

THE
SILVER
DOLLAR
AND
WHAT CAME OF IT.

GALL & INGLIS
EDINBURGH

LONDON



Mrs Morris was welcomed by Susan Wilson, a neat-looking girl about thirteen years of age.—p. 18.

THE

Silver Dollar.

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The Silver Dollar.

‘Is Mary asleep, my son?’

‘Yes, mother, fast asleep at last; but she did not stop frolicking for a good while after you left her and came down stairs. She kept lifting up her head and peeping at me, and saying ‘Johnny! Johnny!’

‘I suppose she wanted me to play with her. But Annie whispered to me to take no notice of her; so I looked steadily on my book and did not smile, though it was pretty hard to keep from laughing, she looked so funny, and her voice sounded so sweetly; and at last she lay quite still, and now she is fast asleep. Will you come now, mother?’

‘Yes, my child,’ said Mrs Hallam, as she took the little boy by the hand, and left the

parlour where she had been sitting with her own parents.

It was Sunday evening ; and Mrs Hallam was in the habit of spending an hour or two in conversation with her little son on that evening before he went to bed.

John always had a text or a hymn to repeat to his mother, and she would talk about it and explain it ; and she would often speak of heaven and of the glorious resurrection at the last day, when the bodies of all who have loved the blessed Saviour and kept his commandments shall awake from their long repose in the grave, and be united again to their happy spirits to dwell for ever in the presence and service of God.

Alas ! for those who, having neglected their duty to God in this life, shall then awake to 'shame and everlasting contempt !'

John loved his mother very much, and always listened to her conversation with delight, especially when she talked about these things. He was a thoughtful boy, but yet of a cheerful disposition and happy temper. Though he was but ten years old, he had seen changes and felt sorrow.

He could well remember the time when his mother, and Mary, and he lived in their own home before his father died. He remembered when Mary was taken, for the first time, to church. She was a sweet little child. And how his little brother William, who had been his companion and play-fellow, was sick a good while, and at last died ; and how he was lifted up to kiss him for the last time, as he lay in his coffin, with white flowers upon his bosom. He remembered that his father and mother wept much, and he himself felt very lonely for a long time. And it was now only two years since he stood by his father's grave, and cried bitterly when he saw him laid by the side of Willie.

Then his grandfather had brought him, with his mother and Mary, and Annie the nurse, to his own house. He was happy and contented here ; but often thought of the pleasant home they left, and of his own beloved father, and especially of his last kind words to him, when he laid his hand upon his head, and blessed him, as he bade him farewell, and said, ' he hoped that he would love his Bible and his Saviour, that when his

life in this world was ended, he might join him in that happy world where sorrow is unknown.'

On this Sunday evening John was particularly happy. He had just received a birth-day present from his grandfather. It was a very nice, new Bible, on the first blank leaf of which was written,

' A birth-day gift to my dear grandson,
JOHN MORRIS HALLAM.'

' Remember now thy Creator in the days
of thy youth.'

Besides this, his grandmother had given him a SILVER DOLLAR,* which she told him he could spend just as he pleased ; but to bear in mind that a dollar might do considerable good if it were spent wisely. John, of course, felt quite rich. This day he carried his new Bible to church, found the text, and listened attentively to the sermon, and thought he understood a good deal of it. He was now prepared to repeat the text to his mother, and gladly went with her to her chamber, where he had placed a large chair before the comfortable fire, and Annie had drawn up the table.

* An American coin worth about four shillings.

As they entered the room, he said, 'Mother, just look at Mary. I think she is as pretty as any of the pictures I have seen in books ; and she is almost laughing now, though she is asleep. Is she not a sweet little sister?'

'Yes, my dear, she is very lovely, and a treasure for which we must be grateful to God who gave her. You, too, are a great comfort to me, John. Mary is very young, not yet three years old, and cannot remember our own home, and your father and Willie ; but you are much older, and can remember them well. Your sympathy has been a solace to me in times of sorrow, and you are now my beloved child, my dearest earthly companion.'

The text which John repeated to his mother, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,' was one from which he had heard the minister preach in church.

'Mother,' said he, 'Mr Mandeville said that the word *gospel* is a Saxon word, and means *good tidings*. What is a Saxon word?'

'You are not much acquainted with history yet, my child ; but you can find where England is on your map, and you know that our forefathers came from that country two or

three hundred years ago, and that we speak the English language. The Saxons were some of the ancient inhabitants of England, and we have many of their words in our language. The word *gospel* is made up from two words ; *God*, which means *good*, and *spel*, which means *tidings*. Our Saviour came into the world to bring good tidings ; and when his ministry here was ended, and he was about to leave the world and return to his Father, he told his apostles, who had been with him and learned the things which he taught, that they must teach them to others.

The text you have repeated is the command he gave them. God, in his goodness, has sent us the gospel to make us happy ; and because he loves all people, and wishes all to be happy, he commands that it should be preached to every creature.

‘ There are many false religions in the world, but they do not make people happy as Christianity does, because they did not come from God. He who made us, knows the heart of man perfectly, and knows just what will suit our necessities.’

There is another beautiful expression of the

same idea —the gospel is called in the Irish tongue ‘The story of peace?’ The prophets in the Old Testament foretold the coming of Christ, and gave the most glowing description of the blessings he would bring. ‘Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.’ ‘O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain: O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid, say unto the cities of Judah, behold your God.’

The whole book of Isaiah is full of beautiful passages relating to the character and preaching of our Saviour, and the kind, benevolent acts he should perform. Some of these you have learned; and I am sure you know the song of the angels on the night of his birth.

‘O yes, mother: Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.’

Tears came into Mrs Hallam's eyes as her little boy repeated these verses, for she thought of the time when he learned them. It was the last Christmas before the death of his father.

John had then repeated them to his father, who was in very feeble health. 'My son,' said he, 'you are pleased with the excitement of this day, the gifts of your friends, the sweet hymns and anthems of praise you hear; but as you grow older and wiser, I trust a higher and nobler joy will fill your bosom at the remembrance of Christ's coming into the world, and that you will better understand the value of the precious gift of God's only Son.

'I shall never forget those verses,' said John, 'nor what my father said to me when I repeated them to him. I am sure father loved the Bible, because he was a minister, and I think I should like to be one too, when I am a man.'

'But first we must be very sure that you love it as he did, and have the same earnest desire to glorify God and be useful to your fellow-men that he had. And now, before I bid you good-night, I wish to tell you, that I trust you

will value the book you have in your hand, not only for its beautiful outside, and because it is your grandfather's gift, but chiefly because it is God's word, and contains those good tidings of which we have been speaking, and those heavenly precepts which are our only safe guide through life.'

John Hallam did not consider his Bible a book to be used only on Sundays, and laid carefully away all the rest of the week; but he was in the habit of reading a chapter every morning by himself, and when he went down into the parlour to attend family prayers, he took his own Bible along with him, and would find the chapter his grandfather read aloud, and follow attentively while he was reading it. To be sure, there were a great many things he could not understand, but then there was many a chapter that was very plain and instructive.

During the week after this conversation with his mother about the gospel, John often thought of what she said, and seldom took up his Bible without wishing that every boy in the world had one. He knew that there were many boys in the world, especially in heathen lands, who had no Bibles at all, and perhaps could

as she was, to see Agnes smile with delight on receiving her gift.

The kitten seemed to know Mary too, and be glad to see her, and many a good frolic they had together.

Sometimes Agnes would sing to the children ; for she had been a beautiful singer in her day, and still retained her voice wonderfully.

But there was one thing in their house which had a peculiar charm for John. This was a large edition of the Pilgrim's Progress, full of pictures, which Agnes had kept with great care for many years. He never tired of looking at the pictures, and asking questions about them. Some of them, such as Pope and Pagan, and Giant Despair, he could not quite comprehend ; but he understood and admired the picture of the Shepherd Boy in the Valley of Humiliation. He looked so peaceful and quiet there, in the green pastures, among the sheep and lambs, singing :—

He that is down, need fear no fall ;
He that is low, no pride ;
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.

I am content with what I have,
Little be it or much ;
And still contentment, Lord, I crave,
Because Thou lovest such.

Agnes would patiently answer all John's questions, and explain everything to him as far as she was able; and although she was a poor woman, whose advantages of education had been extremely small, he could learn many things from her, because she had long been growing in grace and religious experience, and possessed that refinement and elevation of character which true religion always imparts.

Winter had passed away, and the bright beautiful summer had now come.

One pleasant morning, just after breakfast, as Mrs Morris was walking in the garden with her little grandson, she said to him, 'Our strawberries look finely, John; they have borne remarkably well this year, and we have such an abundance, that if you know any family in the neighbourhood that has none, I should like very much to send them some. Can you think of any?'

'Well, grandmother,' replied John, 'there is Edward Wilson's mother; she is sick, you

know, and perhaps she would like some. Are they very poor, grandmother? Edward does not come to school now, and I only see him in the Sunday-school, and he wears very old-looking shoes, though his clothes are always clean and tidy.'

'I am glad you spoke of that family, my child. I must go and see them. Indeed, I have been intending to do so for some time. You ask me if they are poor. I never considered them very poor. The father is an industrious, hard-working man, and they have always appeared to live comfortably. Yet sickness is a sore trial, especially when long continued, and it brings many evils along with it. The sickness of Mrs Wilson must have increased their expenses, and perhaps has obliged them to deny themselves some things to which they have been accustomed. You may go with me this afternoon, and we will take a basket of fruit, and some other little things to Mrs Wilson. I believe you come out of school early to-day.'

'O yes, grandmother, it is Wednesday, and I shall come home at four o'clock. I shall like very much to go with you.'

John was ready in good time to set off on their errand of kindness. On the way they talked about various things. Mrs Morris asked John what kind of a boy Edward Wilson was.

‘Why, grandmother,’ said he, ‘he is what I should call a very *gentle* boy. I never heard him say any thing cross, or what would tease any other child, and sometimes I have seen the tears come into his eyes when other boys were rude to him. When he went to school, he used to ask me often about his lessons (you know I am a little older than he is); and he used to say that his mother had no time to help him, as my mother did me, and did not know as much about books either, though she was a real good mother. In one way and another I became pretty well acquainted with him; but now I only see him in the Sunday-school. I hope he is at home this afternoon.’

‘Is not that he in the little garden?’ inquired Mrs Morris, as they came near the house.

Oh yes, grandmother, that is he. Will you let me go and speak to him?’

‘Yes, John, you may stay in the garden with him, while I take the basket and go into the house to see his mother.’

John followed his grandmother through the gate, and ran off into the garden, while the door was opened, and Mrs Morris was welcomed by Susan Wilson, a neat-looking girl about thirteen years of age. But we will leave her quietly seated in the house, and look after the boys in the garden.

Edward was bending intently over a bed of strawberries, when John laid his hand on his shoulder, and said, ‘How are you, Edward?’

‘Oh, is it you, John?’ said Edward, looking up with surprise. ‘How glad I am to see you!’

‘What are you so busy about here, Neddy and why don’t you come to school now, as you used to do? I miss you very much.’

‘I believe you are the kindest boy in the world, John; at any rate, if you are as good to everybody as you have always been to me, they must all love you. I feel now just as if I could tell you all my troubles. I am not so sad to-day as I was before, but my heart is

full, and I am glad you have come, for I can talk with you, and I know you will feel pleased because I am pleased now.'

'Well, you shall tell me all about it. I know your mother is sick, and that is bad, and I am sorry for you. Come and sit down under this tree, and talk to me, just as if I were your brother, or your cousin.'

The two boys seated themselves on the grass in the shade, and Edward began his story.

'You see mother has been sick several weeks; very sick, indeed; and I have been so much afraid she would die, that I could not take any pleasure in any thing. Many nights I have been lying awake a long time, thinking how dreadful it would be to lose her, and wondering what would become of us. The only thing that gave me any comfort was, to pray that God would make her well again, and think how I would try to obey and please her in every thing, if she could only get better. Susan said it was a mercy that she was old enough to take care of mother, and us, and baby. But she could not do every thing. Father is obliged to be out at work every day to support us; and little Tommy must be

taken care of. We have to hire a woman to come and wash once every week, and then mother's medicines cost a good deal. That is why father had to take me from school—to save money, and we have saved in every way that we could. But then I do not mind being out of school so much, because I am glad to help Susan by taking care of Tommy; and sometimes, when mother feels able to listen, she likes me to read to her. The Sunday-school, you know, does not cost any thing, and I always go there.

But you have not heard all I am going to tell you,' continued Edward. 'I shall soon be better off, and have something of my own to give away. Do you see my strawberry beds? I have taken the whole care of them, besides the rest of our little garden. We only raise a few things, for father has very little time to spend in it. He only helps me a little, early in the morning, before he goes to work. This morning the doctor said to me as he came out here after he had seen mother,'

'Your garden looks nicely, Edward. I suppose you expect to feast on strawberries?'

'No, sir,' said I, 'I do not want them;

mother will have as many as you think she may eat, and I am going to sell the rest.'

'Then the doctor spoke very kindly, and said,

'Well, Edward, I think you will certainly make a good use of money, and I wish you to bring your strawberries to me as fast as you pick them. I will buy them all, and pay you whatever you ask for them.'

'I felt very thankful, and then ventured to ask him what he thought about mother. He said that she was a great deal better, and he thought she would be quite well in a few weeks. Oh, John, you do not know how happy this made me. I could not keep from crying.'

'I do not wonder you were overjoyed,' said John, 'and I think I should have cried for joy too, if I had been with you.'

'Well,' continued Edward, 'I know you will not laugh at me, so I will tell you just what I did. As soon as the doctor had gone, I went straight to my little chamber, and kneeled down to thank God that he had heard my prayer; and I thought that I should always trust in him, and pray to him more than I had ever done before. You know

there is a verse in the Psalms that says, "The Lord is good unto all that call upon him."'

'Yes,' said John, 'and everything in the Bible is true.'

'One thing more I want to tell you, and it is the only thing that troubles me now,' said Edward. 'Charles Nelson keeps threatening to come and eat my strawberries, and I am afraid he will. He always loved to tease me, and lately, whenever he is passing and sees me at work, he stops and looks through the fence, and says, "Take good care of them, Ned, for I expect to make a feast when they are ripe."'

'That would be a shame,' said John, indignantly, 'and he shall not do it if I can prevent him. No; I am sure he will not; he could not be so unkind. But I must go now, Edward; I see grandmother coming out of the house.'

The boys walked together to the gate. Mrs Morris spoke kindly to Edward, and invited him to come to her house some time when he had leisure; and then bidding him good night, went home with her grandson.

While John had been listening to Edward's story, and sympathizing with him, Mrs Morris

had found exercise for her benevolent feelings in the house. She was pleased to find Mrs Wilson getting better, and inquired particularly if there was any way in which she might assist the family. Mrs Wilson told her they managed to live comfortably by practising strict economy. She had, however, been obliged to keep Edward away from school. He was a good, obedient child, and had done all that he could to assist in the family during her illness.

Mrs Morris gave her some money to purchase a few things which she supposed would be useful and acceptable, and told her to place Edward at school again as soon as he could be spared from home, and she would pay his bill until his father should be quite able to do it again.

I have said that John Hallam was a thoughtful boy ; and it is not surprising that he should lie awake for more than an hour on the night after his visit at Mrs Wilson's, reflecting on his conversation with Edward. He was very much interested in him, and felt that he should be delighted to do anything in his power to oblige or please him.

One thing he determined upon ; that was, to find some means of preventing Charles Nelson from taking his strawberries, which he had so carefully cultivated. It was a shame that he should alarm him by such a threat, and it would indeed be cruel to put it in execution. John was really angry at the thought of it. He knew he would meet Charles at school the next morning, and he made up his mind to speak to him about it.

In the morning, before he went to school he told his mother what was passing in his mind, as well as all that Edward had said to him the day before.

Mrs Hallam, seeing that John was much excited, cautioned him against speaking angrily to Charles, and said she would be sorry to have any disagreement or unkind feelings spring up between them. Though it was wrong in Charles to tease another boy in that way, she did not believe he intended to do what he threatened. ‘ So speak mildly and affectionately to him, my son. He will be much more likely to see that he has been unkind to Edward, than if you show an angry spirit. That would only irritate him, and

perhaps make the matter worse. You may tell him if hereally wants strawberries, he may come home with you, and we will give him some.'

'I will try, mother,' replied John.

As John was walking to school, he saw Charles at a little distance before him. He soon overtook him, and they went on together. As they passed Mrs Wilson's house, they saw, through the fence, that Edward was busy in his garden picking strawberries. Charles stopped, and was going to speak, but John took hold of his arm, and said, 'No, no, Charles, don't let us disturb him.'

'I don't care about stopping,' said Charles, as they passed on, 'only sometimes I like to tease Ned, he is so chicken-hearted ; and he cries as easily as a baby.'

'I should say he is very tender-hearted,' said John, 'and he has lately felt very sad. His mother has been sick, and he thought she would die. I wish you would not tease him, Charles. I am his friend, and I would rather be teased myself than to see him teased. I could bear it better.'

'Oh, I did not know that ; I am sorry if I have troubled him. He is always working

over that garden, and sometimes I have told him I would come and eat his strawberries when they were ripe. Of course, I was only in fun; for you know we have plenty of fruit at home.'

'But he was afraid you were in earnest, and it made him feel very anxious indeed, for he has his own plans about his strawberries, and if you knew all he told me, you would never say anything unkind to him again.'

'Well then, John, I shall just stop there as I go home from school, and tell him I did not mean it, and he need not be afraid of me. I am sure I would not do it for the world.'

John was very glad of this; and after school the two boys stopped together to see Edward, and his heart was soon set at ease about the matter.

When John told his mother how pleasantly it had been settled, she rejoiced with him.

'You see, my son,' said she, 'how easily we may distress others by speaking carelessly. Charles had no intention of doing wrong to Edward, and yet by indulging his love of teasing he caused him much anxiety. He knew that Edward was sensitive, and for that

reason should have been careful to avoid wounding his feelings. But he has done what all generous and right-minded persons will do. As soon as he became sensible of his fault, he confessed it, and tried to make all the reparation in his power.

Not long after the event just mentioned, John was sent one day to the cottage to carry a small parcel to Agnes. As he came in sight of Mrs Wilson's house, which was on his way, he thought how pleasant it would be to have Edward to join him in his walk, and stopped to invite him. Edward's mother was quite willing that he should accompany John, and they set off in very good spirits.

'How pleasant everything looks this evening, John,' said Edward.

'Yes,' replied John, 'so I have been thinking as I came along; and see what a pretty bunch of wild flowers I have picked on the way. I shall give them to Agnes.'

'But she is blind. Will she care for flowers? Oh! how dreadful it must be to be blind. Sometimes I have been at her house with my mother, and I always wondered how she could be so cheerful.'

‘Agnes likes flowers very much ; but we will talk about her on our way back. Now, I want you to tell me when you are coming to school ; and how you made out with your strawberries.’

‘I am coming to school to-morrow, John, for mother is almost well now. She sits up more than half the time, and has been mending my clothes to get me ready. This morning I carried the last of my strawberries to the doctor, and he paid me for the whole. Only think of it ! He gave me a whole dollar, and told me I deserved it, for I had earned it. I was surprised to find he was going to pay me so much money, and felt as rich as a king. But as I intended to divide my money with my sister Susan, I asked him to be so good as to give me two half dollars instead. Then he gave me two half dollars, and I am going to give one of them to Susan to-night. Now, don't you think I am one of the happiest boys in the world ? I would not change places even with you, and live in your beautiful house.’

The boys had by this time reached the place. Agnes was sitting near the door with

her knitting work in her hands. She knew John's voice the moment he spoke.

John gave her the parcel with his mother's errand, and then laid in her lap the flowers he had brought.

'I thank you,' said Agnes, 'they are very sweet, and I know them all, though I cannot see them now. Here are honeysuckles, and daisies, and sweet-brier, and violets, all old friends of mine, for I delighted in them when I could go and gather them myself, and look at their beautiful forms and colours. Even now, I can "consider the lillies," and remember the lesson our Saviour taught, of confidence in God, who "so clothes the grass of the field," and provides for the "fowls of the air."''

'Then you are not unhappy because you are blind?' said John, inquiringly.

'Not unhappy! my dear child. No, indeed; for I have a better light than that of the sun; it is the light of God's countenance. I had many years of good health and the perfect use of all my faculties before this affliction came upon me, and I remember these years with gratitude. If my eyes are closed against outward things for a few years before I lie

down in the dust, it is God's will, and I cannot complain. My children read the Bible to me, and I can sing and pray, and rejoice in my hope of heaven, and look forward to the time when this corruptible shall put on incorruption.'

'But what would you do without religion?' asked John.

'Alas! my case should be sad indeed! Darkness without, and darkness within. I often think of the poor heathen, and pray that the gospel may soon be preached to all the world. But there are many, John, in this Christian land, and I pity them as much, who are without the true light of religion in their souls. Read this little tract, which will shew you how much we need to do all we can to send this blessed gospel to the dark places of the land.' John sat down and read the following narrative by Rev. Mr Knill:—

'I love a religious tradesman,' said a celebrated author, and so say I. Men of this class are among the most honourable of the land; they carry their holy principles into the various duties of life, and shine as lights in the

world. Such men must exert a mighty influence on society ; and happily they are greatly on the increase. Much of what is done for the support of religion at home, and for the spread of religion abroad, is done by the hands, and tongues, and purses, and families of religious tradesmen.

Close by the side of those excellent persons I shall place my Russian tailor. His short and simple narrative has been told to deeply affected multitudes, and not a few have acknowledged the benefit they have derived from his example. I now give it a more permanent form, in the hope that readers, as well as hearers, may be benefited by it.

When he was quite a young man he visited England, and became a sailor. He first sailed in a Liverpool slave-ship, and made no less than six voyages from the coast of Africa to the West Indies. The account which he gives of the horrors of the slave trade is dreadful. He was 'in deaths oft,' both among the negroes and the white men, but God preserved him. After this he entered 'the king's service, and was with Nelson at the battle of the Nile. In this battle he lost an eye, and for this he

was discharged; but it is a lamentable fact, that the mortality which he witnessed in the slave-ship, and his near escape from death in the battle where he lost his eye, produced no sorrow for sin, no desire to prepare to meet his God. No, the stony heart became like adamant. There was no pious friend near him in either of these situations to warn, exhort, and entreat. No man of God there to direct him to that Saviour who could 'open his eyes, and turn him from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that he might obtain the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified,' Acts xxvi. v. 18. How deplorable is the state of men so circumstanced! How pitiable in general is the lot of a sailor, especially the sailor who is long from home, without a Sabbath, or a preacher, or any thing to remind him of God! How ought the situation of such men to awaken the zeal of the church, until 'every ship become a Bethel, and every sailor's heart a temple for the Holy Ghost!'

Now, being discharged from the navy, and having spent all his cash, he betook himself to his old trade, and a quiet life on shore. For

some years he worked as a journeyman in London, and afterwards went to St Petersburg, and became a foreman in an extensive business; but he carried so much of 'the man of war' into the shop, and at times became so stormy, and swore so horribly, that the master was compelled to give the foreman his discharge. He then commenced business for himself, and entered into the honourable state of matrimony; he became very obliging, and his trade prospered.

My acquaintance with him began in the following manner:—As I was conversing with one of my congregation, he said to me, 'I have lately met with a member of the Russian church who is uncommonly fond of the English. He has been in England, and speaks our language well. If you have any thing to do in his way, I wish you would employ him.' 'In what way is he engaged?' I enquired. 'He is a draper and tailor, and has a prosperous business.'

Some months after this, one of my young friends visited England, and on his return brought me a piece of Yorkshire cloth for a coat, and I sent it to the Russian tailor to

make it for me ; this he soon accomplished, and brought it home himself. Just at the moment that he called I had a gentleman with me on business, so I said to the tailor, 'Sit down for a few minutes, and I will come to you ; in the meantime, read this little book,' and I put a tract into his hand.

I soon returned, and paid him his bill ; and as he was going away, he said, 'I hope you are pleased with your coat.'

'Yes,' I replied, 'I am much pleased with my coat ! how are you pleased with my book ?'

'Oh,' said he, 'I never trouble myself about books.'

'Do you not ? I am sorry for that ; you are getting an old man, and if you do not trouble yourself about books, I fear there is something else which you neglect.'

'What is that, sir ?'

'Why, your precious soul. "And what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul !"'

'Ah,' said he, 'I guess what you mean ; you think I ought to become religious.'

'Yes, that is it.'

‘Dear me, sir,’ he replied, ‘it would be impossible for me to carry on my large business if I were religious.’

‘You astonish me ; how would religion interfere with your business ?’

‘Why, if I were religious, then I must go to church on Sundays.’

‘To be sure you would ; aye, and you would rejoice when Sunday came, that you might hear something of God and salvation.’

‘I tell you, sir, that it would be impossible with my business. I have thirty men, and I pay most of my bills, and receive most of my money on Sunday ; it is my busiest day.’

‘What ! do you never go to church ?’

‘Never.’

‘This is worse and worse. You say you do not read good books, and you do not go to church ; depend upon it you are going to hell. I have long thought that no man would go to heaven merely because he read the Bible, and went to church ; but I am deeply convinced that the man who neglects these things, is not going to heaven. How can you live so ? Do you not believe there is a God ?’

At this he looked angrily at me, and said, ‘God, sir ! God ! Have you ever seen God ?’

‘One of your hearers wished to present you with a new coat, and I have brought it. I hope you will not be angry.’

I answered, I am not in the habit of being angry with any person, but especially with one who would give me a new coat; pray, what kind friend has done this?

‘Ah,’ said he, ‘that is a part of the business; he will not tell you his name.’

‘Is it a young man?’

He answered, ‘No.’

‘Is it an old man?’

‘Yes, an old man with a grey head.’

There he stood by my side, with his hair as white as milk, but I had no conception that he was the man.

‘Perhaps, you will tell my wife, who it was.’

‘Yes, I am not bound to keep it from Mrs _____.’

So I left them, and he told my wife that he was the person who had given me this coat. Of course I soon knew it; and very peculiar were the feelings produced in my mind by the transaction. A few days afterwards I met him in the street, and said to him,

‘Now, sir, I know who my benefactor is, and I am greatly obliged to you for this kindness ! but do tell me what induced you to give me the coat ?’

At this he burst into tears, and said, ‘ Ah, sir, if God had not changed my heart, I never should have thought of giving you the coat.’

‘ Thank you,’ said I, ‘ for this explanation, and if it be connected with a change of heart, then the coat is invaluable.’ He then gave me a striking proof that his heart was changed indeed. He began to consult me about the spiritual good of his people. ‘ I want to ask you, sir, what I should do for my men ; I feel very much about their souls. What do you think I should do for them ? should I give them copies of the Testament ?’

I was delighted to behold this mark of spiritual life in his own soul, and urged him by all means to give them the Scriptures. This encouraged him. His youth seemed renewed like the eagle’s. He ran home and called his men together, and said to them, ‘ I have something to propose to you, my lads ;’ then turning to one, he said, ‘ Can you read ?’ ‘ Yes, sir, I read Swedish.’ To another, ‘ Can you read ?’

‘Yes, sir, I read German.’ To a third, ‘Can you read?’ ‘Yes, I read Finish.’ To a fourth, ‘Can you read?’ ‘Yes, I read Russ.’ Having ascertained how many of his people could read, and in what languages, he came to me again, saying, ‘Now, sir, I want to buy books in all these languages; for I am resolved that no man who is able to read shall remain in my employ without a copy of the blessed New Testament.’

Reader, think what a great moral reformation it would produce in this world, if all our manufacturers, and merchants, and tradesmen, were to imitate this example.

The inquiry he thus made led to another discovery. He not only found out who could read, but he also found out who could not read, and for them he bought spelling-books, and set the readers to teach them; for he also resolved that every man and boy in his works who could not read should be instructed.

In addition to all this, he usually spent half an hour in the evening with them in reading and explaining the Scriptures. The sight was at once novel and affecting. The old man would fix upon a chapter, then they

would all read the same verse in their different languages, and then the master would give them a short exposition of it in the Russian language, which they all understood. By this means his house passed through as great a change as the master. Instead of being polluted with worldly occupations on the Lord's day, now part of every day was turned into a Sabbath. Prayer and praise and religious instruction were carried on daily. The voice of joy, thanksgiving, and praise, were heard in the tabernacle of the righteous.

‘Now,’ said Agnes, ‘this incident occurred in a Christian land, and I hope, when you grow up to be a man, you too will try to send the precious gospel to the perishing souls who know not, or care not, for the Saviour.’

‘But it is growing late, and I must not keep you any longer ; so good night, and may God bless you both, and make you his own children.’

The moon and stars were out when John drew near his home that night. He meditated deeply on what he had heard that night.

On entering the house, he was delighted to find that his uncle William had arrived unexpectedly to make a short visit. John was a great favourite with this uncle, and there was a strong attachment between them. He had always entered into John's plans and amusements, and John would hardly have told his most private thoughts even to his mother with more freedom than to his uncle William.

Now, as Mr Morris lived in a distant city, they seldom met, and his arrival was always hailed with delight. Nothing could have given John more sincere pleasure than he experienced on meeting his uncle in the parlour that evening. The next day he was allowed to stay at home from school, that he might spend as much time as possible with his uncle during his short visit.

In the course of the day Mrs Morris wished to go to town, about two miles distant, to make some purchases, and proposed that her son and grandson should accompany her in the carriage. Uncle William was so entertaining during the ride, that John was sorry when they arrived at the place.

He soon, however, found enough amusement in the store. While his grandmother was engaged looking at the things she wanted, he examined a variety of fancy articles exposed for sale. Among them he particularly admired an historical game, which appeared to him one of the most attractive things he had ever seen. He inquired the price, which was just one dollar. After looking thoughtfully at it for a few moments, he laid it down, and took up a doll which was very pretty. It was dressed in blue silk, with a nice little bonnet of the same colour, and a pelerine of velvet. In its hand was a funny little hem-stitched handkerchief, and on its feet a pair of bronze slippers. John could not help saying to himself, 'Oh, how that doll would please Mary!' The woman behind the counter told him he had better go and ask his grandmother to buy it for his sister; but he replied that he would not disturb her, as he knew that she was very busy, and then he walked to the door and waited quietly till his grandmother was ready to return home.

Now his uncle William had particularly noticed John's movements in the store, how

thoughtfully he had looked at those toys, and then with what an air of determination he had withdrawn himself from them, and he felt some curiosity to know what was passing in the child's mind. He said nothing to him about it, however, at the time ; but in the evening when they were together alone, he said to him—

‘I noticed your admiration of those toys this morning, John ; did you wish to buy them ?’

John was a little surprised at this question, and did not seem to know exactly what to say.

‘Come now, John,’ resumed Mr Morris, ‘I must ask you to tell me frankly what your thoughts were about them.’

‘Why do you care about my thoughts, uncle ?’ inquired John, looking up with some surprise.

‘I will answer your question, my boy, and then you must answer mine. Thoughts have so much to do with actions, that they are of great importance. You looked so particularly thoughtful this morning that my curiosity was excited, and I felt that I should like to know what was passing in your mind.’

‘Well, then, uncle,’ replied John, ‘it is a

secret, but I will tell you about it. On my last birthday my grandmother gave me a SILVER DOLLAR, and told me I might spend it just as I pleased. I have kept it until now, and have been determined not to spend it till I had considered well what would be the best way. When I saw that game this morning, I was tempted to buy it, because I thought it would be very entertaining ; but I had made up my mind last night what I should do with my money, and I would not break my resolution. Then when I saw that beautiful doll, I thought I should like to buy it for Mary, but I remembered my resolution, and I knew that Mary had many playthings already ; so I would not look at them any longer.'

Here John paused. 'Thank you, John,' said Mr Morris, 'and now will you gratify me still farther by telling me how you intend to spend your dollar ?'

'I intend,' replied John modestly, 'to put it in the Sunday-school missionary box next Sunday, because I want to do something towards making the children who have no schools nor ministers as happy as we are who have them both.'

Mr Morris was much pleased with all this, and, before parting with him, he said—

‘I am very glad, John, that you are going to spend your SILVER DOLLAR in that way, and I am sure you will never regret it. “The silver is mine, and the gold is mine,” saith the Lord, and we only give him his own when we make such offerings.’

At length winter came again, and with it John’s eleventh birthday.

When he awoke in the morning he saw a strange looking parcel lying upon his table, and when he examined it he found his own name written upon it. What was his surprise, on opening it, to see the very same doll and the same game which he had admired so much when he was at the store with his grandmother and uncle in the summer! Besides these, there was a letter directed to himself. So, in a flutter of excitement, he sat down to read the letter, which was as follows:—

DEAR JOHN,

This parcel is intended to reach you on your birthday, and I hope it will give you

pleasure. I send with it my best love and wishes for your happiness. Above all things, I desire to see you advancing in true wisdom as you grow in years and stature.

I cannot express the satisfaction I felt at my last interview with you, when you were kind enough to tell me how you had decided to spend the silver dollar which had been given you for pocket-money. I was glad to see that you could adhere firmly to a good resolution, although tempted to break it; and that you could find a higher enjoyment in the exercise of benevolence than in the gratification of your fancy. Continue, my dear boy, to cultivate such a disposition. I am sure you must have experienced already that *it is more blessed to give than to receive.*

You shall have the pleasure of presenting to little Mary the doll which you thought she would like so much, and I hope you will find the historical game both entertaining and instructive.

You may be sure that no history can be more interesting than your own to your affectionate Uncle,

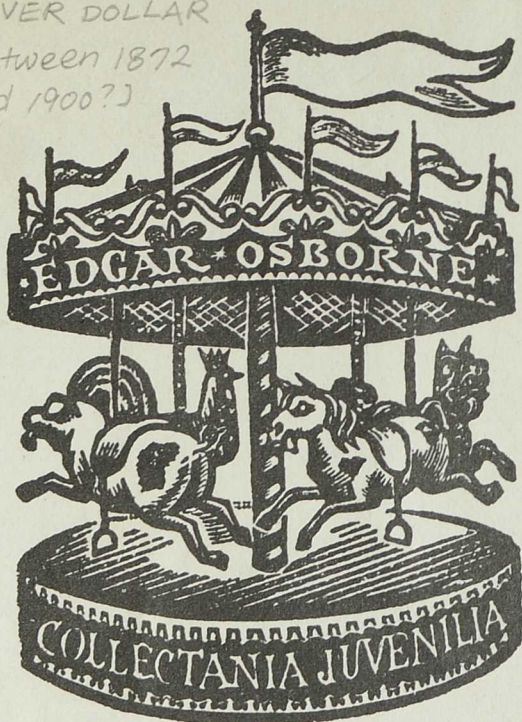
WILLIAM.

Reader, have *you* nothing to give to send the Bible to souls perishing for lack of knowledge? remember the missionary treasury is made up of *littles*, that the hundreds of thousands of pounds contributed are made up of millions of small sums; and above all remember, when you look at your penny or your sixpence, and think it is so little, what Christ Jesus said of the woman who gave her mite—*that she had given more than the rich men—she had done what she could.*

THE END

SA
SILVER DOLLAR
[between 1872
and 1900?]

dr



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