THE

VICTORIA

TALES

AND STORIES

WILLIAM AND RUPERT;

OR,

THE HALF-HOLIDAY.

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WILLIAM HARDY AND RUPERT BRUCE;

OR, THE FOOLISH BOY THAT BECAME A WISE ONE.

WILLIAM HARDY IN THE SULKS.

P. 16.

WILLIAM HARDY AND RUPERT BRUCE;

OR, THE FOOLISH BOY THAT BECAME A WISE ONE.

THERE are many little boys and girls who, as soon as they hear the term "foolish" applied to any one, immediately picture to themselves a mild, easy kind of person, who is just led in any way that other people choose to take him; they think that a "foolish boy" is one who has no will of his own, but is just governed by any person who happens to be near him; submitting quite quietly to any regulations that may be made. These little boys

and girls have no idea of any one being "foolish" who is the very reverse of all this; so, in their own self-conceited hearts, they imagine that they themselves are wise, and spirited, and I know not what, because the truth is, that they are obstinate!

Now, this story is about two little boys and their schoolfellows; and the little reader must be on the watch to find out which among them was the most foolish boy, and endeavour to learn by him which is the best way to become wise and good.

William Hardy and Rupert Bruce were both of them the sons of gentlemen living in the same part of the country. They were cousins, and were both placed under the care of Mr. Wilton, the proprietor of a large boarding school in one of the pleasant, retired villages of England. This was their first quarter at the school, so that neither of them had got much accustomed to Mr. Wilton's mild, yet wise and firm way of treating his pupils; but the strong, good sense of the one boy, made him understand much sooner than the other why Mr. Wilton

established many of the rules and regulations of the school.

"I say, Henry, have you prepared your exercise for Thursday?" asked Rupert one day of a little schoolfellow who was very busy fixing a new string to his kite.

"No," replied Henry. "I was going to do it, but William said he would be very sorry to do any such thing to-day. This is only Tuesday, and it is not wanted to-morrow; so, what is the use of doing things such a long time beforehand?"

"Well," said Rupert, "but then you know Mr. Wilton said they were all to be prepared to-night; because to-morrow is a half-holiday, and we shall all be too busy with play to do them correctly then."

"So he did," replied Henry; "but for all that I don't think I will do mine. William Hardy won't, and he is a real, fine fellow. There is not such another spirit in the school as William is."

"What are you boys talking about?" asked one of the elder pupils, coming towards them,

and looking about upon the four or five who had come together to discuss the propriety of obeying or disobeying Mr. Wilton's orders.

"I was asking Henry White if he was not going to write his exercise," said Rupert; "and he says no, because William Hardy won't write his."

"Not likely," said William, who came up as they were talking: "what's the use of writing it to-day? It's nothing to Mr. Wilton when I do it; all he has to do, is to see that it is right."

"You are quite mistaken there, Hardy," said Wright. "I am older than you, and yet I know that while I am under Mr. Wilton's care it is my duty to obey his orders."

William made no reply to this, but talked away very largely about "doing as he pleased," and "managing his own business," till poor little Henry White was completely misled by his vain boasting.

"That's right, William!" exclaimed he; "there is nothing like having a bit of spirit. I don't see why Mr. Wilton should tell us when to do this, and when to do the other. I'll not write mine!"

"And why not?" asked Rupert Bruce.

"Because——why, because I choose not," said the little boy, trying to look very consequential.

"You mean, because you are led like a simpleton by William Hardy," said Rupert.

All the boys laughed at this, and William Wright, the eldest one, clapped White upon the shoulder, saying, "What a fine fellow Harry White is; he has such a mighty great spirit that he cannot obey Mr. Wilton, who ought to be obeyed; and yet William Hardy, a little fellow as silly as himself, can persuade him to do anything."

Henry turned as red as fire, but tried to look very independent, and as if he cared for nobody; though he saw that several of the boys were laughing at him.

"Come, come now, Harry," said Rupert, "I am going down to the old oak tree to write mine, and so are three or four more of us: we want you to go with us."

"Why, I don't mind if I do go *there*," said Henry, who was beginning to feel rather

ashamed of himself. "It 'll be fine fun to write with the acorns tumbling about our slates."

"You mean, I suppose," said William Hardy, with a sneer, "that because you are afraid of Mr. Wilton, you will take care to do just as he bids you."

"I 'll tell you what he is afraid of, William," said Rupert: "he is afraid of grieving a good, kind master; and if you will go with us, too, you will find that it will be better for you. Come now; Henry, you see, is going to be a good, obedient boy."

"Good, obedient boy!" exclaimed William. "He is a poor mean-spirited fellow, like you all."

Now, if Henry White had been alone with William, he would have been foolish enough to be ashamed as the perverse boy taunted him in this way; but there were so many other and older boys on his side that he kept to his good resolution; and in a very short time they were seen scampering away down the play-ground, each with his books and slate under his arm, and in a few minutes they were seated under the

old oak tree, all as merry as could be, but at work with their exercises.

William walked sulkily away, muttering to himself, "What a poor mean fellow that White is; but I'll make him repent of serving me like this."

This was Tuesday. It was about six o'clock in the evening when the boys began their exercises, and in little more than half an hour, so diligently did they work, that both they and their lessons were all ready.

"Now, boys, for a run," said Rupert; and off they set, to see who would reach the house first. No sooner were the books and slates deposited safely in the school-room than their kites were got out, and a fine time they had with them till the bell rang to call them in for the night.

"You are a poor cowardly thing, to be afraid of the master like that," said William, as he and Henry White came together in going in to prayers.

"No, I am not," returned Henry. "It was not because I was frightened that I went."

"But because," said Rupert, who was just behind them, "he knew it was right; was not that it, Harry?"

"Yes," said the little boy, who now felt quite happy as the thought of having obeyed his master came to his mind.

Oh! it is a blessed thing to do right; and where obedience is our duty, it is a sweet thing to be obedient. It is no mean-spirited or cowardly thing to do what the Bible tells us, and "Obey those that have the rule over you" is written there. God does not tell us to do mean-spirited or cowardly things, but he does tell us that "He that refuseth reproof erreth,"* and "He that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."†

The next morning saw all the boys assembled in the school-room; Rupert and his companions as cheerful and happy as they had been the evening before under the old oak tree; William with a countenance dark and surly as the feelings of his heart.

"Now, boys," said Mr. Wilton, "this is to

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* Proverbs, x. 17. † Proverbs, xii. 15.

be half-holiday for you, you know. I hope every lesson is ready, and every exercise written."

"Oh yes, sir," said the boys, looking as bright and sunny as a May morning is.

"Yours ready, White?" asked the gentleman, turning to the little boy who too often was a sad laggard with his lessons.

"Oh yes, sir," answered Henry; "all ready this morning."

"That's a fine fellow," said Mr. Wilton, stroking the curly head of the happy child.

Little Henry's eyes filled with tears of pleasure: he was of an affectionate disposition, but easily misled by such a one as William Hardy.

The lessons were the first engagements of the day, and nearly all of them repeated them readily. William was in one of his very worst and most obstinate tempers, and the sulky way in which he put his book into the hand of his kind master, would have told any stranger what kind of a boy he was.

"This won't do, Hardy," said Mr. Wilton, as, with a countenance like a thunderstorm, William stood grumbling over his half-learned

book. The book was returned to him, and he took it with an air of defiance.

"Yours is the first bad lesson I have had this day," said Mr. Wilton.

"I don't care," said the boy, as loud as he dared to speak it.

"It is a pity that you do not, sir," returned the gentleman, "for then your parents and your master would have more hope of you than they have now. Pray, sir, may I ask, did you hear the orders I gave about the lessons and exercises last night?"

"Yes," replied Hardy, in a surly, disagreeable tone.

"Have you written your exercise, then?"

"No," replied the churlish boy

"And yet you knew that I had given orders for them to be all written last night?"

"Yes," replied Hardy.

"And why was yours not written last evening?"

"I did not choose to write it then," said the boy, with a side glance at the others, as much as to say, "You see, I am not afraid of him, though

y ou are;" but he did not see a countenance among them that did not express dislike of his behaviour.

"Then I will tell you what I choose," said Mr. Wilton. "I do not choose your school-fellows here should have one bad companion with them when they go to enjoy their holiday; you, sir, shall stay at home. Now go to your seat."

William Hardy had not expected this. He thought Mr. Wilton would have got into a great passion with him; made him learn his lesson, and after it was repeated let him go with the other boys; but he was mistaken, and he felt mortified that all his boasted "spirit" should end in this.

"Perhaps, William," said little Henry White, "if you will be very quick with the lesson, Mr. Wilton may let you go after all."

"You go along!" growled the surly boy. "I have found you out; you are a false friend. Don't speak to me."

Poor little Harry turned away grieved and sorry. He was a kind-hearted little boy, but had

been very nearly spoiled by his acquaintance with Hardy. He was too young and inexperienced to know the difference between a truly noble spirit and a merely obstinate one; and for some time had been greatly in danger of mistaking the one for the other. Rupert Bruce, however, and some of the elder boys, who saw the danger Harry was in, were trying hard to lead him to judge more correctly. Rupert was, in reality, a far more spirited boy than his cousin William, but he was of a more generous temper. He rendered a willing obedience to Mr. Wilton, for he knew that obedience was due to his master; and, beside this, he loved Mr. Wilton as a kind and generous friend.

The afternoon of that day was a happy one for the boys. They had a long, delightful ramble among the green fields, and into a fine wood that lay about a mile's distance from Mr. Wilton's house, and when they returned in the evening they were regaled with tea and cake by Mrs. Wilton.

After this they went again into the play-ground, where, though he deserved no such per-

mission, Hardy was allowed to join them; but his temper was no better than it had been in the morning. He refused all the invitations of his school-fellows to join in their games, and, ill at ease with himself, wandered gloomily about the play-ground till it was time for them all to go in for the night.

"Now, Harry," asked Rupert, as they went up to bed, "are you sorry that you went with us to the old oak tree? Have you not been all the happier to-day for having obeyed your master?"

"Yes, I have," said little Henry. "Mother always used to tell me it was foolish to disobey, for obedience brought its own reward."

"And has it brought it to-day, then?" asked Rupert.

"Yes," replied Henry, "I could not have been happier if I had been at home; and this morning, when Mr. Wilton clapped my head, and looked so kindly at me, I could hardly help crying, I was so glad."

"And what reward do you think disobedience has brought to William?" asked Bruce.

"Why, it has made him wretched, that's all," replied the little boy, looking sadly at Hardy, who, separating himself from everybody, looked the picture of misery.

A quarter of an hour after this the boys were asleep in their respective rooms; all save one, and that one was William; he could not sleep, for he was too unhappy. God has placed a conscience in every breast, and whether we will or not, it keeps telling us whether our actions are right or wrong. William's told him of his misdeeds till he was completely miserable; he knew not what to do, but lay tossing about upon the bed, till at last he thought he would betake himself to prayer. Rising very softly, he knelt down by his bed-side, and prayed to God to forgive him for his wicked behaviour during the day. As he knelt and thought over his past conduct, and how his own bad, obstinate temper had made a day miserable, which his kind master had especially designed to be one of happiness for them all, his tears began to flow rapidly. They were the first he had shed all the day; for, cold, and dark, and

gloomy, there had been nothing of repentance in his heart till now. That rocky heart was subdued by the influence of God's holy spirit upon it; and he could not find rest to his soul till he had prayed that, for the Saviour's sake, God would forgive and bless him.

"I have broken the commands of God," thought the repentant boy, "for I have been disobedient to those set over me; and I have been setting a bad example to my younger schoolfellows: if they follow that example I shall have to answer for it. And then little Henry, poor, kind, little Henry, how I behaved to him when he wanted to comfort me after I got into the trouble! Oh, I have been a wicked boy!"

For some time he knelt there praying and weeping, but at last he became more composed. He not only saw how very far wrong his former temper and behaviour had been, but he resolved that if God would help him to amend it he would act a different part.

"My master sees farther than I do," thought he, "and knows better than I do what is best

for us, and I am sure he is kind. I will, indeed I will, try to be obedient to him; and oh, may God help me to be a better boy!"

A happier feeling began to come over his heart, and with a hope that God, for Christ's sake, had pardoned him, he got into bed again, laid his head down upon his pillow, and was soon fast asleep.

From this day there was a marked difference in William Hardy; not that all at once he got the better of a temper that was by nature obstinate, but he was sincere in his wish to amend his faults, and he sought help to get the better of his temper where alone that help could be found. There is an eye that can see every movement of every human heart, and that eye is God's. There is a power that can control the strongest will of the most obstinate disposition, and that power is God's. It can change what is wicked in the human heart into that which is pure and holy; and put a right spirit into those who before have been led wrong by the enemy of souls. And now that this little history is almost done, surely the young reader can

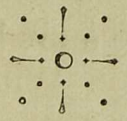
tell who was the foolish boy, and in what way he got wiser. William was very conceited at the first, as all obstinate people are. He thought he was quite as fit to choose the times for prosecuting his various studies as his master, but he was mistaken. He thought that the other boys would admire what he fancied showed a noble, manly spirit, but he was wrong there also; and when he attempted to show off his independent airs, he was only laughed at by his schoolfellows, and rebuked by his master. He lost the delightful holiday and treat which the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Wilton had prepared for the pupils, and, if he had persisted in his obstinate behaviour, would have lost the affection of all his schoolfellows. But he did not; he altered his course before it was too late, and when the Christmas holidays commenced, and all the boys went home for the vacation, Mr. Wilton had the happiness of sending back William Hardy a much better boy than he was when he came. From the time that William's behaviour changed so much, Rupert Bruce and he became far better friends than ever they had

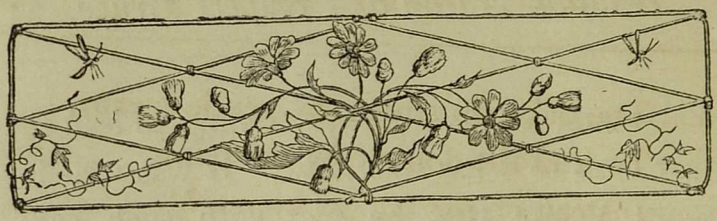
been before. While they were at school together, they were always striving to assist each other in getting the better of anything that was wrong, and in helping each other to become good and wise. It is a great blessing for any one to have a friend who will do this, and the counsels of such a friend should be considered blessings. Children gain nothing by resisting the authority of those set over them; they only make their own lives unhappy, and prevent themselves profiting by the instructions given.

The little reader may see, by the happiness that Henry White felt, after obeying Mr. Wilton's commands about his exercise and lessons, what a reward obedience brings with it; and may trace, in William Hardy's last holiday and his bitter feelings, that a punishment always in some way or other follows disobedience. Another thing also they may learn from this story; namely, the importance of keeping good companions.

Rupert Bruce and William Wright were blessings to the whole school, because their

good examples were always tending to lead the other boys to what was right. It was well for Henry White that he met with such companions, and that their kind endeavours saved him from being corrupted by the then bad example of William Hardy. Can the little reader think of any schoolfellow that is in danger of going wrong as Harry White was? if so, let him try if he can be led right again; but take care not to follow his bad example.





THE TRAVELLER AND THE ASS.

"He that hateth reproof is brutish."

AN old man went along one day,
And with him went a donkey grey,
And nicely o'er the road sped they,
Until two ways did meet.
The donkey then, in wilful mood,
With headlong force and manners rude,
His master's will at once withstood,
Nor would he move his feet.

Stock still stood he, an emblem sad
Of many a wicked, wilful lad,
And many a girl headstrong;
Who, hating just and kind rebuke,
Must needs put on a sulky look,
As if, forsooth, they pleasure took
Only in doing wrong.

The old man strove, by gentle means,
To lead the donkey by the reins,
Instead of *forcing*, as he might,
That wilful thing from wrong to right.
He patted, stroked, and coaxed; but, no,
The stupid donkey would not go.
'T was wearisome to see the thing;
And yet still more to see him fling
His heels about in antics wild,
Just like some foolish, stupid child,
Who, fancying all the while that he
Is somebody of dignity,
Just makes himself a laughing-stock,
A thing that all the world may mock.

The master wished this donkey dull
To go with him to yonder pool,
For well he knew that water there
Lay sparkling, fresh, and sweet, and clear;
And grass so green, and shade so cool,
Were found around that limpid pool;
That had the donkey understood
What sweet refreshments waited there,
Not for one instant he 'd have stood,
But hasted to those comforts rare.

Now, thus it is with boys perverse,
And girls who, obstinate and cross,
Refuse to yield obedience due,
To pastors, parents, teachers true.
They think their knowledge is so great,
That all the world, forsooth, must wait
Their pleasure to do this or that!

Poor foolish things! misled by temper,
Just like the doltish, foolish ass,
Refusing to be led to shelter,
And sparkling drink, and dewy grass,
And all for nothing but to be,
An ass of noted obstinacy!

WILLIE AND ANNA; OR, THE BEGGARS.

ANNA had been saving her money for some time previous to the holidays, and in her little purse she now had two shillings. A few days before Christmas, a lady friend called upon her mother, who had engaged to go with her to a place called the "Children's Hospital," where were gathered together some thirty or forty little children, from the babe of a few weeks old to the boy and girl of nine or ten—little children whose parents were very poor, and who could not be well nursed at home. Here they had warm rooms, comfortable food and clothing, and kind nurses. This "Hospital" was provided by the true kindness of some excellent people, who not only supported it with their money, but visited it regularly, to see that their benevolent purposes were fully carried out.

Anna went with her mother to this children's hospital. How quickly was her heart touched by what she saw! There was a poor little motherless babe, not so old as her little sister Helen. It had large, dark eyes, curly hair, and rosy cheeks, just like Helen's. When Anna bent down to kiss it, the tears blinded her, to think that the babe had no kind mother to love and care for it.

"Mamma," whispered Anna, as they were about going away.

"Well, dear? What is it?" asked her mother.

"Can't I give my two shillings to the Children's Hospital?"

"The money you saved for Christmas?"

"Yes, mamma. I've got it in my pocket; and if you'll let me, I'll give it to the Children's Hospital."

"Do so, if you like, my dear," replied Anna's mother, greatly pleased at such an evidence of good feeling and self-denial on the part of Anna, who had, she knew, entertained other purposes in regard to her money.

So Anna gave her two shillings to the poor, sick children; and she felt happier for what she had done, than if she had spent it in things to gratify herself.

Such was Anna, the little girl who was now walking with her mother and brother.

"Oh, look!" she cried, stopping suddenly, and catching hold of her mother's hand. "There is a poor woman and three little children. It's so cold, and they've no home."

"Just look at that unfeeling lady," said Willy, speaking with some indignation, and pointing across the street, where a lady, warmly clad, with her hands protected by a muff, was passing the beggars without offering them a single penny.

"That is Mrs. L——," replied the mother; "and I know her, my son, to be anything but an unfeeling woman."

"Why does she not offer the beggar a penny, then? I only wish I had some money. I'd give it to her very quickly."

Now, Willie had spent every penny given to him during the holidays in buying things for his

own use. He had not indulged at all in the pleasure of doing good.

"Mrs. L——," replied the mother, "may not think it true charity to encourage women to sit, with their poor little children, in the cold all day, begging for pennies, instead of trying to support them by useful work."

"Ah, but mamma," spoke up Will, quickly, "suppose they can't get work to do?"

"Then, don't you think it would be better for them to go with their children to the workhouse, where they would have warm rooms to stay in, good food to eat, and comfortable clothes to wear,—and where they would be required to do something useful? Idleness and beggary are next-door neighbours to vice."

"I have sixpence left; may I give it to her?" urged Anna, whose heart was too full of sorrow for the little children all exposed to the cold, to feel the force of what her mother said.

"Certainly, dear, if you wish to do so. The money is your own," was replied.

So Anna ran across the street, and placed her sixpence in the woman's hand. When she re-

turned, she looked thoughtful. But little was said by her on her way home. That evening, as she sat alone with her mother (Willie and the other children were playing in the nursery), she said,

"I don't think that beggar-woman was a good woman, mamma."

"Why not, dear?" was the natural inquiry.

"I can't tell," said Anna. "But when she looked into my face, I felt afraid. Oh! I'm so glad she is not my mother. I'm sure she is not good to her children. Poor little things! I wish they were in the Children's Hospital. They would be so much better off."

"There is no doubt of that, my child."

"And the baby, mamma. Oh! it had such a strange look. Its cheeks were red and shining, and its eyes were half closed. It did not look as if it was asleep; and yet it wasn't awake. What could have ailed it, mamma?"

"Beggar-women," replied the mother, "often give their babes large doses of laudanum, or preparations from that hurtful drug, to keep them quiet, while they sit idle in the street."

"Does it hurt the babies?"

"It makes them stupid and insensible for a few hours; and also destroys their health. If it does not cause their death, it lays the foundation for wretchedness in the future."

"Had the babe I speak of taken laudanum?"

"I should think so from what you say," replied the mother.

"Oh, dear! isn't it dreadful, mamma? Why don't they take the poor little children away from such bad women? But there are some beggars who are deserving?"

"I would hardly like to say no, my child," replied the mother, thoughtfully. "And yet, I very much doubt if any but the idle or vicious become beggars. To give to such, you can easily see, would be no charity; for it would only encourage them in their evil ways."

"I 'm sorry I gave that woman my sixpence," said Anna, after looking serious for some time.

"Don't say that, my dear," returned her mother, smiling. "Your act was an unselfish one; you wished to help the needy. There was a good impulse in your heart. Ever cherish

such impulses. They come to you from God, who clothes the naked and feeds the hungry. But we should be wise, Anna, as well as good."

"Wise! O yes, I understand you, mamma. For the future I will take care to whom I give my money."

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