suggests that if you are really all so anxious to give us a helping hand—"

"If we are!" indignantly interrupted Ted.

"'Twas the other fellow said it, don't you see?" said Jack.

"To give us a helping hand," patiently went on mother, "you may send us some more pine-knots, and my friend, Mr. Carson, says he will dispose of them. Of course we will pay expenses of barrels and freight—"

"Hurrah!" shouted the three in one breath.