

The Brave Scottish Maid.

BY DELIA BOGERS.

'Twas in Old Scotland, land of the mountain and dell,
With its clear gurgling brooklets and deep river's swell;
One bright summer's day in the gay month of June,
When the fields were resplendent with heather bloom,
And the birds sang their sweetest, most joyous of lays,
To the God of the universe, heralding praise;
And the gay bells rang merrily out through the glen,
Crying, "God bless the bride; Good will to all men."

For, for three Sundays past, the banns had been read
For brave Bessie Douglas and Jamie McBeth,
And, with hand clasped in hand, and as heart beats to heart,
They vow to be faithful "till death do us part."

With feasting and laughter the hours speed in their flight,
With no cares to annoy, no dangers to fright;
All joyous and happy ebbs fortune's full tide,
For brave Jamie McBeth and his blushing young bride.

Just one year has passed with its weal and its woe,
Bringing sorrow to many and bitterest woe,
For the storm-cloud long gath'ring has burst o'er the land,
By the fierce fire of prejudice and bitter hate fanned,
"And crags rear their foreheads in solemn surprise,
And the heather waves slowly, while liberty dies."

For the sake of the truth men are forced from their homes,
To dwell in dark caverns or mid wild glens to roam;
Or, are hunted like deer over mountain and dell,
Because that they dared the true story to tell
Of Him, who didst die the world to reclaim
From the bondage of sin, of death and of shame,
That man might yet be at peace with his God,
E'er the life here is ended, and he rests 'neath the sod.

Just one year from the day that she stood a gay bride,
The fairest of all the fair maidens who throng round her side,
She toils up the side of the steep mountain road
To the glen where brave Jamie has fixed his abode;
And she thinks of a time when she trod that same pass
With no thought of sorrow, a light-hearted lass;
And the scent of the heather floats on the soft zephyr's breath
While she hears of a love that is stronger than death.

"Do the birds sing as sweetly as they did at that time?
To me it sounds like the cadence of some sad mournful ohme,
And see! The wild flower so sadly is drooping its head,
Does it know that this heart is as heavy as lead?
For Jamie e'en now Claverhouse may have spied,
And his warm heart's life-blood the heather has dyed!
Or is dragged from his refuge to dungeon or stake,
Oh God! Is it not robbery thus a young life to take?
Would to Heaven 'twere so I my own life couldst give,
How gladly I'd die if Jamie might live!"

When, lo! down the side of the steep mountain height
Flashes a long line of redcoats with swords glittering bright,
'Tis Claverhouse' troopers hunting now for their prey,
Who in dens in the wild wood or dark caverns stay;
And boisterous the shout that is borne on the breeze
As before him the form of the fair maid he sees.
"Now, show us the cave where those heretics hide!
For days we have scoured the steep mountain side,

And searched every cavern or den that is near,
So tell us, fair maid, and you've nothing to fear.

"What! You never will tell! Seest thou you bright blade"
One moment, and it in thy proud heart is stayed!"
She looked at the faces that were glowing around,
But no touch of pity in any she found;
She looked at the rocks, that stretched far down beneath,
Far away where a cot decked the blossoming heath;
She looked to the God upon whom she relied,
Then in tones firm and low she bravely replied:
"Though you thrust with your dagger, or drag me to stake,
To prison or dungeon, though my life's blood you take,
You cannot compel me this secret to tell;
I cannot, I dare not, I never will tell!"
Astonished, he gazed at the brave Christian maid,
Then in tones loud and angry Claverhouse said:
"Five minutes I'll give thee in which to decide,
And if thou dost still in thy obstinacy bide,
I'll make thee an example for the rest of thy clan,
Till of all such vile heretics we'll soon rid our land.
Five minutes I'll give thee in which to consider,
And if then tell thou wilt not thy blood stains the heather."

Hark! What sweet strain is that—that sad plaintive sound
That brings tears to the eyes of the rough soldiers around,
As is borne on the breeze, and resounds through the air,
Then is wafted to Heaven—a maiden's last prayer:
"The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green, He leadeth me
The quiet waters by.
Goodness and mercy all my life,
Have surely followed me,
And in God's house for evermore
My dwelling place shall be."

Ended the song, and on down the glen
Rode Claverhouse' troopers, and out through the glade;
But up on the mountain there lieth at rest
Poor Bessie, the brave Scottish maid.
Yes, ended the song and ended this life,
But the spirit bright angels attend,
And bear it away on their swift wings of light
To that land where joys never end.

Only a grave on the soft downy heath,
Where standeth a sad youth beside,
And I hear him murmur to the lov'd one beneath,
"Dear Bessie! for me thou hast died,
But 'twill not be long, something tells me so now,
Ere I pass to the bright golden shore;
In that beautiful land, the home of the blest,
We shall meet to part never more."

Helping Sister.

(See first page.)

THIS is just what an older brother ought to do. Yet sometimes brothers are selfish and unwilling to take the trouble to help their sisters. But if they will only do so, they will find that it will be its own reward, as doing right always is; and that they will so win the affections of their sisters and all whom they oblige that they will do almost anything for them in return.

A Good Testimony.

JOHN H. RAGER, ROME, ITALY.

I SUPPOSE many of you will be surprised when I tell you that probably most of the priests in Italy are not Christians; are not converted men; and that many of them are really bad men. Thousands of them are priests simply because they get their food and

clothing, and a place to sleep; and not because they want to be useful, and lead men to Christ. How can we expect the people to be good when the religious teachers are bad? This is one reason there are so few really pious, intelligent Christians in Italy.

Many people in this country have no confidence in the priests, and they do not hesitate to say so. You may think it strange, but I have never heard worse things said against the priests, and the Catholic Church, and the Pope himself, than in Rome, the great capital of the Catholic world. Some of you will remember how disappointed Luther was when he went to Rome and found the priests so bad, and the whole city so corrupt. He had imagined Rome to be a holy place.

Of course, some of the priests are good men; and others would be much better than they are, if they were situated differently. Sometimes a priest becomes a Protestant and a preacher, and proves himself a worthy, useful, and pious man. I want to tell you something about one of these.

Many years ago he was a priest, and lived in Southern Italy, where many of the people are ignorant and superstitious. When he was quite young, he occupied a prominent position in the church, being a Superior, or Director, of a convent. He was conscientious and tried to do his duty; but he had many false and strange ideas. He was a bigoted Catholic, believed just what the Church taught, and thought only Catholics were right, and all the rest of the world were blind to the truth and on the wrong road. He disliked the Protestants very much; and when they first came to his town he was very angry with them, and would have willingly driven them away, had it been possible. He knew he was right, and was just as sure the Protestants were wrong. I heard a man preach a sermon on infant baptism once, and at the conclusion of his sermon, he said, "I am right, and I know I am right." Our priest felt just as certain; and so he determined to go to the meeting and convince the people, and the preacher, by fair argument.

One day he went; and he went again and again; but instead of convincing he was convinced; and after several private interviews with the preacher, he decided to become a Protestant. That was some twenty years ago, and he has been faithful ever since. He is a good man, and his example is such as to make even his enemies respect him. For more than ten years, he has been living in the same city, a bigoted Catholic place, much under the influence of the Jesuits—a crafty bad party in the Catholic Church. Those Jesuits hate him, and would willingly drive him away, if they could. They would be very glad to find some grave fault in his character that would shake the confidence of the people and lessen his influence. They would not hesitate to tell a lie on him, if they were sure it would be believed.

In spite of all this, he has the respect and confidence of some of the best people of the city, and numbers among his best friends several of the Professors of the University. Not long ago he heard something from one of these Professors that encouraged him very much. In one of their meetings they were talking about the priests, and it seemed to be the general opinion that when a priest abandoned the priesthood he came to

nothing—turned out badly. One of the gentlemen present, who lived next door to our brother, and knew him well, said: "No; I can testify that this is not true in every case, for I know one ex priest who has done well, who is a worthy, good man; who sets a good example to every man in this city, and deserves our respect and esteem." All were surprised, and wished to know who it was. "The Protestant minister," replied the gentleman. They acknowledged that he was right; for they knew nothing against him. What a valuable and comforting testimony! I know this aged minister well, and always enjoy being with him.

Every boy and girl ought to live in such a way as to have a good testimony from others. But in order to have this, you must set a good example. If you are impatient and cross as a selfish; if you tell stories, and say naughty words, and disobey your parents, and quarrel with your brothers and sisters, you cannot expect to have this testimony. The only perfect example is Christ's, and He has taught us to imitate Him, and seek daily to be like Him.

Don't Cross the Line!

A MAN who owned an orchard planted with trees that bore very rare fruit was annoyed by the town boys climbing the fence and carrying away the choicest fruit. He resolved to stop these raids. He prepared an explosive made of nitro-glycerine, and placed it in the orchard at a short distance from the fence, so that by treading on one of the many traps he hid among the grass the box containing the nitro-glycerine would explode. He then placed a sign of warning just inside the fence, so that all could read it and be faithfully warned. Two boys, more bold than the others, determined to risk the dangerous venture within the orchard. One stepped upon a trap, the nitro-glycerine exploded, and he was fearfully injured. It was unsafe to cross the line-fence. He was faithfully warned, but disobeyed, and the disobedience brought its just punishment. So there is a line between safety and danger to the soul. God has placed signs of warning all around us; and yet these warnings are constantly disregarded. God says: "Thou shalt not steal," and yet men do steal. God says: "Thou shalt not lie," and yet men, like Ananias, will lie to God, even at the risk of terrible punishment. Children, do not cross the line of danger. Remain where you are safe. Be honest, truthful, just and always do the right.

Did you ever notice the line between the light and the shadow? It takes but one step to cross that line, and that one step leads you out of the light into the darkness. So with the soul. There is a line, clearly marked, between right and wrong. It is only one step across that line, and you pass from moral light into the darkness of sin. Don't cross the line. It is not safe. It is sinful. —Sunday-School Messenger.

THERE is no place like home, however poor or small. It is the place where all family affection loves to gather. Take away home from the heart, and you remove the brightest part of earthly existence and drop a blank on the best years of any man's life. To be home-sick is a good malady, and one that it is no disgrace to suffer from.