

THE SEVEN APPLES.

One day Robert's father saw him playing with some boys who were rude and unmannerly. He had observed for some time a change for the worse in his son, and now he knew the cause. He was very sorry, but he said nothing to Robert at the time. In the evening he brought from the garden six rosy cheeked apples, put them on a plate and presented them to Robert. He was much pleased at his father's kindness, and thanked him. "You must lay them aside for a few days, that they may become mellow," said the father; and Robert cheerfully placed the apples in his mother's store room.

Just as he was putting them aside his father laid on the plate the seventh apple, and desired him to allow it to remain there.

"But, father," said Robert, "this apple will spoil all the others."

"Do you think so? Why should not the fresh apples rather make the rotten one fresh?" said his father; and with these words he shut the door of the room.

Eight days afterward he asked his son to open the door and take out the apples. But what a sight presented itself! The six apples which had been so round and rosy-cheeked were quite rotten and spread a bad smell through the room.

"Father," cried he, "did I not tell you that the rotten apple would spoil the good ones? You did not listen to me."

"My boy," said the father, "have I not told you often that the company of bad children will make you bad? Yet do you listen to me! See in the state of the apples that which will happen to you if you keep company with wicked boys."

A BAND OF MERCY BOY.

A short time ago, as I was crossing Market Street, near Twenty-second street, a boy, not over ten years old, who had been walking just before me, ran into the street and picked up a broken glass pitcher. I supposed he intended the pieces as missiles, since the desire to throw something seems instinct in every boy. Consequently, I was much surprised when he tossed the pieces into a vacant lot at the corner and walked quietly on. As he passed me, whistling, I said:

"Why did you pick up that pitcher?"

"I was afraid it might cut some horse's foot," he replied.

"My next question was a natural one:

"Are you a Band of Mercy boy?"

He smiled as he said:

"O, yes; that's why I did it."

The bands of mercy were drawn very closely around the dear little fellow's heart, I am sure.—*School and Home.*

HAVE YOU A HEART?

DR. MOFFAT, the African traveller and missionary, used to tell the following story: Not long ago a woman came to me, bringing a boy with her, having travelled fifteen miles, and she said she wished for a New Testament. She brought the price in her hand. I said to her: "My good woman, there is not a copy to be had."

"What! Am I to return empty?"

"I fear you will."

"Oh," said she, "I borrowed a copy once, but the owner has come and taken it away, and now I sit with my family sorrowful, because we have no Book to talk to us. My boy can read, and he is teaching me to read. He reads and I pray. Now we are far from any one else. We are living at a cattle outpost, and we have no one to teach us but the Book. Oh," said she, in true Sechuana style, "go and try to find a Book. O my father! O my mother! O my elder brother! do go and try to find a Book for me. Surely there is one to be found; do not let me go back empty."

I felt for her, for she spoke earnestly and feelingly, until I began to feel my own eyes a little watery, and I said, "Wait a little, and I will see what I can do."

I searched here and there, and at last I found a copy and brought it to the good woman. Oh, could you have seen how her eyes brightened, how she clasped my hands and kissed them over and over again! Away she went with her Book, rejoicing with a heart overflowing with gratitude.

"Oh," she said, "I knew you had a heart. I told you you had a heart!"

Reader, is your heart touched by the thought that millions, both at home and far away, do not yet know the Gospel? And are you doing all you can to help to send it to them?—*Bible Society Gleanings.*

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