

FOR BABY'S SAKE.

It was evening, and the dwellers in a quiet London street heard a strange uncommon shouting and the rush of many feet. Instantly they left their dwellings in a hurry to inquire what had caused the great commotion, when they heard the cry of "Fire!"

Close at hand a house is burning, they can see its lurid light tinting all the dull surroundings, making everything seem bright; and the flames grow fiercer, stronger, and the smoke grows dense overhead, while the crowd is gazing, spellbound, filled with wondrous awe and dread.

Hark! the hoofs of horses clatter! See, the engines dash along, cheered by hundreds as they scatter right and left th' excited throng! Losing not one precious moment, firemen get the hoses out, and the folks, when sprinklers the water, raise a loud applauding shout. Then is heard a mighty hissing as the water fights the fire, but in spite of all the efforts, fiercer grow the flames and higher, still the firemen never falter, though the foe is gaining fast, they with firm and fixed endeavour mean to fight it to the last.

See, the crowd is stirring strangely—'tis a woman pushing through, she is ghastly pale and haggard, and seems very fragile, too; yet she struggles, well-nigh frantic, doing but what would dare, as she cries to those around her, "Let me pass; my baby's here!"

Like a flash the news is scattered, every eye is turned to see the frantic mother who is striving very hard to get her free; and at last the crowd dividing, she can from her fetters break 'twas a battle, but she fought it only for her baby's sake.

Not a moment does she waver, straight towards the house she flies, heedless of the frightful danger and the people's warning cries. Firemen chase her, she eludes them, spite of all the haste they make, right inside the house she dashes for her darling baby's sake.

The deed has sent a thrill of horror through the folks—but they hold their breath, for they can't but think the woman's gone to certain, frightful death. The fire is burning unabated, the house one mass of seething flames, yet the mother's darting through it; breathing out her baby's name.

Hark! what means that mighty cheering! She has passed the topmost height, she has found her darling living, and she holds him up to sight, quick the firemen spread a blanket, and they catch the baby-boy, while the people cry like children, shedding tears of heartfelt joy.

But the day is turned to terror—ere the mother takes the leap she is seen to reel and stagger, like a person half asleep. Flames are bursting all around—she sinks into that burning lake, yielding up her life right nobly for her darling baby's sake.

Yes, the little one is living; loving hands attend to him, as his round eyes gaze in wonder at the smoke-wreaths black and grim, neighbours vie with one another in the zealous care they take of the little orphan baby for his noble mother's sake.

—John F. Nicholls.

BAD company is like a nail driven into a post, which, after the first or second blow, may be drawn out with little difficulty, but being once driven up to the head, the pinners cannot take hold to draw it out; it can only be done by destroying the wood.

SHOEBLACK JIM.

A TRUE STORY BY A NEW YORK TEACHER.

In a small, crowded room in one of the rear tenement houses of our great city, where the sun's rays were never known to shine, or the fresh air allowed to penetrate, our little Jim lay dying.

Months before, I, one morning, saw him standing on a street corner, with his shoe-box strapped to his back, calling out in tremulous tones, "Shine, sir!" But the hurrying business men paid little or no attention to the pleading voice and the frail form which was swayed to and fro by the bitter, biting, December wind. As I handed him a picture paper, I asked, "Are you hungry, my boy?" I noticed the pale, pinched cheeks and the large brown eyes fast filling with tears as he replied, "Yes, miss, I've had nothing to eat since yesterday morning; but granny is worse than me; fur she's had nothing but a cold tater since day afore yesterday."

"And who is granny?"
"She lives in the rear alley on Mott; me own mother died over on the island, so granny says, and I guess I never had any father."

"Did you ever go to a Sunday-school or Band of Hope meeting?"
"Laws, no, miss! I've no time. I has to stan' around all day, and then sometimes gits only a couple of shines; them Italian fellers, with the chairs, takes all the profits off us chaps. Granny says, 'tis a hard world."

I handed the child a dime, and told him to get a warm cup of coffee and a roll; then got from him a promise to attend the Band of Hope meeting that afternoon at four o'clock. I hardly expected to see him again, but was happily surprised to see him walk in—shoe-box on his back—while we were singing "Fold me to Thy bosom." I shall never forget the expression that was on his face as he stood spellbound in the middle of the floor, and stared at me and the organ. I motioned him to a seat, but he did not move till the music had ceased and the other children were all seated.

My lesson that day was about the Great Shepherd that goes out upon the hills and mountains of sin and gathers in the little lambs that wander away from the sheepfold. I did not know, that day, that the dear Saviour's hand was already stretched out to receive this one little lamb that had many times, young as he was, been found tipsy, and also smoking cigarettes that he had stolen from somebody's street-stand.

He was a regular attendant at Sunday-school and Band of Hope, and no one joined more heartily in the singing than "Jim." One day, in our children's prayer-meeting, he gave his heart to Jesus. No one could doubt the conversion of that little heart when they looked into the bright eyes and beaming face that continually shone with heavenly light.

One day a messenger came to me in haste, and said, "Jim is dying. Hurry, please, miss; he wants to see you agin afore he dies." I hurried; and, as I groped my way along the dark alley and up the rickety stairs, I caught the sound of the sweet voice singing, "Fold me, fold me, precious Saviour." I entered quietly, so as not to disturb the singer, but his bright eyes saw me, and he said, "Sing it with me once

more, teacher." We sang it through together, then he said, "The next time I sing will be when Jesus folds me in his arms; I'll never forget the hymn, but will remember it til you come up there too; then we'll sing it agin—"

The little lamp of life went out. The Great Shepherd had called his little lamb home. There was

"Another gem in the Saviour's crown,
Another soul in heaven."

—S. S. Times.

"BOYS' AND GIRLS' GORDON MEMORIAL."

It is pretty generally known that the deep interest which the lamented "Obinero" and "Soudan" Gordon took in ragged schools has led to his memory being honoured by the formation of what is known as "The Gordon Memorial Fund for the Benefit of Poor Children." The late Earl of Shaftesbury was the first chairman of the committee which has the matter in hand. The Lord Mayor of London, the Earl of Aberdeen, Archdeacon Farrar, and other prominent men are members of the same committee. The objects of the Fund include the following:—

1. Paying for the maintenance of poor children in existing homes and institutions.
2. Providing funds, wholly or in part, for the conveyance of wealthy and convalescent children and for their maintenance, in the country or at the seaside.

Mr. John Macdonald, the well-known merchant of this city, has been asked to interest Canadians in the fund. He has secured the co-operation of Mr. S. H. Blake, Q.C., and Mayor Howland. To any one of these gentlemen subscriptions may be sent. What they propose is that the Sunday-schools of the country take the matter up, and that, in order to put a subscription within the reach of every child, one cent collections be asked for in every school. The money thus raised will be devoted to the "Boys' and Girls' Gordon Memorial," which forms a branch of the general plan. It is with pleasure that we direct attention to this matter.—Globe.

The editor of PLEASANT HOURS will be happy to receive and forward any subscriptions for this praiseworthy object.

DON'T BE A SHAM.

As the boy begins, so will the man end. The lad who speaks with affectation, and minces foreign tongues that he does not understand at school, will be a weak chamois in character all his life; the boy who cheats his teacher into thinking him devout at chapel will be the man who will make religion a trade, and bring Christianity into contempt; and the boy who wins the highest average by stealing his examination papers will figure some day as a tricky politician. The lad who, whether rich or poor, dull or clever, looks you straight in the eyes, and keeps his answer inside of truth, already counts friends who will last his life, and holds a capital which will bring him a surer interest than money.

Then get to the bottom of things. You see how it is already as to that. It was the student that was grounded in the grammar who took the Latin prize; it was that slow, steady drudge

who practised firing every day last winter that bagged the most game in the mountain. It is the clerk who studies the specialty of the house in off hours who is promoted. Your brilliant, happy-go-lucky, hip-or-miss fellow usually turns out the dead weight of the family by forty five. Don't take anything for granted, get to the bottom of things. Neither be a sham yourself, nor be fooled by shame.

HAVE YOU DONE IT!

Don't what? Given your heart to Christ. The winter is rapidly going, with its special opportunities. Have you made any serious attempt to lay hold of these? Have you sought the Lord in prayer? Have you asked others to pray for you? Have you listened to the voice of your conscience, or heeded the earnest pleadings of your friends? Have you read the Word of God, to see the path of duty? Have you striven to overcome your sinful heart, or break with your worldly companions? Have you done any of these things? Remember that your precious soul is in peril, and that if you die in your sins, you must be forever lost. The loving Saviour says, "Come." Will you heed his gracious call?

THE THOUGHTS OF THE FATHERLESS.

It is not easy to say which is the greater loss to a child, that of father or mother. This I know: the most touching sermons I heard in childhood came not with the voice of man, were not heard by others, but came to me in silence as I often stood by my father's grave and wondered where he was.

I remembered a pale face, a thin hand placed upon my head, and a feeble voice saying, "Be a good boy, my son, and meet me in heaven."

Then I remembered a solemn day—a hearse, a long procession, the open grave—and I remembered when the stone was set up, having on it the name of my father, and a voice seemed to say once more, in the whispering of the "pines," with their soft and soul-like sounds, "Meet me in heaven."

A LITTLE LIE.

A LIE is a little thing. You have told a lie, just one single word which is not true. But let us see what else you have done. First, you have broken the law of God. Second, you will have to tell many more to maintain that one. Third, you lose the love and friendship of schoolmates. Fourth, if you practise lying, that will lead to something worse; but worst of all, God has said that liars shall some day have their place in the lake that burneth with fire.

From April 1st to December 31st there were in Montreal 3,175 victims of small pox. Of these only ninety-seven were Protestants. Taking in the suburbs, in which the victims were almost entirely Roman Catholic, the figures are altogether about 100 Protestants out of 4,000 cases. According to population the figures should be 960 to 4,000. It is very remarkable how few Methodists have been stricken down—only six out of a population of 6,000.