

Many times, however, he said to himself, "What a fool I am to believe that any of these three things will come true!" Still he could not help trembling like a leaf, as the time drew near for the stranger to come. At length he came, and touching the blind man as he had done the day before, addressing him, said,

"Well, Abuna, how is it? I have come to hear your decision."

"Oh!" said the blind man starting, "is it you? Well, sir, first I want to know something more about that friend. Will he always be good, and kind, or will he go off and leave me by-and-by?"

"He will never leave you, if of the three things you choose him; and he will be everything to you that you would wish a friend to be."

"Then I'll have him!" said the blind man decidedly. "Where shall I go to find him?"

"You need not go anywhere, he will come to you," was the answer.

"Will he come soon?"

"Yes, very soon, and I will leave you now." So saying the stranger departed, and Abuna sat listening most attentively to all the passing footsteps, for some that would come up to him, wondering at the same time what his friend would first say and do. But he waited long and many people came and went by on the road, but no one stopped or spoke to him. All at once he gave a start, for some soft hand seemed to be wiping away his tears, and stroking his head, and a voice whispered to him,

"Weep not, Abuna, I am with you."

The poor man's heart bounded with joy, but he dared not speak a word,—he only sat and enjoyed being comforted. Presently growing tired from the effects of excitement, he leaned his head against the tree, under which he was sitting, but instead of the tree he found he had laid his head on some one's shoulder. Oh how good that felt to him who had never known what it was to have a friend! It was so pleasant he dropped off into a delightful sleep, and slept hours. When he got awake he thought all must have been a dream, and frightened to think that so much time had been wasted in sleep, and he had got no money,

he resumed his usual begging cry with more than ordinary fervor. But that day he was not very successful in his begging, and when it came night he felt very hungry, and had nothing to eat. He groped his way to a little stream, to get at least a drink, and sat on the bank awhile, with his head buried in his arms. Soon he felt a touch, and a voice said, "Abuna, I have brought you food to eat. Take this." The poor blind man let the bread drop, but seized the hand that offered it, and holding it fast in both his, kissed it over and over again, and said, "Sir, I thought it was a dream, and that you would never appear to me again."

"I am with you alway," said the voice. This was food enough for Abuna; his soul had hungered more than his body,



GUTTENBERG AND FAUST'S FIRST PROOF FROM MOVABLE TYPES.

but he ate also the bread offered him, and felt as if he had grown young again. That night, he slept right there, holding on to his friend's hand, lest he should lose him again, notwithstanding what he had said. The next morning he awoke very happy, and all day long clung to his unseen friend. Poor Abuna's joy knew no bound; he did not ask the stranger his name, or anything about him, but was perfectly happy. But Abuna's heart was human, and his love as variable as the wind. He began to think this friend might take him to his house, and feed him on rich food, since he seemed able, and he might save him from sitting there at the wayside begging, and from getting

so hungry and faint. So, though he said nothing about it, he became sulky in his manner, and letting his friend's hand drop, helped himself along the way with his old staff, as he used to do. The strange friend spoke not a word, but let him have his own way after that, so that Abuna thought he must have gone off altogether, and left him, and he said to himself, "It is always the way: what is the use of having friends, they are always so changeable? What a fool I was that I did not choose to be a rich man;" but his conscience troubled him a little when he said that, and when he remembered how happy he was those days in which he was led by that friend. Some days passed, and by-and-by he began to feel sorry for his unkind, hard thoughts, and longed

remembered what had happened, and that some one had cared for him and bathed his wounds; he knew at once who it must have been, and he called aloud, "Oh, my friend, my friend, though I have been so wicked, do come back to me;" and he was at once comforted. But his friend said sadly, "Abuna, I told you I was always with you. Why did you not speak to me before? I was only waiting to hear you call!"

"Oh, my Master, my Lord!" said Abuna, "forgive me; I have been so wicked and ungrateful, and I forgot what you said: but I'll try never to forget again." And he did try to grow better in every respect, and began to love his friend more and more every day.

At length blind Abuna fell sick, but in his sickness he wanted for nothing. Everything he needed, food, medicine, to soothe his pain, and the tenderest care were lavished upon him by one who slept neither night nor day. He little knew what was yet in store for him; but one day, while resting his head on his friend's lap, he fell asleep, and when he awoke he could see. The first object that caught his sight was a glorious face beaming with love and tenderness as it looked at him, and a voice which he knew and loved said to him, "Abuna, do you know me?" and Abuna, overwhelmed with wonder and love and adoration, fell at his feet, and when he could speak exclaimed, "Lord, is it thou?" Is it such a one I have had for my friend? such a one I have grieved so many thousand times? Oh, canst thou forgive me?" And the wonderful one

raised him up and said, "Abuna, you needn't think any more of the past. Look around and see where you are, for I have brought you to my house to live forever with me." Then Abuna looked, and was dazzled and thrilled with the glory and the beauty. But he soon turned back to gaze and gaze upon the blessed face of his friend.

Reader, do you not want such a friend? There is one ready for you. Instead of choosing the world and its unsatisfying pleasures, choose him, and he will come to you, and you will be eternally happy; he will never leave you nor forsake you. "Lo, I am with you alway," are the comforting words he has in store for you. That friend is the Lord Jesus Christ.