

The accountant had barely crossed his humble threshold and sat down, when Robin clambered on his knee and put the puzzling question—"Fasser, what is lightenin'?"

"Lightning, my boy?—why, it's—it's—let me see—it's fire, of course, of some sort, that comes out o' the clouds and goes slap into the earth—there, don't you see it?"

Robin did see it, and was so awestruck by the crash which followed the blinding flash that he forgot at the moment to push his inquiries further, much to his father's satisfaction, who internally resolved to hunt up the *Encyclopædia Britannica* that very evening—letter L—and study it.

In process of time Robin increased in size. As he expanded in body he developed in mind and in heart, for his little mother, although profoundly ignorant of electricity and its effects, was deeply learned in the Scriptures. But Robin did not hunger in vain after scientific knowledge. By good fortune he had a cousin—cousin Sam Shipton—who was fourteen years older than himself, and a clerk at a neighbouring railway station, where there was a telegraphic instrument.

Now, Sam being himself possessed of strongly scientific tendencies, took a great fancy to little Robin, and sought to enlighten his young mind on many subjects where "musser's" knowledge failed.