

hard, but I have this matter on my conscience, and I have done but my duty in speaking plainly."

"True," said the old man; "but 'charity suffereth long, and is kind; beareth all things; hopeth all things.' I have great hopes of that one boy, Robert. Some seed that we sow bears fruit late, but that fruit is generally the most precious of all."

The old minister went to the pulpit that day with a grieved and heavy heart. He closed his discourse with dim and tearful eyes. He wished that his work was done forever, and that he was at rest among the graves under the blooming trees in the old kirkyard.

He lingered in the dear old kirk after the rest were gone. He wished to be alone. The place was sacred and inexpressibly dear to him. It had been his spiritual home from his youth. Before this altar he had prayed over the dead forms of a bygone generation, and had welcomed the children of a new generation; and here, yes, here, he had been told at last that his work was no longer owned and blessed!

No one remained—no one? "Only a boy."

The boy was Robert Moffat. He watched the trembling old man. His soul was filled with loving sympathy. He went to him and laid his hand on his black gown.

"Well, Robert?" said the minister.

"Do you think if I were willing to work hard for an education I could ever become a preacher?"

"A preacher?"

"Perhaps a missionary."

There was a long pause. Tears filled the eyes of the old minister. At length he said: "This heals the ache of my heart, Robert. I see the divine hand now. May God bless you, my boy. Yes, I think you will become a preacher."

Some years ago there returned to London from Africa an aged missionary. His name was spoken with reverence. When he went into an assembly the people rose; when he spoke in public there was deep silence. Princes stood uncovered before him; nobles invited him to their homes.

He had added a province to the church of Christ on earth; had brought under the Gospel influence the most savage of African chiefs; had given the translated Bible to strange tribes; had enriched with valuable knowledge the Royal Geographical Society, and had honored the humble place of his birth, the Scottish kirk, the United

Kingdom, and the universal missionary cause.

It is hard to trust when no evidence of fruit appears. But the harvests of right intentions are sure. The old minister sleeps beneath the trees in the humble place of his labors, but men remember his work because of what he was to that one boy, and what that boy was to the world.

"Only a boy!"

Do thou thy work; it shall succeed

In thine, or in another's day.

And if denied the victor's meed,

Thou shalt not miss the toiler's pay.

—*Youth's Companion.*

GOD'S PROPERTY.

As Uncle Amos passed up the lane that led to his house, he saw a little group of boys collected around some central object that was absorbing their attention. As he was always interested in what interested the little people, he drew near, and, to his indignation, saw that they were putting coals of fire on the back of a poor tortoise, and laughing merrily at its futile efforts to escape from them.

"Bad boys, bad boys," he shouted, "what are you about?"

At the sound of his voice some of the lads sprang up, looking much ashamed.

"We were only putting a few coals on the back of the tortoise to make him put his head out," answered Arthur Grey. "His shell is so thick that it does not hurt him."

"If it does not hurt him, why should he put his head out?" answered Uncle Amos. "Cannot you see that the poor creature is trying to run away from the pain?"

At this moment there was a loud cry from Arthur. He was still on his knees, and as he tried to get up he had rested his hand on one of the hot coals that Uncle Amos had knocked off with his stick. Frantic with pain, he rushed up and down the road, wringing his burned hand.

Uncle Amos smiled grimly. "So it does hurt after all, does it?" he asked. "Hot coals make boys run as well as tortoises. Go to your mother, lad, and have some liniment put on; and, perhaps," he added, as Arthur disappeared amid the laughter of his companions, "you had better bring some down for the tortoise, too. And now," he continued, looking around gravely, "are you not ashamed of yourselves?"

"We didn't think that it would hurt him," said one of the smaller boys.

"You did not care whether it did or

not," he replied. "You were only intent on having what you called fun; and let me tell you," he added, raising his voice, "that any boy who finds amusement in torturing anything weaker than himself, anything that is helpless in his hands, is a coward and a sneak."

The boys glanced furtively at each other. It was a new experience to see Uncle Amos angry.

"In the old heathen days they used to force Christians to fight with wild beasts, and the thousands of spectators seated in the Coliseum would shout with delight as they were torn limb from limb by the savage animals, and their death cries would be drowned in the wild applause of the multitude. This was their favorite amusement, and we shudder as we think of it; but because you cannot hear the death cries of the poor dumb creatures that you torture, you say, 'Oh, it does not hurt them; it is only fun.'

"Boys," he added, solemnly, "our dear Lord gave man 'dominion over the beasts of the field,' not that he might have the right to injure and ill-treat them, but that he might be their protector and caretaker; and it is only a mean nature that takes advantage of its strength to oppress the weak. A boy who is cruel to animals will be cruel when he grows up to his fellow-men. He will probably break his wife's heart, and his children will fear and hate him. Some one has said that even 'the cat and dog in a house know when their master is a Christian,' and I am quite certain that whoever said it is right, for a 'merciful man is merciful to his beast,' as the Bible tells us."

"I hope you will excuse us, Uncle Amos," said Stephen, who was very unwilling to lose the good opinion of the old man who so constantly had pleasures in store for them.

"Make your excuses, lad, to Him whose property you have injured," he answered, pointing upward with his stick. "God, who sees 'every sparrow that falls to the ground,' will hold to a strict account those who cause unnecessary pain to the helpless things around them, and His promise is, 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.'"—*Selected.*

"Boys flying kites haul in their white-winged birds;

You can't do that way when you're flying words.

'Careful with fire' is good advice, we know;

'Careful with words' is ten times doubly so;

Thoughts unexpressed may sometimes fall back dead;

But God Himself can't kill them when they're said."