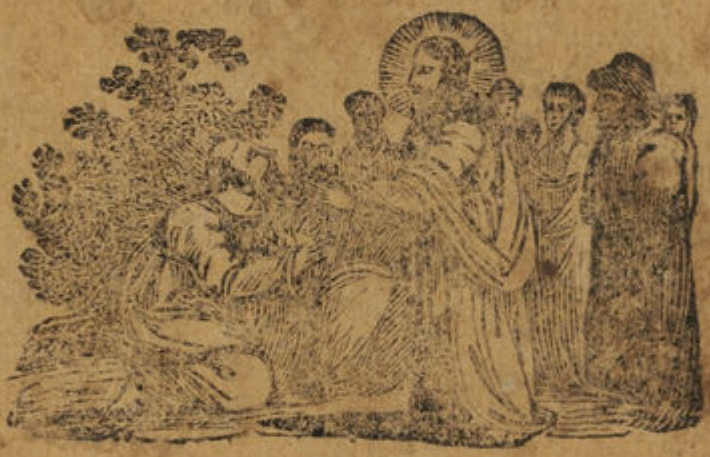
THE

VILLAGE NURSE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF M. WHYTE.



BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY SAMUEL T. ARMSTRONG,
AND CROCKER & BREWSTER.
No. 50, Cornhill.
1823.

Mary Knight Newbury

September. 21. 1823.

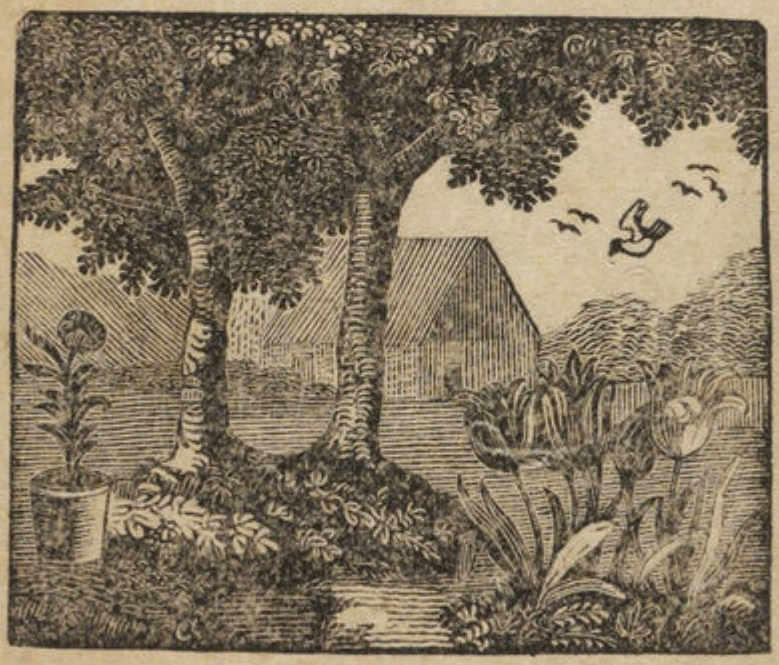
Not in R

THE

Blind Man & Little George.

By Mrs. SHERWOOD,

Author of Little Henry and his Bearer, Ayah and Lady, &c.



BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY SAMUEL T. ARMSTRONG,

AND CROCKER & BREWSTER,

No. 50, Cornhill.

1823.

THE

Blind Man and Little George.

A POOR blind man set out one fine Sunday morning in June, led by his little dog Trusty, to attend his place of worship; but finding himself somewhat too early, he sat down on a green bank in a retired lane, through which his way laid; and there—whilst refreshed by the gentle breezes, which gathered sweetness as they passed over the fields of cowslips and beds of violets, which abound in this country in that pleasant month, and by the song of the thrush and blackbird, which inhabited a little wood just at the back of the lane—he fell into some sweet reflections respecting a future life, and the blessings of that religion, by which death is deprived of all its horrors, and the grave converted into the gate of heaven.

Whilst thus delightfully engaged, his reflections were disturbed by two boys, who had played truant from their Sunday school, and were employed in seeking birds' nests in the hedges.

Now inasmuch as the blind man was seated with his little dog Trusty on one side of the hedge, and the boys were pursuing their wicked sport on the other, they came close upon the back of the old man, without being aware that they had a neighbor so near to them, and in consequence they talked at their ease; and this was the purport of their discourse:—

"Well, George," said the bigger of these boys, "What do you think? is not this much pleasanter than being boxed up, such a fine day as this, in school?"—"But what will our master say, Jack?" replied the lesser boy.

"Who cares for what he says?" returned the other.

"But I shall be afraid to go again next Sunday," said little George; "I shall be sure to get it when I do."

"Then don't go," returned Jack, "and the matter will soon be settled."

"But mother," continued little George, "mother will make a noise, I reckon, if they tell her I have not been at school, because of the hat."

"Because of the hat?" returned Jack; "What do you mean by that?"

"Why the new hat," replied George, "the new hat I am to have at Christmas; you know I

sha'n't have my new hat if I am not regular at school."

"Well then, you must wear your old one a year longer," said the other, finishing his sentence with a shrill whistle. The boys were now interrupted by the blind man, who, calling to them, requested that they would come round into the lane; adding, that he had something to say to them. On this Jack whistled again, and said—"Like enough."

"Well, do as you please, my lads," replied the blind man; "but if you don't come, I shall go to your parents, for I know you both, and I will presently make them acquainted with your playing truant from school, and breaking the sabbath."

"No, pray don't," said little George; "if you do, mother will beat me as sure as I am here."

"Well then," returned the blind man, "come round into the lane, and hear what I have to say; I will do you no harm I promise you." On hearing this the little boy pulled his companion's jacket, saying in an under tone—"Come, Jack, come along, its only blind Richard, and he won't do us any hurt." Being thus persuaded, the elder boy gave way, and they both came round into the lane; and, standing before Richard, waited to hear what he had to say.

"And so, my boys," said the blind man, when the children were come up close to him, "you are playing truant and breaking the Sabbath; and do you think, even if you escape chastisement from your parents and teachers, that He who is above will refrain from inflicting punishment upon you? The Lord has commanded us to keep holy the Sabbath-day.—'Be not deceived,' God will not be mocked, but will take account of the sins of his creatures."

"Come, sit down by me, my lads—we have a little time yet before service begins—and hear what I have to say."—The boys did as Richard bade them; because they feared, if they did not, that the old man would instantly go off, and warn their parents of their truancy. Nevertheless Jack looked very sulky; and if the old man had not had a stick in his hand, he would have treated his companions with another whistle. But blind Richard had no thoughts of using any manner of violence with these boys; on the contrary, it was his object, if possible, to draw them from their evil ways with the words of kindness and love; and for this purpose he discoursed with them as follows:—

"When I was a little boy," said he, "there were no such establishments as Sunday schools, and poor children had then very few opportu-

nities of learning; it had not then entered into the hearts of the gentlefolks, to give themselves the trouble of instructing poor children, without other fee or reward but that which they hope to receive from the Lord, on that day, when he shall say to those on his right hand, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink, naked, and ye clothed me, &c.'

"I had, however, a very pious godmother, an old woman, who lived next door to my father's house, and who used to invite me to her house, on the evening of the sabbath-day, in order to teach me my duty to my God. But I would not receive instruction; I contended against the Almighty;—I would not be taught: and after a while, my poor godmother died, and then I had no farther opportunity of learning; for when I was twelve years old, I was sent to sea; and for many long years, from that time, I lived in the entire ignorance of God, and without any means of learning or knowing any thing good. In the mean while, I thought of nothing but eating and drinking, and enjoying myself; and in this dreadful state of mind I should have died, had not the Lord taken pity upon me.

"When I was about thirty years of age, I was

in a sea-fight; and on that occasion I received a wound from a bullet, which deprived me of the sight of both of my eyes. What a mercy was it that it did not deprive me also of my life; for, if I had died then, in the hardened and wicked state in which I was, I should assuredly have been cast into the fire which is never quenched, and become the prey of the worm which never dies; and this, because I had rejected and despised instruction. I rejected the knowledge of Christ; and for such, there is no hope.

"Well," proceeded blind Richard, "it was no use to keep me at sea, when I had lost the use of my eyes; so I was sent home to my own village, and put to board in a house not far from this place, with an old woman, to take care of me; who, being as ignorant as myself, could give me no instruction.

"Thus the Lord punished me as I deserved, in my own way; for I would not admit light into my heart, and therefore the Lord deprived me of the light of my eyes. And now," continued Richard, "I can give you no idea of the miserable life I led, from that time, for many years: not that I wanted bread, or clothes, or other necessaries; because, having been hurt in battle, the King allowed me a pension,—and the parish officers were also so kind as to help me. So

my trouble did not arise from want, or any thing of that kind; but it was the horror of darkness, which I suffered—darkness within, and darkness without,—and the darkness within was a thousand times worse than the darkness without. I then thought I understood what those words of our Lord meant, 'Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness —there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,' Matt. xxii, 13.; and what is this dreadful darkness, spoken of in scripture? What else, but to be for ever shut out from God, as I am from the light of the sun and the presence of the day. Who is he, which, like the sun, rises upon our dark hearts, and sheds peace and gladness over them, but Christ our Savior? But when I might have learnt to know and love Christ, I would not,—I chose to be spiritually dark,—I would not receive knowledge; and now have I lost sight for ever, not only of Him I would not see, but of that glorious Sun which is his emblem. Then I used to remember the beauties of the morning, when I was accustomed to see the sun rising above the eastern hills, in the days of my childhood, surrounded with a rosy and purple light—chasing away the shades of night before, and drawing up the dews of the earth in transparent mists: I remembered also how gladsome

the woods and groves, the fields and water-springs appeared, when this light first spread itself over them in the first dawning of the day; and I considered that this pleasant appearance of nature was but, as it were, the emblem of the heart of a little child; when it is first led, by the Holy Spirit of God, to receive pious and pleasant thoughts; but I had been like those wicked ones, who spend their nights in the streets, and in carousing in scenes of darkness, and run to conceal themselves from the face of day.

"Thus I used to reflect; and in this state of despair I remained a long while,—till at length a gentleman in this neighborhood gave me a ticket to go to a place where blind persons are taught to make baskets; thither, therefore, I went—and blessed was the day when I set out on that journey. I remained in this place till I had learnt my trade; and whilst I was there I fell into the company of a poor man, who taught me that even now there was hope for me; and that, although I must never think to open my eyes again upon the sun which daily shines on this earth—yet that, through Christ, the most miserable sinner might find mercy in the world to come. It pleased the Lord to bless this good man's discourse to me, and I returned home full

of new hopes; for the Holy Spirit had put it into my heart to cease grieving for the loss of my bodily eye-sight, but rather to mourn on account of my spiritual darkness, and to endeavor to seek spiritual knowledge, and divine light.

So I came back to my house; but now what a loss did I feel, in not having laid by a store of knowledge in my younger days,—I could cail to mind no beautiful portions of scripture, pleasant and spiritual hymns, or profitable sermons treasured up in my memory in my early days,—I could not read myself, nor had I any one to read to me; and as the old woman who lived in my house, was so crippled as to be unable to walk to church, and having no neighbors, I had no one to lead me to a place of worship; so I was forced to remain yet a little longer without instruction. Nevertheless, the Lord had worked this change in me, inasmuch as that I now desired instruction as greatly as I had formerly hated it: at length, however, I procured my little faithful dog, Trusty, who leads me backwards and forwards to church, as prettily as a child would do; and thus I am enabled to hear the Scriptures read once a week, and to carry some good things home on the sabbath-day to feed upon during the other six."

Whilst poor Richard was finishing his story,

Jack, having winked at his little companion, and put his finger on his mouth in order to make him understand that he was not to take notice of what he saw, crept softly away on his hands and knees to some distance, and then made off, as fast as his feet would carry him: this boy, being of the number of those who have "hearts to devise wicked imaginations, and feet that be swift in running to mischief." Prov. vi, 18. But little George, on the contrary, (being no doubt influenced by Him whom as yet he did not know) drew up closer to the blind man; and at length, putting his hand in his, he said, "Jack is gone—but I will stay with you, for I love to hear you talk."

"My little lad," said the blind man, whilst the tears started in his sightless eyes, and he pressed the little hand which had been laid in his, "and has the Lord given me favor in your young heart? Oh that it may be an earnest for good to your poor soul. Suffer me, then, to intreat you not to despise instruction in these your early days—open your heart to learning—shun evil company—and the Lord will bless you. And now, my boy, let me still hold your hand, and lead you back to your school—I will speak for you, that you may be forgiven; and, if your mother will give you leave, come to the end of this lane to-

morrow, and there you will find a little thatched cottage, standing in a garden, beside a small brook, and blind Richard ready, I trust, to give you welcome."

Little George expressed some fear in going back to his school; but blind Richard encouraged him, and spoke a good word for him to the teacher: so he was accordingly forgiven, and his trespass for that time overlooked.

And now, because I have not many pages to spare, I must tell you, in a few words, that little George came the next day to blind Richard's cottage, and sat by the old man to learn the task, which had been given him at the sunday school; and it is surprising how soon he learnt it, for the blind man encouraged him, and learnt with him; and this he did every day during the week, so that when he came to school, the next Sunday, his master was quite surprised to find how much he had learnt, and how greatly he was improved.

When blind Richard heard how much little George had pleased his teacher, he made him a present of a clasp knife, with two blades; which pleased the little boy above all things.

Little George went every day to learn his lessons with blind Richard: and the old man took such pains to explain to him the nature of our

blessed religion, that at the end of the first year of their acquaintance, he was enabled to answer the following questions, which old Richard put to him—"What is natural blindness?" was the question which Richard first put.

George answered, "Not having the use of our eyes."

"Tell me, then," said Richard, "what spiritual blindness is?"

"Having no knowledge or understanding of heavenly things," said the little boy.

"What kind of blindness have we by nature?" said Richard.

"Spiritual blindness," replied the child; "for we all hate to be taught, and that is the reason why it is such hard work to get boys to church and school."

"How came man to be spiritually blind," said Richard.

"Because," said the child, "when Satan tempted the first man and woman to disobey God, sin entered into their hearts; and so we all became corrupt, and sin reigns over us."

"But who," said Richard, "is to cure us of our spiritual blindness?"

"The Lord, the Spirit," replied George; "it is his work to take away the darkness of our hearts, and shew us the way to Christ, who is our light."

"And who is this Lord the Spirit?" said poor Richard.

"There is but one God," replied little George, "but in that one God there are three persons,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,—and these three are equal one with another; and none is before or after the other."

"Why then," said Richard, "is God the Father always spoken of first; and God the Son, mentioned in the second place; and God the Spirit, in the third place?"

"Because," said the little boy, "in saving men, each of these persons has chosen to himself a part; and the work of the Father comes first—that of the Son, second—and that of the Holy Spirit, third."

"And can you tell me," said the blind man, "what the respective works of these Holy Persons are?"

"Yes," said George;—"'God the Father so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;' God the Son gave up his life on the cross, and paid the price of our redemption; and it is God the Holy Ghost who takes away our darkness, shews us the way to Christ, makes our hearts clean, and helps us to be good."

Thus the little boy was enabled to answer all these difficult questions; and old Richard taught him where he might find the texts in the Bible, to prove the truth of all these doctrines.

It will be a pleasure to my reader to hear that the holy friendship between little George and old Richard remained so firm, that when George grew up, and had a house of his own, he took old Richard into it; and was as a dear son unto him, until the dying day of the pious old man.

Thus was the discourse of poor blind Richard blessed to George, in bringing him, with the divine favor, from the state of spiritual darkness in which we all are by nature, into a state of light and happiness.

I am sorry to add, I have nothing pleasant to say of Jack; for this naughty boy never returned to his school,—and as his parents did not punish him for his truancy, he fell from one bad course to another, till at length he died in great misery.

THE END.

VALUABLE BOOKS,

Published at

No. 50, Cornhill, Boston.

Owen on the Hebrews, 4 vols.	$10 00
Thornton's Dialogues on Pure Religion,	75
The Infant's Progress from the Valley of Destruction to Everlasting Glory. By Mrs. Sherwood,	75
A Mother's Journal, during the last illness of her daughter, Sarah Chisman, with a Preface by Jane Taylor, of Ongar,	62
Memoir of Rev. Henry Martyn, Missionary to India,	1 50
Sermons of do.	1 25
Dr. Chalmers' Discourses on the Application of Christianity to the Commercial and Ordinary affairs of life,	75
Foster's Essay on the evils of Popular Ignorance,	1 00
No Fiction, or the Test of Friendship: A Narrative, founded on recent and interesting facts, 2 vols.	1 50
Memoir of Mrs. Savage, daughter of Rev. Philip Henry,	75
Minister's Companion,	3 00
Buchanan's Christian Researches,	1 00
Life of Claudius Buchanan,	1 25
History of Missions, 2 vols.	2 25
Jenks' Family devotions, *new edition*,	1 00
Memoirs of David Brainerd,	1 12
Memoirs of Emma Humphreys, with letters to Young Ladies on their education,	75
Coleman's Hymns and Prayers for Family Worship,	62
Happiness, a Tale for the Grave and Gay,	1 25
Life of the Rev. Thomas Scott, D. D.	1 25
Milner's Church History, with an original Index, in 5 volumes,	9 00
Retrospection, a Tale, by Mrs. Taylor, of Ongar,	62
The History of George Desmond,	75
Memoirs of Capt. James Wilson,	1 25
Worcester's Christian Psalmody,	75
Do. Watts' *entire*, and Select Hymns,	1 00
Do. Select Hymns,	25

* * *A general assortment of Books in the various departments of literature.*

☞ *Also for sale*, a complete assortment of Sabbath School Class Papers, Certificates of Merit, Hymns on Sheets, &c. &c. together with a great variety of Books of rewards.