

"RED DAVE";

Or, "What wilt Thou have me to do?"

(From the Family Friend.)

CHAPTER IV.

DR. MEADOWS.

"Davie, I want you to go up to Sunnyside this morning, with this new medicine for Master Wilfred. His father has consented to try it at last, but he ought to take it before dinner, so make haste."

"Yes, sir; I've left all the medicine you put out in the surgery."

"That's a good boy; and I find you mixed those powders as well as I could have done them myself. I shall make a doctor of you yet."

"You'd make anything of anybody," said Davie, with something like a sob in his voice; "there ain't not a boy in the market-place would know me now."

"No, you don't look much like the little chap I found lying asleep under the glare of the policeman's bull's-eye."

"He were a-going to take me to the work'us, weren't he?"

"Yes, but I told him that I could get you into the Royal Home, so he gave you up to me, but the Home was full, and I could not turn you adrift, so I had to trust you as my errand-boy, and I shall trust you no longer unless you hurry now to Sunnyside."

Davie rushed off with the bottle; he loved going to Sunnyside, for little Wilfred was quite a hero to him, and the strong, healthy boy was no less a wonder in the eyes of poor Wilfred.

When Dr. Joyce's partner, Dr. Meadows, brought the outcast into the surgery at Mereham, and told how he had found him asleep beside a dead woman on the bridge, Dr. Joyce at once declared he was a gaol-bird, and said he should not be employed in that surgery.

But Dr. Meadows had taken a fancy to the little red-haired fellow, which was not at all surprising, since he always did take a fancy to anything or anybody helpless, and he declared he meant to befriend the lad.

"Since we share the surgery," said he, "let him do his work at my end, and you can get another lad to carry out your prescriptions."

Davie, however, had been at his post more than a year, and both partners knew him now as a sharp, trustworthy boy; Doctor Joyce had ceased to treat him slightly, and though always stern, he sometimes praised his quickness and ability.

But Dr. and Mrs. Meadows—he said it was his wife, and his wife said it must be the baby—between them had done a Christ-like work towards the little outcast. Who would have recognized in their smart, bright-faced "buttons" the little gaol-bird who looked to the darkened sky and said, "Our Father?"

Doctor Meadows believed in Davie's innocence of the theft, and Davie knew he believed it. This was the first source of the great influence he possessed with the child; in Davie's eyes, Doctor Meadows was nearly perfect. He it was who clothed, fed, and housed him when the managers of the Boys' Home found their rooms so crowded that they were compelled to refuse another inmate; he it was who conquered Davie's fear of Dr. Joyce, and who taught the lad to read, write, and work sums for an hour every evening; he it was above all who gave Davie a place in his Sunday-school class, and by word and example led him to the Saviour who had shown him the evil of his past, and taken all Davie's

and Master Willie was so feared of the coffin."

"No talk of coffins here, and no talk of Jesus," said the doctor, striking his fist on the table, and making Davie shake in his shoes. "I don't believe in Him, and I don't choose to have religion brought into my house. You must not go near my lad unless you promise to avoid the subject altogether."

"Not talk of Jesus, sir!" cried Davie, blankly.

"Not a word."

"But, please, sir, I must; I loves Him best of all."

"See here, Davie—the boy frets after you—it's only a little thing I ask. And if you please me in this, I'll give you half a crown."

Now Davie had tried long to



"AND NOW THE HYMN, DAVIE DEAR."

poor little heart for His own forever and ever.

When the boy reached Sunnyside, he was told that Wilfred was so ill as to be in bed, and he was turning sadly away, when the doctor called him saying, "Willie likes to chat with you; go up and have dinner with him; I'll tel Meadows I kept you."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" cried the boy in great delight.

"But mind, not one word of church talk; I hear you've been putting all sorts of notions into my lad's head, about things that will frighten him to death."

"No, indeed, sir; I wouldn't frighten him for all the world. I only told him as how Jesus wouldn't never let us keep in the coffin if we trust in Him. Doctor Meadows says we go to heaven;

purchase a pair of tiny blue shoes for Dr. Meadows' baby girl, but was yet some distance short of the price; the money therefore seemed a temptation at first, but only for a moment.

"Please, sir,—it's no good promising—I couldn't help talking about Jesus. And Master Wilfred—I does love him, too—suppose he was to get lost, and me know it was for the want of me telling him?"

"You telling him! you teach a gentleman's son!"

"I know he's a gentleman, sir, but nobody hain't told him about Jesus."

"You are an impudent fellow; get out of the house."

"Please, sir," said the frightened voice, "I didn't go for to be imp'dent, please, sir."

Away down the garden he went, but ere he reached the gate, the doctor's voice came after him. "Here, you young chatter-box, go and keep my lad company, while I see my patients, and don't let him push off the bed-clothes."

A happy boy was Davie when Wilfred's little white hands lay in his own after dinner, and the child learnt from him some of the texts that the doctor had taught him at the Sunday-school.

Willie never talked now of getting well; he understood better than any one else did that he would soon leave his dear home of Sunnyside; but now that he had heard of the Friend "beyond all others," his little voice framed many a secret prayer to the Lord who was able to take care of him all along the dark valley.

"And now the hymn, Davie dear," said he; "I showed father the hymn-book you gave me, and all he said was, 'Don't sing too much—it will hurt your chest!' But what do you think? Mother had a Bible, like yours, for auntie has been keeping it all this time; I heard her talking about it to papa, and he says I may have any book of hers I like, so I'll have a Bible of my own."

"And you can read so beautiful, Master Willie! I wish I could read like you."

"Oh, you can do lots more than I can, but I'll be strong when I go to Jesus, won't I Davie? Now do sing to me once before you go;" and the doctor, opening the door of his consulting-room, heard two boyish voices, one strong and clear, and the other, oh, how feeble! blended in the lov' sweet hymn—

"There is a green hill far away,  
Without a city wall,  
Where the dear Lord was crucified,  
Who died to save us all.

He died that we might be forgiven,  
He died to make us good,  
That we might go at last to heaven,  
Saved by His precious blood."

CHAPTER V.

GOING HOME.

It was a beautiful afternoon in early spring; the river danced in the sunlight, the trees were budding into sweet, fresh green, and the sky was of a deep cloudless blue.

By the river-bank went Davie, whistling for gladness of heart; good Dr. Meadows sent him every day now, when his morning work was done, to the Board School at Bankside, and though at present in a very low class, the master said that if he continued to work as well as he was doing at present, he should soon be quite proud of him as a pupil. The Board School was not very far from Sunnyside; Willie could hear the boys shouting in the play-ground, and the voice of the master who drilled them. He lay listening to the sounds of life and health very patiently on his bed; this mild, fair weather had made no change in little Willie's health.