

"One, two, three. . . ten. . . twelve, thirteen."
"I wonder where the other twenty are," he said to himself.

For some months the attendance had been very good, and each of the boys had made some progress at "working book" or "speaking from book." To-day the teacher had less than half his usual class, and those present were the smaller ones, who had lately been coaxed to attend.

To get a boy to begin school, it was necessary for the teacher to give presents of colored beads and buttons and short lengths of brass wire. In some cases these rewards were demanded by the boy's father, who then became responsible for his son's punctual attendance. Many of the absent ones had been secured in this way, and the missionary teacher was puzzled to know the reason for his small school.

But he went to work upon the scholars that had come. Putting a jar of syrup, with a long stick in it, upon his table, he promised to give a lick of the syrup-covered stick to every boy who would repeat his alphabet correctly.

Several of them earned the taste of syrup, and then the teacher began to question the pupils about things he had taught them the day before.

Most of the answers he got showed that he had been talking to very heedless children on the day before. One boy, however, answered fairly well, and so the teacher asked him some more questions. But with a yawn, and a stretch of his bare arms, the boy said, "My teeth are tired, I can't answer any more."

As the school was singing a hymn, before going at some new work, a crowd of men entered and sat down on the floor, as is the custom of the Africans. The teacher saw that now he was going to learn why so many boys were absent from their places, for these big men were the fathers of the missing pupils.

One of the men acted as spokesman for the group. "You build new school over there?" said he pointing to where the carpenters from England were at work upon the mission buildings.

"Yes," replied the missionary.

"You pay men build the school?" asked the big African, as all the others eagerly listened.

"Oh, yes," said the missionary, thinking that the men would be grateful for what was being done for their village, "oh! yes, I am paying the carpenters a lot of money for building the school."

Then came a pause, during which the visitors looked at each other and made signs. The spokesman resumed: "You want our boys to come to school?"

"Yes," said the missionary eagerly.

"They make school better when they come?"

"They do," was the reply.

"Then you must pay our boys to come, or they not come any more," and up the men got and went out.

Three weeks went by. The older boys of the village had not come back to school, because the teacher would not pay them to learn. He had explained to them, when he could get near them, that going to school was a benefit, "No, no," they had said, "school like prison, hard work to go school."

Well, at the end of the three weeks, the older boys came in a body to the school, and asked if the teacher was going to pay them as he paid the builders across the way.

The teacher had it on his tongue to say, "No," and end the bothersome matter, but just then a happy idea came to him, and he said, "I will not pay you to come and learn, but I will pay you older boys, if you will come and teach the younger ones, and help me in that way."

This suited the boys, who began as monitors, and the missionary thanked God that He had put it into his mind to employ the boys as helpers, for, in order to be good helpers they began to be eager learners.

Toronto

A Child's Grace

Dear heav'nly Father, kind and good,
We thank Thee for our daily food.

Oh! may the strength it gives us be
Used ev'ry day in serving Thee.