

GRASPING THE PROMISES.

On entering one of our Indian hospitals, on a September morning in 1857, I saw a young boy, of about fourteen years of age, lying on one of the *charpays*, evidently in much suffering. On going up to him, I asked him about his illness; on which he replied that he belonged to the artillery, and on the march up from Calcutta had, as usual, been sent one day to water a horse. The animal had become restive, and had thrown him. In consequence the poor boy had his leg broken, and received some internal injuries.

"What is your name?" I asked.—
"Willy."

"Do you know anything of the Lord Jesus?"

"Of whom?"—"Of Jesus, the Son of God."

"I never had my schooling much cared for; so I don't know anything about him."

"Can you read?"—"Oh yes, ma'am."

I asked if I should sit down on his charpoy, and tell him about Jesus. "If you please, ma'am. But it must be very easy, for I'm a poor ignorant boy; so you will please begin from the beginning."

"How do you mean, Willy?" "Why, speak hard and plain; tell me how I may be saved. Speak as if I were to die in an hour."

"I will try; but first let us pray that Jesus may be with us, and teach me how to speak, and teach your heart to come to him."

When I had prayed, I told him, as simply as I could, the story of the creation and of man's fall; and of the birth, life and death of the Son of God "to save our ruined race." He listened with great interest, and then asked me to tell him just how he could be made one of the "little flock" who should be saved.

"I'll tell you a Bible story, Willy, to explain it," and I opened my Bible at Mark x. 46.

"Oh ma'am, please, it's easier to understand you tell it; the book words are so much harder."—"I do not think, Willy, you will find this word hard. God has written it so simply, that little children may learn and love it. Many children

have been led to Jesus." I then read to him the story of Bartimeus.

"Now, ma'am, will you please tell me what that blind man has to do with me; for I can't get my leg made well all of a sudden now."

"Willy, do you know you are just like that blind man?"—"I don't see how that can be. I've got two eyes, and can see as plain as possible."

"Yes; God has been so kind as to give you and me our bodily sight; but your poor heart is blind; every day is bringing you nearer to the world of spirits, and yet you have been living in sin—going on the straight road to hell."

"Yes, ma'am, but then I don't see as how I'm so much to blame. I've scarcely ever heard a word of these things; and father and the men are mostly drunk and cursing."

"Well, now at least you have been told of Jesus. Will you come to him?"—"I don't see as how I can; he's not in the world now."

"Yet, Willy, he is near us, in this very room. Just as you cannot see your soul, so you cannot see God, because he is a Spirit."

"Then how can I go to him like the blind man?"—"Why, lift your heart to him, think of him, believe his word, believe he is present listening to you, and pray to him; tell him all your thoughts and wants; tell him how you have forgotten him up to this time."

"I don't know how to pray; I don't know what I want, except not to go to the place of torment."—"Well, begin with the blind man's prayer: 'Jesus have mercy on me.'"

"Yes, ma'am, but I don't see now how I'll know he hears me. He won't answer me aloud."—"No, Willy, but he has had this story, and all his Bible, written for us. They are God's own message to us; and you must simply believe the message, and, like Bartimeus, rise, and come to him, and expect he will change your heart."

"I should think, ma'am, if it's true he died for us, he must want to save us."—"Yes, he has sent me here this morning to tell you of him; and you must take the message I bring you from him, just as if you heard him speak aloud. Here is a little Bible for you; and when I am gone,