The Orphans' Friend.

VOLUME I. OXFORD, N. C., WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1875. NUMBER 52.

Written for the Orphans' Friend.

BEN HADAD'S BABIES.

CHAPTER I.—NAME AND PEDIGREE.

His first name was John Benhadad Smith. Under the dispensation of slavery, his father owned one hundred and eighty-nine negroes, and worked sixty-three on each of his valuable farms. The father's name was Austin Smith. Now Austin is a contraction of Augustine, and Augustine looks back to Augustus Cæsar, and the Cæsars look back through little Iulus, to tempest-tossed Æneas, the son of Anchises and Venus. Mr. Austin Smith had read that Julius Cæsar was accustomed to scratch his head with a single finger to prevent the displacement of his oily hair, and he delighted to follow the example of his once illustrious ancestor. In fact, he never decided any important question without supposing that he was riding across the Rubicon. He was very exact and very exacting. He punctiliously observed all the rules of courtesy and gentility, and looked with ineffable disgust on those who failed to treat him equal deference. His neighbors thought of pride and aristocratic affectation, while Mr. Smith was thinking of royal descent and noble blood. On one occasion, when a horse was to be sold at auction, and Mr. Smith desired to be informed of his blood, the supercilious auctioneer announced that the horse belonged to the red blood stock. This remark called forth an immense roar of laughter at Mr. Smith's expense.

On another occasion a poor neighbor had business with Mr. Smith and was detained till dark. He was preparing to take his departure, but Mr. Smith's rigid observance of the laws of hospitality would not allow him to do so. He sent the horse to the stable and conducted his neighbor into the parlor. The plain man had never before witnessed such a display of magnificent mats adorned with pictures of birds and lions and tigers. He took special pains to jump over them all, lest he might soil them with his shoes, and Mr. Smith was too polite to appear to notice his very amusing antics. At tea the visitor attacked the apple-float with knife and fork, though Mr. Smith took special care to have him supplied with a spoon. On leaving the table, he stuffed the napkin into his pocket. Mr. Smith accompanied his guest to bed, and after burying him in feathers and loading him with blankets, tucked him in so snugly that he could not possibly kick. When the poor man reached his home, his wife discovered and returned the napkin, and very often afterwards called upon her husband to relate to their friends the story of his adventures at Mr. Smith's. Mrs. Smith's maiden name was Mabel Powel. She was born with a silver spoon in her mouth, and then her relatives left her several legacies. Most men blame their poor relations for being bad managers (even when they never had any thing to manage,) and so leave their property to their richest kin. As Mabel Powel she was sometimes perplexed to decide what she would do with her wealth: but as Mrs. Smith that question was easily answered.

Mrs. Smith shared her husband's aristocratic feelings. She was very kind to her poor neighbors and especially to the sick; but she very often incidentally reminded them of her high social position and the consequent respect which she had a right to command. Their only child was John Ben-hadad Smith. He was the pride of his father, the joy of his mother, and the pet of all the servants; but he was a lover of pleasure, of fun, and frolic. Hunting, fishing, and driving were his constant delight. His school life was simply endured; but not enjoyed. In the academy and in college, he unlocked hard problems with 'keys,' and rode over difficult places on 'ponies.' At examinations he usually 'guessed' what questions would be propounded to him, and carried the answers in his pocket, instead of his head. In 1860 he graduated without distinction, being what is known, at Oxford, Eng., as a 'Poll Graduate." He was one of the few young men who did not expect to be President of the United States, nor even Governor of North Carolina. He had not even wondered if his native land could ever furnish scope for his marvelous powers. He literally flung away ambition, and was perfectly contented as John B. Smith.

But all through his boy-hood, young Smith had loved Dora Dill, the blacksmith's daughter. Now Mr Dill rented a shop of Mr. Smith and did the work of the farms; but his charges were moderate and his family was large and expensive, and alas, he was guilty of the crime of poverty. Mrs. Smith had often invited Dora to her house, when busy with sewing, or preparing for parties, and had rewarded her liberally for her services. On such occasions Mrs. Smith was glad to see her son linger at home and show fondness for the company of his mother. Yet it did not occur to mother or father that a Smith and a Dill could ever be united in marriage. But when the young man returned from college and, on several successive Sundays, escorted Dora to church, the Smith mansion was full of alarm, lest something rash should be done. Mrs. Smith conversed with her son and reminded him of his rich and royal birth, and of the folly of dropping down with common people. When he informed her that his attentions to Dora were honorable and serious, her amazement knew no bounds and she called her husband. Mr. Austin Smith never lost his dignity. He deliberately explained to his son the duty of seeking a companion among his equals in education, position, and wealth, and solemnly warned him not to degrade or disgrace the honored and illustrious name of Smith by a matrimonial alliance with a Dill, a name utterly unknown in the annals of wealth and blood.

The young man heard him with calmness and patience and then deliberately answered: "All that you say is probably true. I can not answer your arguments; but my heart refuses to beat except for Dora, and hers beats only for me."

"Then," sternly replied the father, "I renounce you as my son. I command you not bear my name; for you can not inherit my fortune."

The young man evidently felt oppressed by his father's words and knew they would not be recalled. For some moments he was silent and sad. At length he answered: 'My name is no longer Smith; but Ben Hadad and nothing more.' In one hour Mr. Hadad and Miss Dill were sitting near together under the shade of a fruit-tree in the honest blacksmith's garden.

(CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.)

DEAR CHILDREN:—At one of the depots on the Seaboard Road two women daily offer to the passengers in the cars home-knit socks to buy food for a sick mother. They frequently receive the worth of the socks and have them returned to be resold. Now we are constantly hoping to hear the shrill whistle that announces the arrival of Oxford and Henderson cars, and I want to know how many little girls in the Orphan Asylum can knit socks they would be willing to have sold in *those cars?* You ought to be very energetic in practising, for fear your work will *not* be ready to offer as soon as the cars are built for the *Oxford road*, and any financier will admit that the business would be exceedingly profitable if the same socks sold every day were offered for sale with the same profit on the next. It pushing times should come upon us two little girls (or grown up women as they may be when the first whistle sounds for Oxford cars) might catch many honest pennies from the use of knitting needles. Knitting machines are much used, but it requires as much knowledge to use them skillfully as it does to heel and toe a sock. Knitting is a very easy and pleasant work, and I have no doubt that if girls learnt to knit when they were young they would find it very amusing as well as useful, and many an idle hour would be profitably spent. I have seen women knitting when going to the well for water with pails on their heads, and recollect the teacher that taught me to spell b-a-k-e-r always had knitting in her hand, and almost playing a tune with the rapid strike of the needles. Poor old lady has been gone many years, but the mischievous girls that tangled her yarn when knitting son Tommie's socks have not forgotten how they had to dodge the long beech whip and promise not to do so any more.

Now, girls, you do not know how proud you would feel if you always wore stockings of your own knitting, and a nice little boy had a pair of socks presented by you for a Christmas gift. I confess to you to-day I can not shape a pretty stocking, because when I was young and wild I would not sit still by poor old Mrs. Beasley and be taught, but let the spirit move me and a straight up and down sock I can turn off daily.

During the war I had wooden needles made to knit shirts for the soldiers, and they are yet doing good service. Then an accomplishment next to knitting was much in use. That is, straw plaiting. Girls and boys can both learn to plait straw for hats and bonnets. Like learning to play upon an instrument it is better to accustom the fingers to it before they get stiff and greater proficiency will be acquired. In England two or three fine kind of fine grasses are used to plait the famous English straw bonnets that command high prices in America. In Italy stalks of wheat are selected, white and smooth, some split and some whole, and made round and flat, of which the fine leghorn bonnets are made. You can easily gather straws to learn the different plaits, and then we can buy bonnets and hats from the orphans.

In the third year of the war I paid a lady in Oxford $50 for a straw bonnet that would now bring $1. She made it of wheat straw, and it paid for two bushels of meal. That amount of meal would make many a hoecake to drive starvation from the door, if, in such times, woman's handiwork was again brought into requisition. Idle hands, children, are always in mischief. Be like the busy bee that gathers honey from every flower and improve the time allotted you in the Asylum by imitating the prominent talent of the sweet young ladies placed over you, training your pliant minds and leaving solid impressions upon them for future usefulness. Imitate every known virtue, shun idleness, and you will escape the snares of the vicious, who are placing traps daily in your path that leadeth to destruction.

S. A. E.

A DRUNKARD IN MEETING.

It was a rare experiment, and one which not every minister would feel willing to make,—protecting a disturber in church in the hope that he might be benefited by remaining. Yet the happy result, as recorded in the following brief story, is perhaps not a solitary instance of the wisdom of forbearance, even in extremes.

A drunkard entered an elegant city church one Sunday afternoon, while the choir was singing the first hymn. How he happened to pass the sexton and ushers, ragged and reeling as he was, and make his way, unchallenged, to a seat near the pulpit, seems a wonder; but he certainly did so. And there he soon fell asleep.

Strangely out of place as he looked in that fashionable assemblage, no one liked to take the trouble of removing him, so long as he was quiet. But presently his heavy breathing began to attract notice. By the time the minister was half through his sermon, it had increased to a loud snore.

One of the deacons rose and came forward to lead the man out of the house; but the clergyman said,

'Let us bear with him. Something has led the poor man here, not in his right mind, and I think the Lord's hand is in it. Before he goes, perhaps some word will waken both his ear and his heart.'

So nothing was done to the rough sleeper beyond touching him, to check his noisy breathing. He continued to slumber till the sermon was done. The music of the organ and the singers, and the rising up of the congregation, awoke him, and started him to his feet. The choir sang

"Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee."

The wretched man caught the words, and stared wildly about him. Then he sank back into his seat, and covered his face. That hymn was the one which his mother had sung on her death-bed.

From that day, Sabbath after Sabbath, the same stranger (still poorly clad, but no longer drunken) appeared in the same church, and sat a serious and quiet hearer.

The minister sought him out, and gathered round him other friends, and when he told his story, none cold doubt that his heart was changed. He had been going rapidly the downward road since his mother's death, till the moment when, led by an unseen Hand, he had wandered, half intoxicated, into the house of God.

That rescued drunkard became a devoted servant of Christ, and an officer in the very church whose pastor's considerate patience was his unexpected means of grace.

The Saviour often interfered for needy and offensive ones whom His less far-seeing disciples would have driven away. Doubtless a minister cannot always, in similar cases, do as that pastor did,—certainly not when a disturbance is boisterous and intolerable. But here God's hand was in it.'

To have turned that poor drunkard out of the sanctuary would have torn him from the presence of salvation.—*Youths Companion.*

Punishment of Lying.

When Aristotle, who was a Grecian philosopher, and the tutor of Alexander the Great, was once asked what a man could gain by uttering falsehoods, he replied, "Not to be credited when he shall tell the truth." On the contrary, it is related that when Petrarch, an Italian poet, a man of strict integrity, was summoned as a witness, and offered in the usual manner to take an oath before a court of justice, the judge closed the book saying, "As for you, Petrarch, *your* WORD is sufficient." From the story of Petrarch we may learn how great respect is paid to those whose character for truth is established; and from the reply of Aristotle, the folly as well as wickedness of lying. In the country of Siam, a kingdom of Asia, he who tells a lie is punished, according to law, by having his mouth sewed up.

FAITH AND WORKS.—Faith and works were illustrated by a venturesome little six-year old boy, who ran into the forest after a team and rode home upon the load of wood. When asked by his mother if he was frightened when the team came down a very steep hill, he said, 'Yes, a little; but I asked the Lord to help me, and *hung on like a beaver.*'