

## THE RED-HOT PENNY.

Everybody in the village of Hoppinglee rejoiced that Squire Meadows, during the winter months when the roads were bad, agreed to allow the highway travellers to go across his own private road, and out into the public thoroughfare again on the other side. This short cut lessened the traveller's journey by a good mile and a half, for otherwise he would have had to go all round the park, which he was now permitted to pass through.

During the winter, therefore, the traffic along this private road became so great, that some of the village boys were in the habit of turning an honest penny by opening the gate at the entrance of the grounds, for the carriages and light carts that came by that way.

One evening Sam and Ben (for these were their names) remained there later than usual. It had been market-day in the neighboring town, so many carts had passed, and the children were still lingering in the hope of some more chances for a penny, as the drivers of the market-carts had not hitherto proved very generous.

Presently Sam paused in his jumping over a snowy stump, and said, "Ben, do you hear anything?"

Both boys listened, and in a moment or two their practised ears detected the quick trot of a horse on the snowy ground. The gate was flung open in an instant, and a dog-cart passed through, driven by a gentleman, who flung a copper to the boys as he went by.

The snow was deep, and the penny fell with some force, and sank into it, so that in the waning twilight it could not be readily seen. However, both boys were down at once on their hands and knees, hunting eagerly for the hidden treasure.

Once more the sound of wheels met their ear, and just as Sam sprang to the gate to open it, Ben's hand turned over some snow, and lighted on the penny. Acting upon a sudden impulse he popped it into his pocket, saying to himself, "Sam needn't know, and then tomorrow I can buy that whistle I've been wanting so long."

The carriage passed on its way, but the coachman gave the boys nothing, and Sam returned to the search.

"You've not found it, have you?" said he, as Ben still feigned to look for the money.

"No, I'm afraid it's no use looking any more," replied Ben; "it's rather cold; shall we go?"

"All right," said Sam. "We'll come down early in the morning, and look for it." So off went the brothers to their home.

Poor Ben crept into bed without saying his prayers that night. Somehow he did not feel as if he could pray, with that penny, and the lie he had told about it, burning into his conscience. Neither could he

could bear the stings of conscience no longer.

"Sam," said he, "I want to tell you something. I *did* find that penny after all, and here it is, and I'm so unhappy, I don't know what to do."

Then tender-hearted Sam put his arms round his brother, and tried to comfort him; but seeing that nothing made him feel much better, he whispered at last, "Come, Ben, let's kneel down here and tell God about it. Mother says that's the only way to get right again." So they knelt down together by Sam's bed, and Ben sobbed out a confession of his sin, and prayed to be forgiven. Then the boys went back to their beds, and fell asleep.

## NEWSY DAISY.

BY MRS. ANNIE A. PRESTON.

Daisy Lester, who was very fond of telling news, would also tell naughty stories. She was a quiet little thing, fond of curling down in a corner of the lounge or windowseat when her mother had company, and listening to the conversation; and then, going among the neighbors, she often repented, with additions of her own, what she had heard. Sometimes she would even make up stories out of whole cloth. So she caused a great deal of trouble, of course, a number of times, by telling these false stories about people; and there were quarrels in consequence before the wicked, wrong stories were traced back to "newsy Daisy Lester," as she came to be called.

Daisy was now ten years old. She had been scolded and punished for her bad habit, and had promised to be a better girl in future. Her mother was even beginning to take courage and believe that Daisy would never tell another wrong story. But one day Lizzie, who was Daisy's twelve-year-old sister, came in from school with a pale, tearstained face, saying, "O mamma, it has been such a miserable day! Daisy has been 'making up' again, and she got Jane State and Ruth Brooks punished. When the teacher found out they had not done wrong, and that Daisy had told a lie, she tied her up to the door-latch with her pocket-handkerchief, told all the children to laugh, and point their fingers at her, and say, 'For shame!' O mamma, you don't know how it

sounded! I am so mortified I don't think I can ever go to school again."

Daisy came slowly into the room just then, and stood with drooping head near the table without looking in her mother's face. Mrs. Lester considerably kissed both her little girls, and told them to run and get ready for tea. When they came back with fresh clean faces and shining hair, she put new white aprons on them, and while they were at table, instead of talking about the day's trouble, she said, "I am going to call on Grandma Lester. Lizzie can come with me, and Daisy may take this large thistle which has gone to seed, and, pulling



sleep. The money was under his pillow, and he felt as if it was getting hotter and hotter, till it scorched his cheek. Restlessly he tossed about, till at last, towards morning, he fell into an unquiet, dreamful slumber.

But even in his dreams the penny seemed to scorch him. Now he was racing, as if for life, down a snowy road, and a great big jenny like a dagger behind him. At another time he thought he was struggling in a river, with ice over his head, and a penny hung round his neck, dragging him down, down to the bottom.

At last he woke, the horror of his dreams still upon him. He

We are glad to tell you that Ben did not lose his tender conscience as he grew older, nor did he ever forget the misery of what he called the "Red-hot penny night." Oh dear children, most of you know that no punishment can be more severe than that of our own conscience, when we have done wrong. Perhaps you have learned (God grant that you may have done so!) what alone can give this guilty conscience peace. But to those who have not yet learned, let us say that nothing can bring rest to the burdened heart, but coming to God, confessing the sin, and asking humbly for pardon, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—*Child's Companion.*