

senger and the chariot of God came, but poor Aleck was found kneeling by a tree, stone dead.

This miracle of grace has never been effaced from our mind and heart, and after more than thirty years we write out this simple story. Poor Aleck is, no doubt, among the glorified saints. We can almost hear him yet singing:—

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want:
More than all in thee I find."

Good Autumn Days.

THE magic voice of spring is gone,
Her emerald blades are turning brown,
The Dandelion's ball of lace
Has given place to Thistle-down.
Violets that caught the dew
Hide beneath their bonnets blue,
At orchard blossoms, pure and sweet,
Have long since withered in the heat.

The sickle, sharp and keen, has reaped
The meadow flowers, rows on rows
The Barley lies in winnowed heaps,
And aftermath luxuriant grows;
The Sumachs tall, all touched with change,
Form crimson hedge around the grange,
And floating, now, my path across,
On gauzy wings, is Milkweed's floss.

O, Maples, all in scarlet dressed;
O, spike of fiery Golden Rod;
O, purple Asters, everywhere
Uppringing from the sere-grown sod;
O, blue-fringed Gentian, growing tall,
Thou comest when the leaflets fall,
Sweet flowers to bloom 'neath golden haze
That glorify glad autumn days.

Teachers' Department.

John Merwin's Venture.

BY THE REV. E. A. RAND.

"JOHN, just venture!"

"I want to, Frank; I certainly want to do it; but when I come to open my mouth, and say anything to my boys on the subject of religion, the mouth is open but the message isn't there. There I sit, wanting to speak; but I am as dumb as if I had never been able to say a word. I tried it once or twice, and then gave it up."

"Try it again, John. Don't give it up. Just venture. I don't believe God would give you the impulse to speak unless he put some word behind the impulse. And then, this is to be remembered, I don't think it is always what we say, but if our scholars see us anxious somehow to influence them to lead new and prayerful lives, that affects them, though the sermon we preach may be exceedingly poor. Just venture, John! Step out and trust God."

"Well, I will."

"Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

They met one day in the office of the Berwick, two old friends and Sunday-school workers—John Merwin and Frank Arlington. John was a resident of the city, who chanced to step into the office of the Berwick on a matter of business, and there met his old friend from Chicago.

"I am just here on business for a day or two," explained Frank, "and I brought my boy, Will, with me—he is lonely at home, you know, since his mother died, for only the housekeeper is there—and I put up at the Berwick: sort of a home-like place, though a bit old-fashioned."

As the conversation was continued, the subject of Sunday school came up, and John had mentioned one of his difficulties, indicated above.

The next day was Sunday, and John's thoughts were still on the subject of yesterday. The lesson

in the Sunday school was that of Christ as Friend. The pastor came into the school that day—a very desirable thing, if he can be in every Sunday—and he spoke upon the subject of the lesson. He did not spin out his thoughts till they were tiresome, but in a few words—warm and tender and sympathetic, because coming from the heart—he showed how we all need a divine-human friend, and Christ was that Friend.

"I would like to say a few personal words to that new boy in my class," thought John Merwin. The new boy had a shy face, with big, startled eyes, and for some reason John Merwin's heart went out to him.

"I—I will take Frank Arlington's advice," he thought, "and just venture."

In the silence of his thoughts he asked the Saviour to give and bless the word he was about to say for him; and turning the new scholar on the shoulder as he was, going out of school at its close, whispered, "I hope you will take that Friend as yours—you need him."

"There," thought the teacher, "I did get out something this time."

But how did the scholar receive it? He lifted his large, dark eyes to John Merwin's face, looked sorrowfully, and without a word walked away. The teacher was discouraged.

"Afraid I made a mistake," was his reflection.

"He didn't look as if he liked it. And I didn't take the new scholar's name, either. What an omission!"

John Merwin was very particular about his class registry, and here he had forgotten to ask the boy for his address.

"I suppose," thought John, "I was so intent on saying something I feared he did not like, that I forgot all about his name. Well, I will find out next Sunday."

The next Sunday the new scholar was not at school; neither did any one know about him.

"I guess," said Charlie Jarvis—one of the boys always on hand with a "guess"—that he lives down in Back Alley. He came out of it, I thought, and I saw him on the sidewalk, and asked him in."

"Please inquire round there," said the teacher. "It is a poor neighbourhood, and it may be somebody who really needs us."

Charlie, however, expected to receive a new Bible, the trophy promised by the superintendent for every new scholar. He did not want to "inquire round there," and, perhaps, find out that the boy was not coming again, and so lose his prize. As it was, a new scholar had been reported by Charlie, and as the new scholar would be expected again every Sunday, by the time it was concluded he was not coming Charlie would have his Bible.

"I expect I drove that boy away," thought John. He could not forget the boy, though. Oftentimes his big, black eyes would be seen by John, and as the teacher's "venture" was sincere, he sometimes asked God to bless the poor little word spoken, and not let the seed shrivel and die for the want of the Spirit's gracious rain.

A few months later he had occasion to step again into the Berwick. He had hardly entered the office when he was suddenly asked by a porter, "Are you a minister?"

"Well," said John, smiling, "do I look like one?"

"Oh, beg pardon!" said the man. "I knew that upstairs they had sent for one, or wanted to send—little feller is dreadful sick, and they are strangers, you know—and I felt interested—"

"Strangers?" asked John, his sympathies aroused by the word. "If no minister has come, why, I know of one."

"You might just step up and tell them," suggested the porter. I sort of took to the boy."

John Merwin was touched by the man's earnestness, and said, "If they are strangers, they may not know where to send, and—and—I will just run up and find out about them, if you will show me the way."

"Oh, yes, certainly. I know they will be glad to see anybody who—"

In the excitement of his interest, he did not finish his sentence, but ran ahead to guide this good Samaritan.

When John was admitted to the sick room, he saw a woman dressed as a nurse, and on the bed, amid the white sheets, was a face as white as they, and out of it looked large, expressive eyes that John Merwin knew he had seen before.

"I came to see—"

"You don't remember me," said a thin, husky voice, interrupting his sentence, while a white hand feebly beckoned him. He went at once, and knelt by the side of the boy's bed, and took in his own grasp the little hand.

"Don't—don't you—remember what—you said to me—one Sunday—about a friend?"

"Are you the boy?"

"Yes—and I—found Him. What—you said—it set—me to praying—I am not—afraid. The doctor—told us—I could not—get well—this morning—but I'm not afraid—Jesus is there—and mother—is there—and—"

He stopped, and the weary eyes were closed.

"You want me to pray with you?" asked John.

"Yes," whispered the boy.

"Well, I'll say the Lord's Prayer, and you can follow me if you don't feel too tired."

That sweet prayer the Saviour taught us went up from that room of death, and at intervals a weak, faltering voice added its note of supplication. John Merwin commended to a Shepherd's arms this lamb of the flock caught in the driving death-storm, and then left, promising to send his pastor.

"Why, Frank Arlington!" he exclaimed, when he reached his office, seeing his old friend there. "You in town? Where are you hurrying? Do you know I have just come from the bedside of a little fellow whom I said a word to one Sunday, encouraged by something you told me, and he is upstairs, dying, but holding on to that strong Friend I recommended—Why, what's the matter, Frank?"

"It was—it was," sobbed his old friend, through the hands that covered his face, "my boy—you—talked with, John."

"In the Morning."

MUCH might be said on the wisdom of taking a constantly fresh view of life. It is one of the moral uses of the night that it gives the world anew to us every morning, and of sleep that it makes life a daily recreation. If we always saw the world, we might grow weary of it. If a third of life were not spent in unconsciousness, the rest might become tedious. God is thus all the while presenting the cup of life afresh to our lips. Thus, after a night of peaceful sleep, we behold the world as new and fresh and wonderful as it was on the first morning of creation, when God pronounced it very good. And sleep itself has a divine alchemy that gives us to ourselves with our primitive energy of body and mind. The days are not mere repetitions of themselves; to-morrow will have another meaning; I shall come to it with larger vision than I have to-day.

Those are marked for ruin that are deaf to reproof and good counsel.