

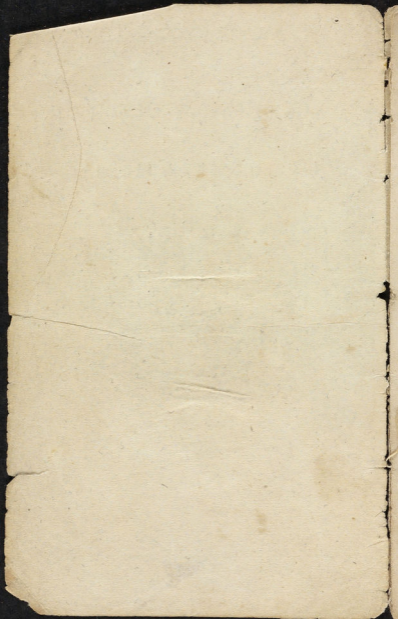
THE
NINEPENNY-PIECE,
AND THE
LITTLE BASKET-MAKER.



Embellished with Cuts.



PROVIDENCE:
PUBLISHED BY GEO. P. DANIELS.
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THE NINEPENNY-PIECE.

On a beautiful morning in summer, when the trees were richly clothed in verdant foliage, and the earth covered with bloom, Mrs. Thornton rose much earlier than usual, and awoke her son and daughter. She then informed Francis that she would allow him to see the fair which was to be held that day in a village not far off, where one of his aunts resided. The heart of little Francis palpitated with joy at this grand intelligence, and his gladness was the greater, from having no previous anticipation of it. This was intended by Mrs. Thornton ; for she thought it a hurtful practice to raise children's minds with the prospect of future pleasure ; and she was careful that their enjoyment should always spring from a proper performance of their duties, whether in attending to

their tasks, or in obeying her commands. Attired in a morning habit, with little Emma by her side, she accompanied him a considerable way on the road, till they reached the shade of a beautiful tree, below which there was a fine seat of moss, perhaps made for the accommodation of passengers, where she sat down, and gave Francis particular directions regarding his conduct at his aunt's. After kissing him, she bade him



Francis going to his Aunt's.

farewell, and Francis, elated with joy, pointed with triumph to the place of his

destination, leaving his little sister quite contented with her mother, although not allowed to go with him.

A poor old blind man, who had been very unfortunate, was seated on the road-side, and raised his plaintive voice whenever he heard any one approaching. He had nothing to support him but the alms of such passengers as came that way, many of whom bestowed their charity ; while others, who had nothing



Francis and the Blind Man.

to give, would generally say "God help you!" The good man prayed equally

for those who assisted him and those who recommended him to God.

Francis, pursuing his journey with ardor, stopped opposite to the poor blind man, and looked at him with compassion. "Poor man," said he, "you can neither see beautiful fields nor the sun. It is just the same as when I open my eyes in a very dark night ; and this poor man cannot do any thing for himself, and must die with hunger if he is not assisted. O, how sorry I am that I have not any thing to give him. When I grow a man, if I am rich enough, I will give alms to all the poor people I meet." After saying this to himself, he again looked compassionately at the blind man, and on going away, cried "God bless you, my good man !" "I am much obliged to you, my child," replied the poor man, "may God bless you also, and give you grace to become a good man."

The wish of the old man affected the heart of the child, and a tear trickled down his cheek. "Oh, how unfortunate I am," said he, "in not having any thing

to give him." As he continued to pursue his way to the village, the impression he had received, by degrees became less forcible, and he felt much pleasure in viewing the fine country, listening to the pretty birds, gathering the nice flowers, and looking at the people as they passed. At length he approached the village, and began to hear the noise of some children who were dancing under a large elm tree, when he saw upon the road a piece of money half covered with dust. He instantly stooped down to pick it up, and found it was a ninepenny-piece. His heart immediately leaped for joy, and his first thought was of the blind man. "Suppose I run and give him this ninepenny-piece," said he; he then turned about, and on reflection found that if he went with expedition, he could be there in five minutes.

He hesitated a little, however, and reflected, that with this ninepence he might buy something at the fair, and it was a very melancholy thing to walk between rows of booths without being able

to spend even ninepence—and it would appear so very shabby to have an empty pocket. “Yes,” said he; “but then this poor man perhaps has nothing to buy his dinner with, and ninepence would be sufficient to get him bread for the day. I shall get both my dinner and tea at my aunt’s, and shall be nicely feasted; besides, I am sure that will not prevent her from buying me cakes at the fair.—Come, come, I will carry the ninepence to the poor old man, for certainly I have no right to it.” He still hesitated about taking it to the poor man, for it was so long since he was in possession of ninepence.

While he was hesitating between the pleasure of doing good to an unfortunate fellow-creature and that of satisfying a foolish fancy, a number of children about his own age came up, hallooing and jumping after a show-man, who was carrying a large show-box on his shoulders. He quickly joined the party, and followed the show-man. The man soon fixed his stage, and began to perform a

little, to attract the crowd, but only such trifles as are shown at the door. When the crowd was sufficiently great, they announced a much more magnificent show. This was the *magic lantern*, where for ninepence they might see wonders, such as kings, queens, and great men, also, the principal cities in the world, and the sun and the moon; which was sufficient to tempt children less curious than Francis. While they entered in crowds, this foolish boy remained in a state of indecision at the door, turning in his pocket the precious piece of money. The man insisted on every one to walk in; and the more to touch their pride, he concluded every intimation by crying with all his might—"Yes, gentlemen, to deprive yourselves of such a sight, you must certainly be without ninepence in your pocket." He by chance looked at Francis, who immediately thought it must be himself only whom the man addressed; and determined to let them see that he was not so poor, he immediately took out his

money and entered with the others.—
The show lasted a quarter of an hour,
and the child came out as poor as he
was before he had found the ninepence.

The remembrance of the blind man,
who still occupied his mind, considerably
disturbed the pleasure which he enjoyed,
and he went quite dejected to his aunt's,
saying, in order to reconcile his con-
science, "She will certainly give me
some money for the fair, which I will



Francis and his Aunt.

not spend, that I may give it to the poor
man as I return home.

But things did not turn out as he expected. His aunt, who received him very kindly, treated him, as he had anticipated, with tarts and cream, pears, cakes, and all sorts of dainties, while the poor old man had not perhaps a bit of dry bread to eat. She gave him no monee, but bought him at the fair some marbles and a trumpet, and sent him away, particularly cautioning him not to stop or play by the road. He was at first very pensive, and reproached him-



Francis avoiding the Blind Man.

self for the hardness of his heart ; how-

ever, in the midst of his reflections, he took out his trumpet, and began to blow with all his might ; but when he found himself at a little distance from the blind man, he put up his trumpet. He even went on the other side of the way, and walked with great precaution, as if afraid of being heard ; but the poor man heard him, and presented his petition as before : “ Please to bestow your charity on a poor blind man, who has no other means of subsistence but from your beneficence.” These words touched the child to the heart, and he durst not answer as he had done in the morning—“ God bless you !” but went away as dissatisfied with himself as if he had stolen the ninepence from the blind man.

This uneasiness was renewed whenever he passed that way ; and it lasted until he had the happiness of carrying him ninepence, which he amassed with great care, by a cent at a time.—“ Thank God,” said he, “ I can now pass by him, and pray to God to bless him.”

THE LITTLE BASKET-MAKER.

It is much to be regretted, that there are many children in the higher orders of society who because their parents are rich, think they are born to do what they please, and to have servants to attend to their every want, without doing any thing for themselves, or being of service to others. They cherish an inordinate degree of pride, and will treat poor children with contempt, although they pay the greatest obeisance and respect to them.

Mr. Smith, a gentleman of very independent fortune, was so unhappy as to have two children of the above description. His son James thought it was impossible to live without the assistance of a servant; and Sophia, his little daughter, was so indolent that she would not even put on her own shoes and stockings. As they were one day taking a walk through the woods, they

heard, in one corner of it, a little boy singing with all his might, and they immediately went to the place. "Ah," said James, "this little boy is so very cheerful, he has no doubt neither lesson to learn, nor any kind of work to employ him. One would suppose he was some little gentleman, who had nothing to think of but pleasure." "I should rather suspect," said Sophia, "that he is some little vagabond, who amuses himself by idling away his time."

While they were speaking they arrived at the spot where the little singer was seated, and saw the boy, between ten and eleven years of age, who was so busy that he did not observe them when they approached. On both sides of him were placed several baskets, very prettily worked, and he was just finishing another at that moment. "So, my little friend," said James, "you seem very happy in the midst of your work."

These words interrupted the singer, who, looking up to see who was speaking, immediately arose, took off his hat,



Rich and Poverty.

and replied in a very attractive manner, "Indeed, sir, I have no reason to be dissatisfied, for I have a tolerable share of business, and a little song makes it more agreeable." "It is, without doubt, for your amusement," said Sophia, "that you make these nice little baskets?" "Really, Miss," replied the boy, "that might do very well for you, but it would not do for me, because my dinner is never ready till I have worked for it. I make these little baskets to sell, and with the money which they bring I buy

meat and clothes, otherwise I must starve." "What! have you no parents to give you the necessaries of life?" said she. "Oh no, Miss," said the little basket-maker; "It is almost a year since I lost my poor dear mother; and having no one to assist me, I was obliged to think of doing something for a livelihood. It was a happy circumstance that my good mother had early accustomed me to work; for I made baskets, both large and small, with her. 'My dear little Peter,' she would often say, 'whatever you do, learn a trade, and with that your fortune is made. He who can work, has no need of the assistance of others.'—This was the advice my dear mother used to give me; and when she was at the point of death, she said to me, 'My dear little Peter, be an honest man—never beg, if you can avoid it—and God will recompense you in the next world.' I have followed the advice of my good mother, and, little as I am, I have never asked the assistance of any one." The little basket-maker

spoke this with a sort of spirited pride ; and James and Sophia felt quite ashamed of themselves, when they saw that a boy of their own age was able to support himself, whilst they were incapable of doing any thing whatever.

Mr. Smith, who had overheard the last part of the conversation, now joined the party.—He was charmed with the spirit which the little basket-maker had exhibited, and after praising him for his industry, picked out two pretty baskets for his children, and put a dollar into the little basket-maker's hand. "Oh, sir!" said he, "I don't sell my baskets so dear." "And I," replied Mr. Smith, "never pay less for them." "I see, sir," replied the boy, "that you have compassion on my youth, and I ought not to be so rude as to refuse it from a gentleman so rich as you ; but I beg you will observe this, that I have not asked, nor did I expect any thing." "Go, my child," said Mr. Smith, patting him on the shoulder—"your honesty will be the means of your prosperity, and all

good persons who know you will take pleasure in assisting you."

Mr. Smith took advantage of this adventure with poor Peter, to make his children sensible how far that poor orphan was above them in point of sentiment. "What would become of you," said he to them, "if you were in his place? Were this to happen,—and there have often been as great vicissitudes in fortune, and even greater than that—you would be unable to do any thing for yourselves; and, instead of working and singing, like that good little child, you would be weeping at every body's door, and begging a bit of bread to prolong your miserable lives. Be convinced then, my children, of the value of industry; get the better of your pride and indolence, which lead you to think that the rich ought not to do any thing; and provide against future accidents, for you know not what changes may await you; therefore blush at being so helpless as you now are."

DIALOGUE ON CREATION.

“ Can you tell me, brother dear,
How this world was made so fair ?”

“ Yes, its being first was given,
When God created earth and heaven,
And the light was taught to play,
On the first, the new-born day.”

“ Well, dear brother, can you say
What occurred the second day ?”

“ A firmament expanded fair
The waters to divide—in air
Some hung—while others fled
To their own appointed bed.”

“ Brother, tell me, if you can,
On the third day what was done.”

“ Oceans, seas, and rivers wide,
Rolled their billows, swelled their tide,
And left behind a barren sand.”

“ What was that called ?”

“ ’T was called dry land.”



The Brothers.

“What else, pray tell me, brother dear?”

“God made the trees and grass appear;
The expanding leaves, the swelling flood,
The fragrant blossoms, fruit for food.”

“Upon the fourth day what was done?”

“At God’s command now came the sun
In majesty and glory bright,
High in the heavens to give us light;
The moon and stars, too, rode abroad,
Obedient to their Maker’s word;
The earth with verdure now was teeming,
And high in heaven the light was streaming.”

“But can you tell, as on you go,
What the fifth day’s work did do?”

E. S. Budlong

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