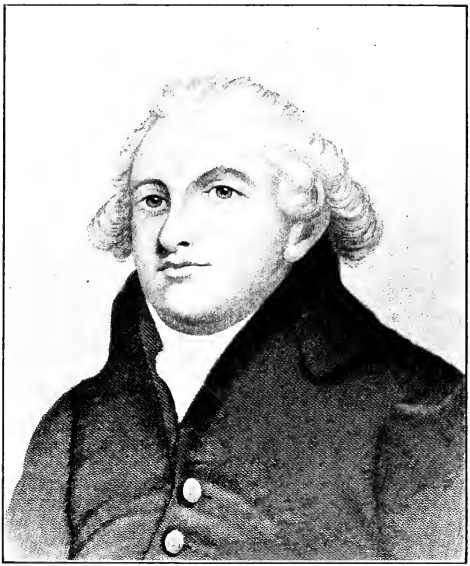
THE STORY OF ROBERT RAIKES

J. HENRY HARRIS



ROBERT RAIKES

From an old portrait — Engraved by Buttre

Frontispiece

THE STORY OF

ROBERT RAIKES

FOR THE YOUNG

BY

J. HENRY HARRIS

EDITOR OF "ROBERT RAIKES: THE MAN AND HIS WORK."

WITH A PREFATORY NOTE TO THE AUTHORIZED AMERICAN EDITION

BY EDWIN W. RICE, D.D.

"It is something to have the wish to be what we ought. A longing look may produce an exertion; repeated efforts may gain some ground. Let us not despond."

—ROBERT RAIKES *to the Rev. W. Lewelyn*

PHILADELPHIA:

THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION.

TO THE

RISING GENERATION

IN TWO

HEMISPHERES

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK.

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PREFATORY NOTE TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

The memory of Robert Raikes has been more warmly cherished and probably more highly honored in America than in the city of his birth. And the interest continues to deepen with the growth of the modern Sunday-school movement.*

*When a statue of Raikes was placed upon the Thames' Embankment, London, Eng., in 1880, to commemorate his remarkable work as the founder of modern Sunday-schools, the only memorial of him in Gloucester, Eng., was a plain marble slab, which Mr. John Briggs discovered "hidden away in the old church of St. Mary de Crypt," in a corner so dark, and so near the roof as to be difficult to decipher." It was "a plain slab of marble, some twenty-four inches square, containing a memorial of the death of Robert Raikes," and "a bare mention that he was the founder of Sunday-schools," the rest of the inscription being the entire passage in Job 29 : 11–13. "It would be easier to ascribe a character for general benevolence to the subject of the Memorial," says the explorer, "than to trace [in these words] any special connection with Sunday-schools." "Lower down there is a larger slab in memory of the

The brief biographies of this great man, which have heretofore appeared from time to time in this country, are, for the most part, out of print. Happily the author has prepared a delightful sketch for a new generation of scholars who wish to learn anew the history of the founder and the founding of this mighty Christian organization.

The millions of Sunday-school workers in America owe their best thanks to Mr. Harris and his father for gathering a great mass of hitherto unknown material throwing clearer light upon the life, work and character of Robert Raikes.

That material has been patiently examined, arranged and wisely digested, and out of it he

father of Robert Raikes," who was also a printer. On the lower part of this slab, evidently not originally intended to be used for an inscription, is a further memoir in Latin, setting forth that Robert his eldest son first founded Sunday-schools and by his zeal commended the work to others."

The recollections of his work had died out, in Gloucester, even in 1862, except among the poor only. Of these, there were some old men and women, who delighted to honor the "friend of the poor."

In the centennary year (1880) of Sunday-schools, however, a Memorial Hall was built by subscriptions, and Mr. Addison erected a memorial tower, to commemorate the simple and great character of Mr. Raikes, in the city of Gloucester.

has herein wrought what, it is safe to say, readers will pronounce a graphic, forceful, and satisfactory life of Raikes for the young.

The author has kindly transmitted advanced proofs of his work to The American Sunday-School Union, and arranged to have it issue an "Authorized Edition" in America simultaneously with its appearance in Great Britain. The title of the work there is "The Sunday Scholars' Life of Robert Raikes," which has been slightly changed here to suit American readers.

I am sure that any Sunday-school worker who takes up this racy sketch will find it extremely difficult to lay it down, until it is completed, and then it will be with a profounder conviction of the greatness of the founder and of his work.

EDWIN W. RICE.

PHILADELPHIA,
January, 1900.

INTRODUCTION.

TO MY YOUNG FRIENDS.

If I were to show you a watch, which for one hundred and twenty years had worked without once stopping, and if I were to touch a spring and you were to hear musical bells chiming the hour and the quarters, many of you would ask me to take it to pieces and tell you all about the genius who designed it. I would gladly show you the wheels, and the jewels on which they run, and the musical chimes, and the slender springs moving like living things, and never growing tired, for it is a good sign when young people wish to know about what is useful and artistic.

But now I am going to tell you about something more wonderful still—something about a living and a growing thing full of music; and you will be the more interested in it because you—all of you—are parts of it, and are the chimes to which God listens.

I am going to tell you about the Sunday-

school, which, this very year [1900], is one hundred and twenty years old. All these years it has never once stopped, never grown tired; and what at first may seem wonderful is, that as it has grown older it has grown younger, more beautiful, more full of power, more full of delicious music. What is more, should it live for a thousand, or ten thousand years, it will become younger and younger, more lovely, more full of richer tones, and will never cease this putting back the "shadow on the dial" until every child, in every nation upon earth, shall each Sabbath Day swell the chorus which God loves to hear from the lips of little children.

It is a very simple story, simpler far than that of the watch chiming the hours so that a blind man may know the time, only it is more wonderful, as you will say when you know of what materials the Sunday-school was formed, and hear about the man who found and shaped them, put them together, and was able, by God's blessing, to breathe into them "the breath of lives," and endow them with the magic charm of never growing old!

Everything is contained in a nutshell: little children, a poor woman, a good man. We shall find for ourselves: First, the MOTIVE—the good man's desire to serve others; then the

TEACHER—the poor woman who taught children poorer still; and then the SCHOOL—the little children who were taught. These are the elements, and out of these has grown the Sunday-school, which you all love; but you should know how very different everything was at first, or you will never rightly value what has been done for you.

I only ask your patience for a little while, and you will learn how much of care, and thought, and unselfish love has been expended upon you, your classes, your lessons, and everything to your profit. Then when next you go to school you will put joy into your teachers' hearts by showing them that they do not work in vain.

THE STORY OF ROBERT RAIKES.

FOR THE YOUNG.

CHAPTER I.

THE BEGINNING.

I HAVE told you that the modern Sunday-school began one hundred and twenty years ago, and the first thing you will want to know is: WHY DID IT BEGIN?

You must fancy that you were living in the city of Gloucester, England, a very important town in those days, because it had a cathedral and was a market and seaport town, and well known for the manufacture of pins, the making of sacks, and the casting of church bells. Some of the people were weavers, and made cloth upon hand-looms. It was a very fine old city, anciently surrounded by strong walls entered by four gates—North, South, East, and West. Outside the walls the country was beautiful

and very fertile, and there were many villages and small towns round about, whose inhabitants swarmed into the city on market-days and festivals and in times of trouble, and there was seldom wanting an excuse to take them there. Inside the walls were the Castle, the Cathedral, the Bishop's Palace, and many beautiful houses with quaint gables and finely-timbered fronts, some of which remain intact to this very day.

There were so many churches that when the bells were pealed anthems of devotion filled the air, and there were so many charities for the sick and poor, and widows and orphans, that people said when certain of anything, "As sure as God's in Gloucester."

I must, however, tell you that there were prisons in the city as well as churches, and that judges came each Assize and condemned so many people to death that you might suppose the city was full of criminals. It was not worse than other places; indeed, not so bad as some; but the laws were very severe, and a man who stole a sheep or a handkerchief might be hanged; and when a man slew his fellow nothing worse could happen to him. For begging, and quarreling, and bad conduct men and women were tied to carts'-tails and whipped through the streets, so that, although

this was a cathedral city and full of churches and charities, the people became so accustomed to these sights that cruelty to others did not move them to pity.

In the eighteenth century—not so very long ago—the city of Gloucester was full of contrasts—full of churches and full of crime, with plenty of wealth and over-full of poverty ; full of charities and full of suffering. There were Charity Schools, Dame Schools, and Grammar and Collegiate Schools. There were learned men in the Cathedral close, and out of it ; but the mass of the population were ignorant of almost everything outside of their proper trade or calling. The "vulgar" or "common" people could not say their A, B, C, and even tradespeople kept accounts "in their heads," or by means of chalk-marks upon boards called "tallies," or "tally marks." Ignorant and vicious parents brought up children in ignorance and vice ; and, as new generations invented new vices, it really is a wonder that the masses of the people were not worse than they were.

All the streets, excepting the main streets leading to and from the city gates, were narrow—for the most part they were lanes or alleys, and were called so ; all were very filthy, and at night dark. Respectable people ventur-

ing out carried lanterns in their hands to avoid the open gutters and heaps of garbage before their doors. As this was the condition of things under the eyes and noses of the well-to-do, I must leave you to fancy how horrible they were in the dens—I won't call them houses—of the poor. Particulars are not wanting as to these dens and their inmates, but I would not shock you by repeating them.

The well-to-do citizens of this important Church and Industrial center were, of course, very well dressed, and well fed according to the notions of the day; but their manners were not nice, and their language, even in friendly gossip, was very coarse, just as it was in London and throughout the country.

So far as the masses of the people are concerned, I cannot say with truth that they were properly clothed in any part of this country in the eighteenth century. They wore a "livery of rags and patches." If you could see them without shoes or stockings, with cast-off knee-breeches, with ragged shirts, or none, under ragged "frocks," I think you would say they were not "clothed," but partly covered. In snow and frost men swathed their feet and legs in straw, and threw pieces of old sacking across their shoulders for warmth, and to keep them dry in wet weather. Women and girls

did the same work as the men, and were dressed up in odds and ends of cast-off garments and sacking, just like the men; and it makes one's heart sore to look at them in old pictures wherein the truth is told, and told plainly.

I would not have you think that *all* were like this. There were some thrifty laborers whose sons and daughters went out to service in good families, and were well fed and decently clothed; but they were quite distinct from the "masses," or, let us say, from four out of every five of the people of this country during the eighteenth century, when, you must remember, there were no State or National Schools, and the great middle class of to-day did not exist.

One thing more I would refer to, namely, the language of the "masses." I have said that the well-to-do were very "coarse," even to one another, so you will not be surprised to hear that the talk of the common people was shocking. It would not be intelligible to you now if you were to hear it; and, if it were translated, you would be horrified. You know that your own parents and teachers and friends use thousands of words in ordinary conversation, and that words, conveying shades of meaning, act on the ear like delicate tones of color on the eye, filling the mind with beautiful thoughts,

and the fancy with choice imagery. If we lost the power of speech how dull we should be! Well, the common people spoke to one another, it is true, but their choice of words was very small. In their trades and callings they used words which we may call "technical," and beyond these they only knew enough to express sensations of pleasure and pain, anger and sorrow, some common objects, changes in the weather, sports and the like. Many of their words expressing much love, or pain, or violent emotion cannot be repeated now, and often conjured up degrading fancies. Infant lips, in all innocency lisped words of infamy; children at their games shouted in curses. As they grew their souls were stunted and never leaped in gladness at the sound of words which give fresh life and hope and strength, such as you hear every hour of your lives.

It will be well to remember this, because the foul language used by children in the streets had a great deal to do with the starting of Sunday-schools.

Now I know that some of you are wishful to ask me, WHAT WERE ALL THE CLERGY AND MINISTERS OF RELIGION AND GOOD PEOPLE DOING IN THOSE DAYS?

I tell you frankly that I cannot answer that question briefly. Good and pious people there

were, full of courage, self-sacrifice, charity, devotion, love. Those who choose to inquire will find in almost every parish records of saintly lives which may well make many of us blush at our own shortcomings, and yet the Christian Church had, seemingly, fallen asleep when the whole country was ripe for mission work. There are so many reasons social, political, and moral, to be thought of that I cannot answer the question now, and I mention it so that you may see I had not forgotten it, or purposely passed it by. I need not say more now to enable you to see that in the face of great and good men and women and in spite of all they said and did, the "common" people in this country were in a pitiable plight—ignorant and unlovely.

They were, however, ready for a change, and when they heard voices charged with spiritual magnetism crying, "Repent ye," they answered to it; and it was when in the throes of a moral awakening that the Sunday-school was born.

NOTE.—The student of the condition and morals of the masses in England during the eighteenth and well into the nineteenth century is, first, indignant, then incredulous, and then sad. Unhappily, authority is not needed in support of the statement that the masses were heathen. When Whitefield and Wesley preached of God, prayer, and Jesus they used words producing an

impression of novelty and strangeness equal to that produced amongst tribes which had never before seen civilized men. Mr. Raikes tells the following story: A man on the scaffold was recommended to pray before he was hanged. He said, "Pray! I was never taught to do so. I don't know what it means; and if you hang me now I shall go to hell, clothes and all." Mrs. Hannah More found one Bible in the Cheddar district, and that was used for propping up a flower-pot. In North Bucks a poor woman was asked (about the year 1820) "if she knew Jesus Christ?" After a little hesitation she replied, "that she had *not heard of such a gentleman*." The annals of the poor in all our parishes are full of testimony against those who betrayed their trust, but for true pathos this poor woman's reply is seldom equaled.

CHAPTER II.

THE RAIKES FAMILY.

You will like to know something about the family from which the Founder of Modern Sunday-schools descended, who they were, what brought his father to Gloucester, and why he settled there. You will also like to know something about his father who was also called Robert, but whom we will here call the elder—Robert the elder—so that there may be no confusion.

The Founder of Sunday-schools, was born in the city of Gloucester, England, nearly one hundred and sixty-four years ago. He came of an old Yorkshire family, whose history has been traced as far back as 1507. The name is not a common one in England, and when we first hear of the family they were husbandmen, living at Stillingfleet, near York. How long they had been settled there I do not know; and it is thought that they originally came from Denmark.* The name is spelled in different

* For more information about the Raikes family see *Robert Raikes: The Man and His Works*, chap. xvii.

ways, such as Raks, Rakys, and Rackes, but from about the year 1600 it has been spelled Raikes.

The family, you see, were of the people, and workers. They were an energetic and independent race, cautious and thrifty, for we find by their wills and other deeds, that each generation was more wealthy than the one before it. By and by they gave up farming for commerce, and settled in Kingston-upon-Hull, an important town in those days. Here they pushed to the front, and owned ships, were wardens of the Trinity House, and took part in municipal affairs. Thomas Raikes was twice Mayor, and held office when King Charles I. laid siege to the town, whose inhabitants had closed their gates against him and his army. This Thomas Raikes showed much prudence and courage in days when men lost their wealth and heads with very little warning, and the confidence of the people in him was unbounded. He was of the people and for the people, and did his duty without flinching; and no man can do more.

The elder brother of Thomas, the Mayor, was named Richard, also a merchant. He had a son named after himself, who became the Vicar of Hessle, in Yorkshire, whose son Timothy also took holy orders and succeeded his

father as Vicar of Hessle, and whose daughter, Hester, married William Wilberforce, and became the great-grandmother of William Wilberforce, the philanthropist. The family were farmers and merchants and clergymen, and did not belong to the great landed class which was then the only aristocracy in the country.

Timothy Raikes's eldest son was named Robert, who served his apprenticeship as a printer, probably at York. For some time he worked as a journeyman, and at last found his way into Gloucester. He went into partnership with a Mr. Dicey, and they started the *Gloucester Journal* newspaper, now one of the oldest in England. The partnership did not last long; and this Robert Raikes remained in the city of Gloucester and carried on a printing and newspaper business—by no means a common one in those days.

It was a love affair, I think, which brought Robert Raikes the elder into Gloucester, for only two months before the *Journal* was started, in 1722, he married Sarah Niblett, of Fairford. She dying soon, he married Ann Mond, and after her death he married Mary, the daughter of the Rev. Richard Drew, of Nailsworth. This was probably about the year 1734–5. Our Robert was the eldest son of

this third marriage, and he was born in the parish of St. Mary de Crypt, Gloucester, on September 14th, 1736, and was baptized on the 24th of the same month, as may be seen in the Parish Register.

There is not much to tell you about Robert Raikes the elder, but the little that is known is valuable, because of its influence on the life and character of his son. He was a practical man of business, and lived next to the Swan Inn, Pye Corner, in the Southgate, where his printing presses were. He had "push" and energy, and constantly altered the appearance of his newspaper, which he edited in so independent a way as to be summoned twice to the bar of the House of Commons. He only appeared once, and then he had to go down upon his knees and be reprimanded by "Mr. Speaker" for printing certain votes in Parliament! This was a bold and dangerous thing to do in those days, and it was noised abroad that he had committed some sort of treason against the Government—"a false and scandalous aspersion" which he warmly resented.

He was a kindly-natured man, and in times of distress inserted the advertisements of charitable committees free of charge in his *Journal*. He was a humane man, and wrote against the fashionable sport of cock-fighting, and made

frequent appeals for the relief of poor debtors in prison. He was a temperance man, and set his face against excessive drinking in ale-houses, and wrote boldly against the destruction of grain to make spirits which drove people mad and ruined them body and soul. He was an overseer of the poor for his parish, and died in the house in which he had always lived, in the year 1757, and in the 68th year of his age. He left behind him a widow, who survived him for twenty-two years, one daughter and five sons, of whom, as I have already said, Robert was the eldest.

Of Robert Raikes's mother we know very little, but we must not pass her by, for a good mother is as a hymn of gladness in the hearts of her children. Mary Raikes must have had the domestic virtues well developed within her, and so she made home beautiful. She was twenty-five years younger than her husband, and so greatly did he confide in her judgment and motherly love that he left her a free hand in the management of his family and affairs, and no man can show more loyal regard for his wife than this. The Raikes family appear to have been very fortunate in their wives. Their rule seems to have been to choose their wives, like Mrs. Primrose chose her wedding gown, for qualities which would "wear well";

and when they died they left them free to do as they chose with their families and estates.

The death of Robert Raikes the elder did not break up the home, for he had been a prosperous and thrifty man, and possessed lands and houses besides the printing business. His son Robert was just over twenty-one years of age, and stepped into his shoes. The appearance of the newspaper was improved, but things went on as usual, only the eldest son had upon his shoulders the support of his mother, and the education and maintenance of his brothers and sisters. He lived in the old home with his mother, of whose character we shall get some insight when we see what became of her children.

Robert was twenty-one, and carried on the business.

Richard was fourteen, was sent to St. John's College, Cambridge, where he made his mark, took his degree, and entered holy orders.

William and Thomas became merchants in the "Russia" trade, and Thomas so distinguished himself as to become Governor of the Bank of England. In the city of London his name ranked high for moral worth, and he was well known throughout Europe for his benevolence.

Charles married a rich cousin, and lived

the life of a private gentleman in Cambridgeshire.

There was only one daughter, Mary, named after her dear mother, and she married Francis Newberry, a gentleman, of Heatherford Park, Sussex.

For the widow of a printer to bring up her children in those days so that *all* of them should be well educated and settled in life, and become known for their sterling qualities and charities, speaks volumes. I take it to be a good sign that the children were in no haste to leave home and the soft caresses of a mother's lips. Robert never left her, but lived with her in the old house "against the 'Swan Inn,'" and in the new house in Southgate Street until she died, and was once more, after a separation of twenty-two years, laid by the side of her husband in the family vault.

More than this I cannot tell you of the mother of Robert Raikes, but I think all of you will say that it is a good sign when men of high character cherish their own parents until death. When we find a young man like Robert Raikes living at home with his widowed mother, and acting as a father towards his little brothers and sisters, then I think we may also say that the home influence of that family has been blessed.

CHAPTER III.

ROBERT RAIKES.

I WISH I could tell you more than I am able about the childhood and youth of him who has had so much to do in making the lives of little children beautiful. He would, I fancy, come nearer to your hearts, and we should all know him better if we could only see him at play, for he was the sort of boy to play well. He was a handsome lad, with light brown curly hair, and fair skin, and blue, sympathetic eyes; and if you put a flat cloth cap upon his head, and button his long coat up to the chin, and give him thick, worsted-knitted stockings, and put shoes on his feet, you will have a picture of him during his school-days, for this was how the son of a well-to-do citizen was dressed in Gloucester one hundred and fifty years ago.

The St. Mary de Crypt Grammar School was only a good stone's-throw from his father's house, and at this old school, founded in 1528, some of the most promising youths of Glou-

cester were educated. George Whitefield, the soul-stirring Evangelist, and John Moore, Archbishop of Canterbury in 1783, were St. Mary de Crypt Grammar School boys. Young Raikes is said to have gone there for a time but left when about fourteen to go to the Cathedral College School,* which stood high in the county and turned out many good scholars. School began at six o'clock every morning with Psalms and prayers. There was a religious atmosphere about this school wherein the choir boys were trained to the glory of God and the good of the commonwealth. Young Robert left school to be apprenticed to his father. The rules with regard to apprenticeship were pretty strictly observed in those days; his father was proud of his calling, and the word "typographer" is engraved on his tomb. He never styled himself "Editor," but always "Printer" of his *Journal*, and young

* Robert Raikes's name appears on the school register in the year 1750. The headmaster was the Rev. William Alexander, M. A., who was required by the ancient statutes to be "skilful in Greek and Latin, of good fame and a godly life, well qualified for teaching, who may train up in piety and good learning those children who may resort to our school to learn grammar." Henry Phillpotts, afterwards Bishop of Exeter, was an "old boy" when Robert Raikes acted as one of the dinner stewards in 1795.—*Memoirs of the College School, Gloucester*, by Frederic Hannam Clark.

Robert was destined from the first to succeed him in a profession not wanting in peril. The young man learned his trade, and if we could see him in the "composing-room" we should see him standing at his "case" with an apron before him, and a brown paper cap upon his head, like other craftsmen of his day. He was never "above his work," and long after he became famous he set up type in his office, and his "composing-stick" is preserved in the Gloucester Museum.

The education which he received included the classics. His father's was the only printing-office in several counties in England and Wales; and authors in those days were much given to make a display of learning in Latin and Greek quotations. The newspapers and magazines were generally full of classical allusions, so that it was a matter of necessity for a printer of books and the editor of a newspaper, if he was to succeed, to have a fair knowledge of the classics. In this instance there is more than guess work to guide us, for in a letter to a friend Robert Raikes says, "I have just finished a Latin author, which I am printing." Moreover, he was his own "proof" reader. When he succeeded to the business the Raikes Press had a good reputation from Gloucester to Hereford, and he increased it on

account of the quality of his work. As I have seen some of his trade accounts for work done, I should say that he was well-grounded in book-keeping; so we may fairly conclude that his school education was commercial and classical.

I think we shall be right in believing that young Robert's studies were continued after leaving the St. Mary de Crypt Grammar School, because he "wrote French fluently, and was a first-rate geographer." *

You remember that Gloucester, England, was a cathedral city, full of clergy, some of whom eked out their incomes as tutors in private families; and it is probable that young Robert was privately tutored, since he did not go to a university.

It would not be right to imagine Robert Raikes as a "great scholar"; he was simply a well-educated man, very superior to ordinary citizens engaged in trade, and able to hold his own when in the company of "men of letters" and "men of the world," which was of very great advantage to him when he came forward with his plans for popular education and the institution of Sunday-schools.

Now, perhaps, you would like to know

* See Mrs. Weller-Ladbroke's Letter in *Robert Raikes. The Man and His Work*, p. 209.

something about his marriage. Well, he married Anne Trigge, the daughter of Thomas Trigge, of Newenham, in the county of Gloucester. The bride was residing with her mother (then Mrs. Napier on her second marriage) in Great Pulteney Street, Piccadilly, at the time of her marriage. The young lady was in "society," and one of her brothers became General Sir Thomas Trigge, K.C.B., and another an admiral. We may therefore take it for granted that when Mr. Raikes went to Newenham as the accepted suitor of his bride, or visited her in London, he had the manners and appearance of a gentleman of the period. He was thirty-one years of age when he married, and if you look at his portrait you will see what a handsome and intelligent face he had, how it beamed when he smiled, and what well-shaped lips he had for a smile to dwell upon.

In the eighteenth century dress was much more important than now, and marked a man's rank in life in the eyes of the people more readily than his pedigree. To be well dressed then a man needed ample means. When a gentleman was ready to step into a sedan chair to make a polite visit his costume would cost not less than $2,500, unless he wore sham diamonds in his shoe buckles and imitation

lace on his coat. Very great dandies—they were called "Bucks" and "Beaux"—wore little fortunes on their backs and fingers, and carried gold snuff-boxes sparkling with gems.

In his native city Robert Raikes was counted amongst the dandies of the day. As he mixed in fashionable society, no doubt he dressed well, and as he had a natural swagger with him when he walked through the streets, he was called a "Buck," and his manners "buckish"; and his appearance and manners became in after years a tradition. Some people said he was "vain" and "conceited," and when, in the years to come, his name was trumpeted everywhere for his good deeds, his little vanities were remembered against him.

The marriage took place by special license in St. James's Church, Piccadilly, on December 3rd, 1767. The bride was given away by her brother Thomas, in the presence of her mother, and both their names appear in the Church Register. The marriage may be found chronicled amongst the fashionable news of the society papers of the day. The bride was twenty-three years of age, and had a "delicate air" with her, which never forsook her. She had also the manners of a society lady of her day, and kept those beneath her at their

"proper distance." The people of Gloucester, when they knew her, called her "Madam." There were many striking contrasts in the dispositions of husband and wife, but one thing they had in common, namely, an abounding sympathy at the sight of suffering and distress. The young wife never took any active part in her husband's philanthropic work, but then she put no obstacles in his way ; or, if she did, he overcame her prejudices, and we know nothing of them.

Within a year after his father's death Robert Raikes removed from the premises "against the Swan" to a fine old house in Southgate Street, with open timbered front, wherein a celebrated judge once lived. His dear mother was living with him then, and there he took his young wife. In all, nine children were born to him. Nearly the whole of his public life was passed there, and there he worked out his problems for social reform. In the Sunday-school world this fine old house will possess a special attraction, because it was whilst there that Mr. Raikes conceived the idea of "botanizing" in the child-life of the city. Every one who makes a pilgrimage to Gloucester looks at the well-preserved and picturesque old house with a sense of reverence, as though the spirit of the man still hovered

about it: and I do not doubt that some have caught the contagion of doing good by only looking at it.

There was not a shop in the premises in those days. Robert Raikes did not keep a shop like his father had done. He once wrote to a customer, "I keep no shop, and have no concern in the bookselling line." His printing-office was separated from the house by Bolt Lane, and a man was employed by him to sweep a pathway across the Lane for his use, so that his shoes should not be dirtied, and his stockings splashed by filth. In the printing-office he had a little room, which he called "my den," which opened into the composing-room where the printers were at work. A window opened into Bolt Lane, and underneath this window the neglected children of the city played "chuck," and quarreled and fought, and used language too horrible to repeat.

These children caused him very much annoyance when he was engaged in reading "proofs," or writing for his *Journal;* and the parish beadles, even if they had the power, did not choose to interfere with the wild liberty of ragged children to play and curse, if they wished to.

It was here, in this workroom, that during many years the painful and unnatural degrad-

ation of child-life was brought before him vividly—all the more painful and vivid, perhaps, because but a few yards away were his own little ones, clean and neat, loving and loved, and lisping words winged with joy, which go to the heart. Here, in this "den," he often worked at the great problems of life, as we know from his editorial notes; and here he probably worked out the first principles on which Sunday-schools were founded.

The old office in Bolt Lane has long since disappeared, but the dwelling-house in the Southgate Street remains.

I would now enter upon the formation of Sunday-schools, only I would have you first know about the work in which Robert Raikes had been for years and years engaged before attempting to deal with children. I shall not delay you long, but we must follow him by steps and watch his ideas unfold, or we shall never know the real man, and be certain to lose the grand lesson of his life.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRISON REFORMER.

Robert Raikes inherited the democratic instincts of his family, and from the time that he began to edit the *Gloucester* [*Eng.*] *Journal* we find him always on the side of the masses. His aim was twofold: to elevate the people, and repress those who directly or indirectly degraded them. Week by week, month by month, the paper contained paragraphs drawing attention to the need of bettering the condition of the common people, and of training them in the habits of industry and thrift; the paper also breathed protests against those who profited by the degradation of the masses, and against the false policy of the State in neglecting people until they became criminal, and then punishing them without mercy or chance of redemption.

I can fancy that some of you are thinking that I am speaking of another man, and not of the handsome young dandy who swaggered down the streets with the air of a "man of

quality," until people called him "Buck Raikes." No, there is no mistake or confusion. I am speaking of the same man, only of another side of him. Some men have many sides. Robert Raikes is one of them, as you will find before we finish; and we can only know the complete man, so that his example may help us, after studying his strength and his weakness, his foibles and his virtues. Then when we put him together, as a whole, we shall see if the bad controls the good, or if the good controls the bad, and praise or blame accordingly. This is only fair, and surely we should be fair to the dead who yet have another life—the historical life—to live in this world.

The city of Gloucester had two prisons: the county prison at the Castle, and the Bridewell. Both were horrible. There was this distinction. If a woman used her tongue too freely, or a vagrant was awaiting a sound whipping at the cart's-tail, or a man had been drunk and brawling, they were sent to the Bridewell. Persons arrested for debt, or committed for trial at the next assizes, were sent to the Castle. The Bridewell and Castle were, for the prisoners, the nearest approaches to hells upon earth conceivable, if we except prisons in other parts of the country which were reported to be in yet worse conditions.

The Bridewell and the Castle jail were shunned as pest-houses by every person in the city, because "jail fever" was so rife and virulent, that people used to lead clean and wholesome lives caught it and died. The clergy stood aloof, the laity stood on one side; there were no sisterhoods or brotherhoods of mercy. The chaplain was paid his salary, but seldom went to the jail, and contented himself with reading prayers over batches of poor wretches sentenced to be hanged for petty thefts or murder. The public demanded the presence of the chaplain on the scaffold as a part of the show. They had "pet" names for chaplains of prisons, which showed how familiar they were with the terrible sight of gibbets. If the chaplain could find a good excuse, and did not attend, the prisoners were hanged all the same, only without a word of sympathy or prayer.

It is only a century which separates us from this state of things, and it is only within a very few years that a healthy public opinion has asked for and obtained a complete change in the idea of the aim and object of punishment. You all know that if you are not the *better* for being punished there has been a waste of energy —in fact, it is worse than that because you become hardened. Repeated punishment without reform will, in the end, destroy the moral sense.

Robert Raikes was one of the first persons in this country to note this, and act upon his observation.

I think he must have commenced visiting the prisons in his father's lifetime, because the old files of the *Gloucester Journal* show no break in the flow of appeals for prisoners, and editorial paragraphs showing up the terrible state of society which needed such measures. I think he must have been greatly indebted to his father for the working-out of results on subjects not attractive to ordinary young men, very dainty in their habits, and careful about the cut and color of their waistcoats.

The visiting of prisons had this effect on the young man. It widened his sympathies, deepened his charity, and set him thinking. He arrived early at the conclusion that *vice is preventible.* If we follow him closely, we shall find him obstinately clinging to this idea through numerous failures, and we shall also note that he was a slow thinker, and more sound than brilliant. When he once arrived at a conclusion it remained with him. We can trace his thoughts on this subject, and they are, briefly—

Vice is preventible.

Idleness is the parent of vice.

Ignorance is the cause of idleness amongst the masses.

He set himself to cure ignorance, and he commenced with prisoners in the Bridewell and the Castle jail. He read to the men and women, and when he found a prisoner could read he employed him to read to the others. When prisoners were liberated he found employment for them, but, to his dismay, the jail-bird often returned to his nest worse, much worse, than when set free.

For nearly thirty years he labored on these lines, but with very little encouragement, though he must have seen some good results, or, I think, his stout heart must have failed him. When he attacked the prison system he was sincere, and preferred to suffer loss in silence than punish the offender.

I will tell you a story. The woman who washed his linen stole some of his shirts and pawned them. Had he sent her to prison she might have been sentenced to death, and most assuredly she would have been transported. In any case, she would have come out of prison (if she lived long enough) broken in health, and with a soul scorched but not purified. What do you think he did?

He forgave her on her showing signs of sorrow for her bad conduct, and on her promising amendment. He took the shirts out of pawn, and said no more about it.

Here you see the true man—true to his convictions—suffering wrong rather than break a guiding principle of his life. You see also the generous-tempered man, who redeemed his stolen shirts *and said nothing*. May you all, my young friends, live to know the rich, mellow tone of the generosity which dwells in silence.

Mr. Raikes did not keep a diary, nor did he leave any papers or correspondence behind him, with marginal notes, all in apple-pie order, and all ready for publication; and what is strange is that very few of the letters which he must have written to various people have been preserved. All the stranger this, because he was a nimble penman, and very seldom altered a single word in any of the letters which I have seen. As editor of the *Gloucester Journal* we sometimes catch him *thinking*, and when we are trying to piece together the character of a man out of shreds and patches these thoughts are priceless. Here is an instance. After some poor wretches had been hanged for petty thefts he wrote: "How deplorable that society cannot be secured without so great a sacrifice!" He may have been thinking of his own stolen shirts then, and so tried to secure society in another way, namely, by getting the poor woman to repent, and then forgiving her

and keeping silence. This story would never have been known but the woman told it years afterwards to a maidservant in the household of Mr. Raikes's son, then the Vicar of Longhope, and so we may hope that forgiveness for sin bore good fruit.

Now I may tell you that Mr. Raikes was not "popular" amongst certain of his fellow-citizens. His affable manners and fine clothes and well-to-do air did not save him from ridicule. His acts and words were reproaches to those who knew all he knew, and yet did nothing. People in the Castle jail stole from each other, and some went naked; were covered with "prison mould," and were starved to death. At night they were chained together, and mastiffs, fed at the public expense, were let loose to hunt down any one who escaped. Infants were sometimes born in the prison, and no man knows what relief Mr. Raikes afforded out of his own purse, or out of subscriptions which he begged, week by week, in his *Journal*. His appeals would melt a heart of stone.

You know that if such things took place to-day your good clergymen and ministers and district visitors would cry "shame," and work without ceasing to wipe away the disgrace. In those days it was not so. People had been so

long accustomed to see the "masses" neglected and ill-treated that they came to think hanging was a good thing, and that whipping, and coarse food, and ignorance were necessary to keep the "vulgar in their proper places." So when Mr. Raikes interfered he was thought to be impertinent by those whose *duty* it was to visit the sick in prison, and heal moral ulcers. He was also said to be an enemy to society for attempting to make men discontented with their lot. He was set down as a "faddist," and his fellow-citizens spoke contemptuously of "Bobby Reekes's" notions for prison reform, and the treatment of prisoners as though they were really human and could feel.

For many years there was only one man who worked with him in prison matters, through good and ill repute, and that was Sir George Onesiphorus Paul—name of happy omen—the Governor of the jail. Then Howard, the great prison philanthropist, came on the scene, and, after years of incessant labor, reforms commenced. There is no official record of Mr. Raikes's unselfish devotion—so unselfish that every time he entered the prisons he ran great risk of fatal prison contagion. He never mentioned this, but Howard did, when speaking of himself, and so we know.

Now, where did Mr. Raikes find inspiration

during these years of hard work, self-sacrifice, and discouragement? I think I can tell you in his own words. He was a Bible student, and tried to realize what his Master would do. He wrote:

"It is that part of our Saviour's character I try to imitate; he went about doing good."

Where was the sustaining power? In the Psalms. He wrote:

"I am never in so proper a frame of mind as when I am reading or repeating passages from that heavenly composition. They are my chief comfort and consolation when any distress approaches; they furnish the language of thanksgiving when the heart rejoices."

You have here the key to a character at first difficult to understand. You see the desire to imitate Christ in doing good, was far *stronger* in him than personal vanity and pride in dress, and the dainty ways which went to make a "buck" of the period. Then you also see he had simple faith in God's promises, and the Psalms of David were as the songs of angels to his soul in all its moods.

CHAPTER V.

THE STORY OF SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

Robert Raikes was forty-four years of age when he began a new "experiment." He was already old in effort, having for nearly a quarter of a century studied life in the prisons and the streets, with the view of creating what he termed "a new race." He commenced with adults, and failed; and then he changed his method. The principle rooted in his mind remained unaltered. He began with the idea that *vice is preventible*, and he ended with the same idea. Having failed with the adult he tried the child. He began to study child life at close quarters, and he very soon found that he was on the right track. As you have seen, he patiently tested his plans for reforming criminals, and I would not have you forget this, because it shows how thorough he was, and how slow his mind was to move out of old grooves. He was a man who hammered a thought out well, and when he acted he was in earnest.

Some of you are ready to ask: how is it if

Mr. Raikes was a Bible student, he did not remember two texts:—

"Train up *a child* in the way he should go," and "Suffer *little children* to come unto me"?

These texts had not the same meaning for him at first as they had afterwards, and as they have for us. If they had, he would have known earlier what to have done. You will excuse him when you think that all the rest of the world had very hazy ideas of what was meant by these simple words, and that to-day good men all over the world are studying child life, as though it were a new science, in order to fathom the meaning of and give effect to these simple precepts.

The condition of the children of the working classes in 1780 was a problem which required courage to face. Listen to what a poor woman said to Mr. Raikes about the state of things on Sundays:—

"The street is filled with multitudes of these *wretches*, who, released on that day from employment, spend their time in noise and riot, playing at 'chuck,' and cursing and swearing in a manner so horrid as to convey to any serious mind an idea of hell rather than any other place."

This was no news to Mr. Raikes, because the same thing went on under the window of his

office, and disturbed him when reading "proofs" and writing for his newspaper. His old prison experiences came to his aid. He knew the parents of these children, and the habits of their class, and he said both of parents and children that neither they nor their ancestors had ever entered the house of God for the purpose of worship! It was no good for him to appeal to such parents. George Whitefield had also tried his hand on the masses in Gloucester and failed. The Wesleys and Howel Harris, and such men, were stirring the souls of men everywhere, but here was a new field for Robert Raikes—begin with the child.

Vice is preventible. Begin with the child.

Nothing simpler since the days of the Apostles ever crossed the mind of man.

What Was the Condition of These Children?

The poor woman, a gardener's wife it is said, who stopped him one day and called his attention to them, called them "wretches." Certainly to all outward seeming they were wretched. They were in groups—bright-eyed and intelligent; full of fun and frolic and mischief; uncombed, unwashed, ragged, and disgusting. Of such was the new generation on

which England must depend for her greatness and supremacy, for the throb of the steam-engine had been felt, and some men, like Adam Smith, had already seen that this child "waste" contained the vital reserve of national supremacy. This "waste," which society treated as though only fit for hanging, contained invention, art, science, poetry, language, enterprise—everything which marks the highest civilization. All it wanted was development. Robert Raikes had seen this "waste" for years, and looked on it with despair. He knew that all this precious, budding talent shown in impish ingenuity was worse than wasted, because by and by native wit and invention would be put to bad uses. And then? Then these children, grown up, would recruit the sad, sad army of immorality and crime. This was their future, unless——

Whilst he was thinking over these things, the simple word "try" came into his mind; and the word came into the mind of the right man. Just think how wonderful a thing it is that the right word comes to the right man, and at the right moment! "Try!"

He had been during all his manhood, trying in the face of opposition and ridicule, and made but little progress. Some men would have given up, but not so Robert Raikes. You

remember the stock he came from—old Yorkshire farmers, and seamen, and merchants, shrewd and progressive men, with democratic instincts. To elevate the people! Here was a mission! Here was a chance for the close imitation of Christ!

At the right moment, whilst these ideas were taking shape, he met the right man to help him. The Rev. Thomas Stock, Vicar of St. John the Baptist, and Headmaster of the Cathedral School, "chanced" to be walking in the same street. They talked the matter over. What they said we may never know, but the result we know—they agreed to *do* something, and they did it. They found some poor, but respectable, women who would teach children on Sundays, and then they visited some parents in the city slums, and induced them to send their children to these good women instead of turning them into the streets to riot and play at "chuckfarthing."

Mr. Raikes's first idea of a Sunday-school was what we now know as a Ragged School, kept on Sundays by women paid one shilling per week, and extra for coals in winter; and I don't suppose that it entered his mind, or the mind of the Rev. Thomas Stock who acted with him, that at that moment were laid the foundations of an Institution which would be-

come national and world-wide. Very many good people had gathered children together, and taught them their catechism and prayers long before Mr. Raikes was born, and when they grew tired, or old, or died, there was an end of effort, and the world seemed little better than before. We shall soon see the real difference between the Gloucester movement and all which had gone before.

I would like to say a word about Mr. Stock, for he was Mr. Raikes's friend and true helper when the first children were collected and taught. He plays no important part in the development and organization of the Sunday-school system, but all honor is due to him for his help and moral support before the idea was published to the world. He was a scholar and a Christian, and when he died the church lost an ornament, and poor humanity a friend. As it will tire you to divide your attention I shall confine myself to the school which Mr. Raikes founded, wherein he collected ragamuffins as wild as asses' colts and tamed them, and humanized them, until they became to him children who brought him much joy.

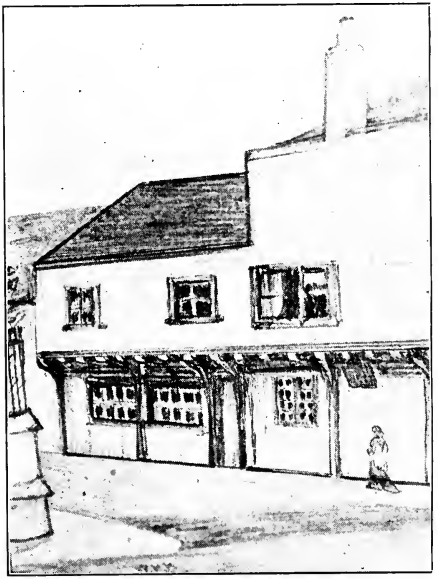
The first school which Mr. Raikes started was in Sooty Alley, and here he commenced his studies in child life, which he afterwards called "botanizing in human nature." The

mistress over this school was Mrs. Meredith, who kept a Dame, or "Mam" School, to use the local word. This school was kept in the kitchen, and Mrs. Meredith's spinning-wheel was in one corner. On Sundays the children sat on forms or stools, but learnt little, and poor Mrs. Meredith's patience was soon worn out with trying to keep them in order.

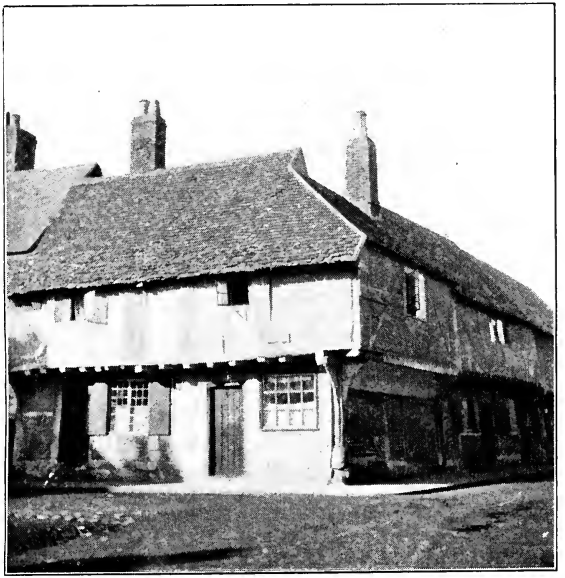
One of her pupils was Charles Cox, five years old, and when he was a hale old man of eighty-seven, he said he did not learn much "except perhaps to sit still, which the older boys found it very hard to learn." * He also said the boys were "terrible bad," which, in Gloucester, meant as bad as they could be made. Poor Mrs. Meredith had a very hard time of it, and gave up her post after a few months' trial.

Mr. Raikes found a woman better fitted for his purpose in Mrs. Mary Critchley, and she took Mrs. Meredith's pupils into her house in the Southgate Street. It was a house with two frontages—one in the Southgate Street and the other in Grey Fryars, facing the south porch of St. Mary de Crypt Church, and so near to Mr. Raikes's house that persons standing in the doorways could almost speak to one another.

* *Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work*, pp. 24 and 45.



RAIKES' OWN SUNDAY-SCHOOL
St. Mary de Crypt, Gloucester, England



RAIKES SCHOOL
St. Catherine St., Gloucester, England

The nearness of Mr. Raikes was a great moral support to the teacher, for some of the boys continued to be "terrible bad." Girls were not at first admitted, and so that you may fancy what sort of boys they were, I can tell you that some of them were marched from their houses with logs of wood and weights tied to their legs to prevent their running away. And a story is told of a boy named "Winkin' Jim," who brought a young badger under his rags, and "let it fly" in school, so as to make "old Mother Critchley jump"!

You can very well guess from these examples what kind of boys Mr. Raikes picked up to experiment upon, and when I tell you that he sometimes birched them with his own hands, and sometimes marched them home and insisted on their parents "leathering" them, stopping to see it done, and then marching them back to school again, you will see that he was very much in earnest, and "botanized" under difficulties. You will also see that *before* those poor children could be taught anything they had to be disciplined, and this made the first step more tedious and difficult.

This is no fancy picture, but it is a little softer in outline and color than the original, and I am sure we may all say that Mrs. Critchley was a brave woman, deserving of all honor

for trying to teach such children their letters and to humanize them.*

Now we see pretty well with what kind of materials Mr. Raikes worked, and very unpromising they were. When you look around your bright and beautiful class-rooms, adorned with maps and pictures, and remember your blackboard lessons, your "expositions," and call up the sweetly sympathetic faces of your teachers, and then think of the light, and music, and singing in which your Sunday hours have been spent, your minds will be filled with wonder that the beginning of it all was so squalid and repulsive.

Mr. Raikes gave the experiment a three years trial, from 1780 to 1783, before he ventured to let the world know anything about it. He was not a man in a hurry, and he was so astonished at the results that, I fancy, he could hardly believe they were real. When he first took the children to church they did not know how to behave, and he taught them to bow, as a sign of reverence, on entering a holy place. When he found that they stuck pins into one another, and fought, and swore, and were

* Mrs. Critchley died at her post and was followed by her daughter (Mrs. Sarah Packer), who was succeeded by her daughter (Mrs. Caroline Watkins). The office was hereditary down to 1863.

turned out by the parish "beadle," then he sat very close to them, and, in time, got them under control. Some persons thought the dandy and rich Mr. Raikes—the poor people always referred to him as a rich man—very soft and very foolish, and a little "cracked" over his new fad about dirty children, and they called him, playfully, or by way of derision, "Bobby Wild Goose"!

During these three years (1780–3) seven or eight Sunday-schools were opened in the city by Mr. Raikes, the Rev. Thomas Stock, and the Vicar of St. Nicholas, with an average of thirty scholars in each. The names of some of the first teachers were Mrs. Meredith, Mrs. Critchley, Mr. and Mrs. James King, Mrs. James Bretherton, and Mrs. Lea.

I cannot tell you when girls were first taken in hand, but they certainly were admitted during these three years of experiment. Some of you may be surprised to hear that, bad as the boys were, the girls were worse! I suppose they were more difficult to manage. The treatment of women in those days will, perhaps, account for this. They were, for small offenses, publicly whipped through the streets, and for using their tongues too freely were often half drowned in horse-ponds. The ducking-stool was common, and even scholars and gentlemen

said and wrote that ducking was a very proper punishment for scolding and unruly women!

Although Mr. Raikes birched the boys, he probably did not think such strong measures the right thing for little girls. At first he left them alone, and then, I believe, when they saw what nice boys their brothers were becoming, with their clean faces and hair combed, and that shoes and clothes were given to them, they thought it would be a nice thing to go to school also. A little curiosity, and a little vanity, brought the girls, and they were not refused admission. So soon as possible the sexes were separated. By means of the children a new atmosphere was brought into the squalid homes of these little ragamuffins, who even began to reform their own parents!

No wonder such results astonished those who produced them. The rule on which mankind had acted for ages was reversed. This new rule was: the child first! The pyramid stood on its apex and did not topple over, and those who watched, marveled.

CHAPTER VI.

THE STORY OF RAIKES'S SUNDAY LESSONS.

At the end of three years Robert Raikes was ready to show the world what could be done towards the creation of a new race out of social "waste."

He looked upon himself as a nurseryman "botanizing in human nature," and these schools were his botanical gardens. There is always something natural in the relation of children to flowers, and when we cannot say of a child that it is beautiful, we know there is something wrong, somewhere.

The "seminary"—to use Mr. Raikes's pet word—especially his, was opposite St. Mary de Crypt Church, under the care of Mrs. Critchley. If we think of this seminary as a garden plot, in which he had planted sprigs of wild briar, and passion flower, and bulbs, and then watered, and watched until they bloomed, full of color and perfume, we may fancy with what secret pride he showed his seed plot to the world.

The day on which he made known some

results of his efforts was doubly blessed, for on it his eldest son was born. The 3rd of November, 1783, showed him as twice a parent—the parent of the Sunday-school in which a "new race" was born, and of a son who, in a letter, he called "lovely." Doesn't this word tell us a good deal about the man's tender spots, and dreams, and leanings towards the helpless, and habit of artless confession to his friends? I fancy that on that 3rd of November there was not a happier man in the King's dominion than Robert Raikes.*

The success of the "scheme" was immediate. Sympathy, like an electric current, ran through the good and pious men and women in every town and village, wishing for a new life to be breathed into the masses, but not knowing what to do. This was the very thing. All that they had to do was to write to Mr. Raikes for information. He was the mainspring of the movement. Colonel Townley wrote from Sheffield, and Mr. Raikes's reply was published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and copied everywhere. Mrs. Hannah More wrote, and then acted, like the good, energetic woman

* "My eldest boy was born on the very day that I made public to the world the scheme of Sunday-schools in my paper of Nov. 3, 1783."—Raikes to Mrs. Harris of Chelsea.

she was, and she was encouraged afterwards by the good William Wilberforce to take in hand the savages of Cheddar. John Wesley, who knew Robert Raikes and stayed at his house, caught fire, and wherever there was a Methodist Society there he would have, if possible, a Sunday-school. His own immediate mission was to perishing men and women—brands to be plucked from the burning; but he saw clearly that the child was the heir, and that to possess the child was to build a church. Sunday-school boards were formed. The pulpits rang with the praises of the institution, and within a year the benevolent and respectable Mr. Raikes was the most lauded man in the kingdom.

When strangers came to Gloucester what had he to show them?

First, he could take them into the streets and lanes, and show them types of the originals, which he had transplanted and flushed into bloom. There they were, happy in their filth and rags, cursing and fighting, and playing at "chuck." Then he could take them into Mrs. Critchley's and show the boys, clean and fairly clothed, in classes of five, the elder and more advanced teaching the younger their letters. Then in another room there were the girls, with little white tippets on their

shoulders, the ends crossed over the breast and tied behind, and white caps on their heads, also separated into classes, with monitors over them. The boys had been taught to bow, and the girls to curtsey, when strangers entered. When Mr. Fox, the philanthropist, and Mr. Jonas Hanway, the great traveler, and Mr. William Wilberforce visited the school and heard the children repeat simple prayers and the catechism, and answer Bible questions, and then sing Dr. Watts's hymns, they were astonished. They were more astonished when Mr. Raikes drove them to the village of Painswick, and showed them exactly the same thing in similar schools which a rich cloth weaver supported for a time; only I don't think that the little girls wore white caps and tippets. This was Mr. Raikes's idea for his "own" children, so that when they were in church every one knew them by their good behavior and clean garments.* I have already told you how very particular Mr. Raikes was about his clothes and personal cleanliness, so you can easily believe that he would have those about him clean also.

I have not been able to find that there was any alteration in this system of setting monitors over small classes in Mr. Raikes's schools,

* *Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work*, p. 17.

and these, in fact, were the first voluntary teachers. The system was, in truth, founded on and supported by voluntary effort; paid masters and mistresses were, at first, necessary, but they gradually disappeared, and if they had not, then I am afraid the Sunday-school system must have died.

Mr. Raikes used to hold what he called "conversations" with the children, and I think that his appearance was looked for, probably in the afternoons, as Sunday was a very busy day for him. We may picture him in Mrs. Critchley's large kitchen, on one occasion, with a magnet in his hand, and the children, open-eyed, crowding around him. This is the lesson he was teaching and his manner of teaching it:

SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS.

"I was," he says, "showing my scholars, a little time ago, how possible it is for one invisible power to exist in bodies which shall act upon other bodies without our being able to perceive in what manner they act. This I proved to them by the powers of the magnet.

"They see the magnet draw the needle without touching it. Thus, I tell them, I wish to draw them to the paths of duty, and thus lead them to heaven and happiness; and as they saw one needle, when it had touched the

magnet, then capable of drawing another needle, thus when they became good they would be made the instruments in the hands of God, very probably, of making other boys good."

This, I suppose, is the first Sunday-school lesson preserved in the world, and your teachers, my young friends, can tell you better than I what a grand teacher the man must have been who could thus gently excite the imagination, and then, in so few words, convey a meaning so simple and so true.*

Mr. Raikes was not a Sunday-school teacher on Sundays only, but on all days whenever children came about him. He used to attend the Cathedral service at seven o'clock in the morning, and children often met him there, and their presence provoked him to teach something. In the Lady Chapel, or in the nave of the grand Cathedral, Mr. Raikes would get one of the boys to read, and then and there he would teach something. He was a ready teacher, his heart being in his work.

* Mr. Raikes allowed the children to think for themselves, and did not attempt to do everything for them, as teachers, mistakenly kind, sometimes will. The result of this little lesson was that the children went about the city of their own accord, and, acting the part of magnets, drew others to meet Mr. Raikes at the Cathedral.

The Gospel for the day one morning was Luke 17, and Mr. Raikes tells us what happened. He says:—

"They were reading that verse in St. Luke the other morning where the Saviour says, 'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. . . . The kingdom of God is within you.'

"'Who can tell me,' says [*sic*] I, 'what we are to understand by that expression, "the kingdom of God is within you"?'

"They were all silent for some minutes. At last the boy who was reading said, 'I believe it means when the Spirit of God is in our hearts.'"

The joy that that answer gave to Mr. Raikes was greater far than we can fancy; but it was very great, as you may know when you read the next sentences. "Don't you think," he asked his friend Mr. Lewelyn, "that this is encouragement to cultivate the lower orders of the people? I could render to you numberless incidents of this nature that occur to me to render my scheme of botanizing in human nature pleasant and agreeable."

Robert Raikes found pleasure in his work, and so we are sure he did it well. Only it is a subject for regret that many more of these lessons and incidents have not been preserved.

Now, I think, you have a very good idea of what the Sunday-school was at first, and the good it did; and I suppose you will be surprised to hear that in a very short time a great outcry was made against Mr. Raikes in his own city.

SUNDAY TEACHING IS HOLY.

Those who were envious, and were tired of hearing so much about the "benevolent" and "good" Mr. Raikes, and those who felt remorse in secret for neglecting their duty towards those committed to their charge, and those who hated what was good and wished the poor to remain so, and those who were narrow-minded, though very good in their own way, said that teaching children on the Sabbath was a breach of the fourth commandment. This is true, because Mr. Raikes replied to it, and said his object in establishing Sunday-schools was to render "the Lord's day subservient to the ends of instruction." His own opinion was that the doing of God's work was holy and that a holy day was honored by doing it. His full vindication is contained in the following lines:—

"The minds of men have taken great hold on that prejudice that we are to do nothing on the Sabbath Day which may be deemed labor,

and therefore we are to be excused from all application of mind as well as body.

"The rooting out of this prejudice is the point I aim at as my favorite object. Our Saviour takes particular pains to manifest that whatever tended to promote the health and happiness of our fellow-creatures were sacrifices peculiarly acceptable on that day."

Here you see the thinker and the Christian, as well as the man capable of stating his convictions in calm language, when provoked. And you know how right he was, because the whole Christian Church has since confirmed him; and now every Sabbath more than two millions of Christian men and women make personal sacrifices in order to lead little children to heaven.

Outside of Gloucester, and indeed throughout the whole country, prejudices against teaching the children of the poor grew rapidly, and at last became so strong that the great Mr. Pitt seriously intended to make it a State question, and introduce a Bill into Parliament for *the Suppression of Sunday-schools.* The enemies to education coupled Sunday-school teaching with open-air preaching; and the Pitt Ministry, acting in what they supposed to be the interest of the Established Church, wished to put down both by law. Happily, better counsels pre-

vailed, but not until after the Rev. Rowland Hill, a lover of Sunday-schools from their beginning, published his now forgotten, but at one time famous, *Apology for Sunday-schools.** Many bitter and untrue things were said and written against Robert Raikes and Sunday-schools; but I pass them by, for they have died away and left no trace, like all things will which are rooted in bad motives and dishonor.

If God's blessing was ever showered abundantly upon a movement, it was upon Sunday-schools. Mr. Raikes lived to see what he loved to call a "little grain of mustard seed" covering many lands with its grateful shadow; and we now know that it contains within itself those divine germs which spring into life in every clime where Christianity gains a foothold. It has developed, and developed, and developed, but its principle remains unaltered. And this is the principle in Mr. Raikes's own words:—

"To check the growth of vice at an early period by . . . good habits of acting and thinking."

Those who treated Mr. Raikes as a "faddist" and as one a little mad, did not understand the meaning of those words. What he meant by

* Sermon preached at the Surrey Chapel, and printed and published some time after in the year 1801.

them, and what pains he took to understand the delicate workings of children's minds as they unfolded under this care, we shall next see.

NOTE.—Mr. Raikes has another claim to distinction, which some may think even more important than the organization of Sunday-schools—he was the forerunner of the movement for popular national education in England. He established and spread and advocated in his *Journal* Industrial Day Schools for the poor, in which education was free, and very often subscriptions were equally divided in parishes between the Sunday and day schools. Even during the experimental period —between 1780 and 1783—he paid Mrs. Critchley and others extra for teaching children during meal times and in the evenings. He introduced the system of "monitors" in schools before either Lancaster or Bell were heard of. Mr. Lancaster visited Mr. Raikes, perhaps, about the year 1796, and probably borrowed this excellent idea from the original thinker of Gloucester. Mr. Bell hit on the idea in 1792 when at Madras, but that was about ten years after Mr. Raikes divided his school into small classes, putting the elder over the younger.

CHAPTER VII.

STUDIES IN CHILD LIFE.

THE children which came into Mr. Raikes's botanical garden were the product—the sorry product—of the century.* The mistake which people then made was in treating them as "waste," incapable of improvement, and of little use in the world except as parts of a machine for fighting at home or abroad, for working on farms and at looms, and doing household drudgery for their "betters." Many quite forgot that there was much difference in sex. Women worked out of doors like men, and used the language of men, which makes us shudder only to think that children heard them. The parents herded like cattle both in the city, and in the country, and were sodden, or vicious or both.

And those who knew better helped to keep them so. There was an atmosphere for the poor, and they were expected to live in it, and take their color from what was about them.

* See Chapter I., "In the Beginning."

It was the fashion of the day to see in the child only the vices of the parent. As father, so son; as mother, so daughter; and there were proverbs in counties which cut all heart out of human beings trying to improve. Very good, and kind, and intelligent people believed that if parents were vicious so must the child be—virtue in a cottage was banished to the realms of fiction; honesty in rags was a dream.

Mr. Raikes shared these opinions of the day; we know he did because he was astonished, and frankly confessed the fact, when he found that children, if only caught early enough, began life on independent lines.

He had reason to detest children for annoying him when at work in his office and he wanted to be quiet, and he had a real horror of their filth and rags, and noise and foul language. Like other well-to-do people of his day he did not see the other side of all this, or think even that the gutter-child is never ignorant, but has a mind full of knowledge of a kind. Did you ever hear of little Gavroche, the gutter-child of Paris, one of the finest sketches of that great poet, Victor Hugo? *

* "The *gamin* [gutter child] is a beauty, and at the same time a disease of the nation—a disease that must be cured. How? By light" [education]. Robert Raikes expressed similar views eighty years before

Mr. Raikes had these little Gavroches all around him, and when he found out what could be made of them he was surprised. These children were as sharp as the pins which they pointed—full of device and wit, cunning and mischief; but their native talents were wasted, and minds on which beautiful pencilings might have been traced were marked with villainous etchings.

Mr. Raikes entered on the work of civilizing children with misgiving, because he called it an "experiment." This is not a hopeful word when entering on a social problem which the centuries have left unsolved. If he had not been a "hopeful" man he would not have touched it at all. The way in which respectable people spoke of these little ones was not encouraging. They called them "wretches," "profligates," "wolves and tigers" in temper and disposition, and as "hardly differing from the brute creation." No doubt they were called other names even less polite. Mr. Raikes

Victor Hugo wrote. One thing Raikes and Hugo had in common: they loved to see poor little children clothed and happy. Raikes clothed them and fed them on beef and plum pudding. Hugo said, "The livery of rags touches my heart," and he clothed them; once a week he had forty children to dinner, and called this treat "the festival of poor little children." See *Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work*, pp. 183–4.

called them " wild asses' colts," but that was after he had tamed some of them ; what he said before was probably stronger, and no less true.

When he entered on the work he worked thoroughly. Some of you may fancy that he gave up visiting the prisons when he began to teach. He did nothing of the kind. He worked as hard at prison reform as he did before, for he was not the man to give up until right was done. He was an earnest man, and a thorough. He said of his new experiment, " I am botanizing in human nature " in order to see " a new race " spring up, and he watered the seeds himself and saw them sprout. The soil on which he worked was truly virgin, except for its weeds, for he said that neither the children " nor their ancestors," had ever entered a church for worship ; and that " cursing and swearing, and other vile expressions," formed " the sum of their conversation."

Now I will tell you, very nearly in his own words, what he says he did, and what he observed.

Those who came to school barefooted he bought shoes for, and those who were very " bare of apparel " he clothed.

He printed a little book for them out of which they learned the alphabet, and then to

read, beginning with words of one syllable. The first two lines of the first reading lesson were—

"God is one."
"God is love."

In a very short time he found that these ragged outcasts liked to be clean, and wear nice clothes, and come to school, and really could learn and remember. That the children of neglect should have brains startled him at first, and he wrote: "I cannot express the pleasure I often receive in discovering genius, and innate good dispositions, among this little multitude." He was no less surprised and pleased to find that some had "extraordinary memories," and could repeat the whole of Dr. Watts's hymns for children, and that some had good voices and could sing. These were revelations to him, and to the friends to whom he wrote, and then he came to this conclusion: "If good seed be sown in the mind at an early period . . . it may please God to cause it to spring up, and to bring forth a plentiful harvest."

This observation sounded new then, because people—and very good people too—thought that the capacity to learn from books was limited to and belonged by right only to chil-

dren who were "genteely" born. Even great men like Bacon and Milton did not think of the "masses" when they wrote on education —they are passed over as serfs in a free land.

Mr. Raikes very early learned the value of home influence. At first he birched the boys, and when he found it was wrong to punish children for the faults of their parents he commenced home visiting. He wished to do justice to children, and this is what he wrote: "I frequently go round to their habitations to inquire into their behavior at home, *and into the conduct of the parents*, to whom I give some little hints now and then, as well as to the children."

He could visit and interfere without leaving behind unpleasant memories, and the following story will show you what sort of visitor he made. The story is told by himself:—"I was taking a woman to task one day, before her husband, because the house was not so clean as it ought. 'Troth, sir,' said the man, 'I wish you would come a little oftener; we should be all the better.'"

His influence grew both at school and at home, for, "The people tell me," he wrote, "they keep their children in better order by the threat of telling Mr. R. than they could formerly by the most severe stripes."

When we see Robert Raikes at work in

jails, marching ragged boys to school, visiting slums, and lecturing untidy women, we lose sight of the dandy who would not dirty his shoes, and "snuffed with elegance" out of a gold snuff-box.* We are now on the earnest, practical side of him, and see him learning his lessons and noting down observations, for he was, as he once said, "in a new country." He made one note so early in his work that it seems to have come to him by intuition, namely, that the child's mind could be best worked at a profit between the ages of six and twelve. He commenced at five, and writing generally, said: "A reformation in society seems to me to be only practicable by establishing notions of duty and practical habits of order and decorum at an early age." The full meaning of this is better understood now that the study of child life has been raised to the rank of a "science." Yet we are only learning that a child differs from the adult as a bud differs from the full-blown flower. If we idly pick a rosebud to pieces who would ever dream (not already knowing) that, if allowed to bloom, in a few hours it would become rich in color, and full of perfume, and of glorious shape? The bud had its own shape, and beauty, and tender markings, but it was not

* *Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work*, p. 49.

what it was intended to be. It contained its own mysteries. The child is no less mysterious. When it grows up it seems too late to ask for its soul's secrets, before it grows up it seems too early, so that this new "science" which looks so simple is very, very deep, and those only who have sympathy can ever hope to master it.

I think that Mr. Raikes had this sympathy in great measure. If he had not been a very sympathetic man little children would never have let him see into their souls so deeply, almost before they had got over their awe of his fine clothes and masterful ways. He had a caressing manner with children which attracted them. He used to pat them on their heads, and touch them under their chins, and say, "You are a good boy"; or put a glass to his eye and say, "I can *see* what a bad boy you've been." He was fond of talking to them and asking them questions; and even when he talked seriously there was something vivid and dramatic conjured up, which children so love and remember afterwards. Here is one of his stories, with a moral, which he afterwards committed to paper:—

"In my visit to my Sunday-school last Sunday I remarked some of my sheep had gone astray. On my inquiry one of the boys told

me that they were at play with a set of wicked boys in a neighboring field.

"'Alas!' said I, 'the wicked one was afraid we should lead all the poor boys to heaven! He has therefore set up a Sunday-school against us to lead some of them to his place of torment!

"'Let those who now take pleasure in wickedness go to *their* master; but I know all who wish to call God *their* friend will come and take part with *me*. But do you now mark the end of these boys who have joined our adversary; and their fate, I am convinced, will confirm you in your duty.'"

The child would be too unnaturally dull for the streets who could not understand this lesson, and whose mind would not at once be filled with images of combat—the good Mr. Raikes fighting for God, their friend, and they on the side of the good Mr. Raikes. The little auditors were turned into actors in four simple sentences, and their souls enlisted on the side of the good. Bunyan never drew a situation which called the spiritual forces of a child into play more rapidly and with fewer strokes.

Fixing the attention of children by rapid dramatization was his practise, for he wrote: "By this means I endeavor to avail myself of the folly of the bad to strengthen the good."

Sometimes children thought he had come from heaven, so skilfully did he excite their imaginations. Here is Mr. Raikes's report of his little critic's criticism :—

"I had some time ago been exerting my feeble powers to convey some ideas to some poor children at the opening of a Sunday-school at a village in this neighborhood, [Gloucester] where, till then, the poor had been entirely neglected, and a little boy who had listened attentively to my conversation went home to his mother . . . and asked whether that gentleman had not been at heaven."

Mr. Raikes could tell a story very well, and he was always watching for effect. His note about this child is that "the simplicity of the question showed that the boy's mind had been strongly impressed." In this way he worked towards the inmost recesses of the children's minds, and I have another story which shows the mutual relations between them.

"My children last Sunday told me," he wrote, "that they were sorry when the time came that I was to leave them. The subject of my conversation with them was the history of Joseph. . . . I brought it down to a level with their conditions, representing Joseph as a poor boy, like one of them."

He interested them, and observed effects at

a moment when pathos was deep, and his note is: "You would have been agreeably struck with the fixed attention of their little minds. I daresay many went home and told the story to their parents."

Mr. Raikes was studying child's life then in the spirit of an original investigator, so we may be sure that there was very little helpful knowledge to hand. Does it not seem strange so to talk now about the children of a century ago, as though some new species had then sprung into being to be studied in the scientific spirit? Now we see that Mr. Raikes was a student himself, and came to school to learn as well as to teach. He did not rely upon sympathy only, though he did not forget it in its proper time and place, as you may judge when he says:—

"I have invited all my Sunday-school children to dine with me on New Year's Day [1795] on beef and plum pudding. I wish you could step in and see what clean and joyous countenances *we* shall exhibit, and you would not be disappointed to hear how well they sing their Maker's praise."

We see how successful he was throughout the piece. First he birched the boys, and then they became fast friends; then he studied them, and they clung to him until they were

as one, and he could touch the secret springs which set the soul's chimes playing. An old man when sixty-five years of age said: "People may say what they like, but Robert Raikes seemed quite angelic as he walked through the streets of Gloucester—there was no one like him." Another, speaking of his memory, said: "I love it!"

The personal charm of Robert Raikes must have been very great for those whom he most sought to sway.

CHAPTER VIII.

A FRIEND OF THE POOR.

THE "benevolent" Mr. Raikes, popular amongst the poor and those who had no helper, was the most unpopular man of his day amongst the well-to-do of his fellow-citizens. He was sincerely loved; he was most honestly disliked. So genuine were both feelings that you may trace them easily enough to-day in the city of Gloucester, Eng., where the Raikes tradition is weak amongst the descendants of the educated and well-to-do of his own day. There is no doubt that he was disliked—not persecuted, but disliked, and isolated, and laughed at, or pitied for his foibles. We have his own word for the existence of the atmosphere of unkindness about him. When we look for reasons we can easily find them. His grand offense was that he was the friend of the poor!

His acts, and writings, and example were protests against the habits, and manners, and public conduct of his fellows. He lived among

but was not of them. He was a prosperous tradesman, but dressed as a gentleman at a time when tradesmen wore aprons, or some mark of their calling. Outside of the clergy, the "professional" class was very small, and by no means rich. Socially, Mr. Raikes stood very much alone, and could afford to be independent. His personal friends resided out of the city, and were either rich cloth manufacturers or persons of county rank.

His presence in the city was a source of irritation. His personal cleanliness in the streets—his having a pathway swept at his own expense from his house to the printing-office—was a silent protest against the filth heaps in all the public thoroughfares of the time. His townsmen called him "Bobby Reekes"—the old Gloucester way of speaking—and said he was too good for common folk! Then there were the clergy, and he offended them. He visited the prisons, "made influence" with the judges to save some poor wretches from hanging, pleaded the cause of prisoners perishing from want of food and neglect, which was considered a highly improper thing for any one to do unless it was his "business," and he was paid for doing it. Then he began to educate, and feed, and clothe poor little children; and it was said that

"Bobby Reekes" was interfering with the designs of Providence, and would, in time, set the poor above their station in life and make them discontented. He was Guardian of the Poor for some years, encouraged men and women to be properly married, and was a frequent witness to the marks in the register made by the bridegrooms and their brides who could not write. Poor people living without God did not trouble about the rites of the Church, but Mr. Raikes encouraged some and paid their fees. However, he took care to be present. He held no municipal office, for he would have been a thorn in the sides of those who sat with arms folded, and did nothing but under compulsion.

A few of Mr. Raikes' opinions about the treatment he received, and the opinions and acts of his fellow-citizens, have been preserved. They are very few, and so are precious. Writing about himself and his plans for improving the condition of the people he says:—

"I can prevail on no one to second me in my little efforts to civilize the long despised and neglected children of indigence.

"I walk alone. It seems as if I had discovered a new country, where no other adventurer chooses to follow.

"It is some recompense for the *scorn and*

contempt of my neighbors that I am frequently honored with visits from strangers . . . one of whom told me the other day that he would rather have been the instrument of so much good to the world than to be the possessor of a million of gold.

"I wonder not that you are *vilified*. *I am equally so.* Our Master was far more than we.

"I did not conceive that I held any degree of esteem among my neighbors, and am therefore the more astonished at your having heard anything praiseworthy of one that seems *here* to be walking alone."

When he appeared in public with his little "ragged robins," going to or returning from early morning cathedral service, the children clustering around him as though he had "loaves and fishes to distribute"—which he often had—people said, jeeringly: "There goes Bobby Wild Goose and his ragged regiment." They had no real harm to say of him, only that he made a fool of himself over his fads; and this nickname very truly represented public opinion. "Bobby Wild Goose!" There is character about the name, when we think it over.

Whatever respect may have been paid to Mr. Raikes as a printer of books and newspapers, and as a man of property, he was allowed to "walk alone" when doing good.

We may estimate the sincerity of his desire to elevate the masses by his continued efforts in the face of sneers and ridicule; and in the same way we may test the strong fiber beating in his heart under the fine laced coat, and the figured waistcoat, of the dandy of the period.

We may be sure he felt this isolation—boycotting we should call it now—for trying to do good, or he would not have stooped to complaint. He had, however, fixed opinions about himself and his neighbors—about the clergy and others in the city, whose work he was doing out of pure love for God. He was an Evangelical churchman, and wrote: "Calvinists and Socinians abound here, but those abound more who consider the world as the only abiding-place, and therefore give themselves no concern about the preparation for another." Then, respecting the clergy: "I fear they are past feeling. . . . Their minds are seared with the hot iron spoken of in the Scriptures."

These were strong words, and no favor is shown to his own ministers. Certainly he had not received much sympathy from the clergy in the Cathedral city. When their help was given it was given grudgingly. Hear him again: "Within this month the minister of my parish has at last *condescended* to give me

assistance in this laborious work which I have carried on for six years, with little or no support," in his own parish.

Abundant help and encouragement came from outside and afar, but only cold, mocking glances met him at home. The Rev. Thomas Stock, already mentioned, who died too soon, and the Rev. Richard Raikes, Vicar of Maisemore, will ever be gratefully remembered for the help they gave when the budding shoots of the Sunday-school institution were very tender. Richard Raikes lived in the city, and was so modest that he would never allow his brother to mention his name; but he also lived in the hearts of the poor for his good deeds, and there is no name in the city to-day more lovingly remembered. The effort of these three men was noble, and Mr. Raikes's language is noble also. This is what he said :—

"I have two clergymen engaged with me in an effort to raise up among the lowest of the people a new race, taught at an early period the happiness of thinking on that which is good, and bringing those thoughts into action in the several duties that Christianity enjoins.

"We consider it as an experiment how far it be practicable to lead mankind by slow and gentle steps to the comforts and peace that good morals supply, and thereby render those

a blessing who have hitherto been a scandal to the community."

These elevated words form the charter of the Sunday-school.

Now, when you are trying to do good to others, and find no one near to sympathize with you, and smile approvingly, think of Robert Raikes and his great Christian endeavor, and struggle on. And when you see your teachers following in his steps, weary and downcast because they see no improvement in the school, do you then think of Robert Raikes and make their hearts glad, and lighten their work by showing how much better you can be. When teachers droop and are weary they want *your* sympathy, and it is very precious to them. Only a look gives new life sometimes.

I shall have given you a wrong idea of this friend of the poor if you fancy he was not a sociable man, either at home or abroad. He was, in truth, a "society" man, and his name often appeared in the society papers of the day. We read that the "eminent," or "benevolent," or "the highly-respectable Mr. Raikes of Gloucester" did so and so, or that his daughter was married to so and so, or that his son was presented to such and such a living, or had his commission in the Guards.

He kept a good table, and must have been a

genial host, though he played neither cards, nor dice, nor betted on horses, cock-fighting, bear-baiting, or prize fights. He entertained the "best" company when they came to the city. Prince William of Gloucester dined with him, and amongst his friends and visitors were the Wesleys, William Wilberforce (a relation by marriage), Howard, some members of the French Academy, maids of honor of the Court of George III., and distinguished young officers who fought under Nelson. And so delightful did these young heroes, who fought their way to glory and rank in both services, find Mr. Raikes's home, that they married his six daughters. The girls went off year by year, with the regularity of clockwork, until none was left; so we may be sure it was not a gloomy house or a gloomy family to visit.

When Mr. Raikes was pleased he showed it like an overgrown boy. The celebrated Miss Burney told him one day that she would speak of him and his Sunday-school to the Queen, and "the joy with which he heard this was little short of rapture," wrote the shrewd little diarist. She kept her word, and Mr. Raikes went to Windsor and saw the good Queen Charlotte, who encouraged him, and became a patron of Sunday-schools in the royal borough. Mr. Raikes tried to get the ladies of England

to follow the example of the good Queen, but the time was not yet come.

If we only saw Robert Raikes, the dandy, visiting royalty, entertaining princes, and figuring in the society news of the day we might find it hard to believe that he was the "friend of the poor," nicknamed and "vilified" by his neighbors, and in very truth, a piece of that "salt of the earth" without which the world would be a sorry waste.

It is all the greater pleasure to write this, because you may be sure it is not true that "the poor have no friends." They always have had a friend. Follow the greatest names in all the world from the beginning of moral life down to Jesus, and from Jesus until now, and you will find that the grandest have ever been on the side of the poor. Were it not so the "Ascent of Man" would have been very, very slow.

NOTE.—Mr. Raikes was honored with an audience of King George III. and Queen Charlotte; and it seems probable that the Queen gave him a second audience, so interested was she in the Sunday-school mission. The following is from a letter in the possession of the Grant family, written by Thomas Raikes, to his friend Mr. Charles Grant of the Bengal Civil Service, dated Eltham, July 4th, 1787:—"My brother [Robert] was at Windsor about a fortnight ago, and both the King and Queen came to him after the chapel service

and spoke with him upon the subject ; expressing how much his country was obliged to him for the scheme and for his zealous exertions in the cause."—Writing twelve months afterwards—June 27, 1788, to the Rev. Bowen Thickens of Ross, Robert Raikes said : "The Queen sent for me the other day to give her Majesty an account of the effects observable on the manners of the poor, and her Majesty most graciously said that she envied those who had the power of doing good by thus personally promoting the welfare of society in giving instructions and morality to the general mass of the common people, a pleasure from which by her position she was debarred."—The *Gentleman's Magazine* said that this interview with the Queen took place at the Lodge and lasted more than an hour. The two accounts point to two interviews with royalty within a year. On one occasion King George III. visited the Sunday-school at Brentford conducted by Mrs. Trimmer and her daughters, and Queen Charlotte took a personal interest in the Sunday-school started in the royal boroughs of Windsor.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BIBLE STUDENT.

Some of you, my young friends, are ready to ask me, Was Robert Raikes a religious man?

This is an important question for those to ask who would shape their life upon the model of a man who went about doing good. When a good man does good, the good seems yet more beautiful and holy because of its setting. Now that we owe so much to Robert Raikes, and continue his labors, enlarging year by year the splendid inheritance committed to our keeping, there should be no doubt about his spiritual life. I would not escape answering this important question, because, I would not leave you in any doubt as to the Sunday-school being founded by a man whose faith was simple and Bible-rooted.

Mr. Raikes, as you have seen, was a many-sided man—prosperous but benevolent, a prison-worker and a dandy; a society man and a founder of Sunday-schools; unpopular with the rich and loved by the poor; nice in his

sense of cleanliness, but mostly seen where there was squalor and filth and misery. Intellectually we also meet with many striking contrasts: he is impulsive, yet cautious; slow to take up a new thing, but obstinate in persevering to the end. Wherever we find him there is no doubt about the man: swaggering through the streets, at early morning cathedral service, ministering in jail, teaching in schools, giving away combs and clothes and Bibles, celebrating the victory of the Nile with "open house;" wherever we see him there is no doubt that he is Robert Raikes. He carried his own atmosphere with him.

A man might be and do all this and yet not be a religious man.

Was Robert Raikes, the founder and organizer of Sunday-schools, a religious man? Yes.

This is all the more an important answer because, until quite recently, the world has been obliged to take it upon trust that a man who did so much good, without profit to himself, must have been a Christ-lover. I used to *think* so, but now I am *sure* of it, because his words have come to light, and the words and acts confirm each other.

Mr. Raikes had a correspondence with the Rev. William Lewelyn, a Nonconformist minister, for whom he printed many religious

works, including an *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*. The correspondence lasted about six years, and at intervals Mr. Raikes poured forth his soul in sentences which read like "confessions of faith" in his moments of spiritual exaltation, or of loneliness because of the feeling against him in his native city. If I give you his own words without comment you will like it the better, because they are soul-secrets, such as men breathe in silent prayer, and they were so intended by the writer, who, on one occasion, wrote, "This is the language which I speak only to you, and to my own heart."

These passages, all too rare, may be classified under several heads.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

"I rejoice," he wrote, "that I have some kindred spirits . . . anxious to promote the glory of him who is invisible, and who wish to enlarge the kingdom of his Son.

"Your work is calculated only for minds which have been strongly impressed with the love of God. To those who are insensible to this sublime impression, your *Exposition* would appear as the Gospel did heretofore to the Jews, a stumbling-block, to the Greeks, foolishness."

"You could not have gratified me more highly than in the freedom with which you say you write to me on the subject of the love of God.

"Were all men by such communications to provoke each other to good works, manifesting their love to the Giver of all good by imitating his beneficence in their conduct to their fellow-creatures, what a happy world should we live in; how well adapted to prepare us for that city whose builder is God!"

THE BIBLE FIRST.

"Your words have in them something so purely spiritual that I find no reading, *except the Scriptures*, that operate so powerfully in purifying the heart, and fitting it for an intercourse with him that is invisible. . . .

"Your analogy of the great operations of Nature, and the words of Grace, displayed in the Life of our Blessed Redeemer, are very striking. You show the wonderful uniformity in every part of the divine economy." *

THE BOOK OF REVELATION.

When sending some proof-sheets of the *Exposition of the Revelation* to Mr. Lewelyn, Mr. Raikes wrote :—

* These extracts refer to a volume entitled *Christianity: or the Science of Christ*, printed by Raikes in 1795.

"You begin to open to my view the object of this wonderful and mysterious book in a manner more clear and satisfactory than I have ever seen before.

"There is some pleasure in printing works that purify and elevate the heart, and fit it for an intercourse with the mansions of Eternity.

"Long may you enjoy health to extend your exertions in the cause of purity and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

On another occasion he wrote :—

"I wish to ask you what you understand by the Seven spirits, like the Seven lamps burning before the throne. Do they mean any particular attributes of the Deity?"

BELIEF IN A HAPPY IMMORTALITY.

Mr. Raikes's admiration for the spiritual gifts of his correspondent increased with time, and he gave expression to secret feelings in language which he said "I speak only to you, and to my own heart." Here are examples :—

"I wish my Spiritual Part was subtilized and refined like yours. Heaven grant we may one day meet, and pass a happy Eternity together in that blessed society where the praise of God is the only enjoyment."

"Perhaps we may not meet on this side the

grave, but I pray that we may pass Eternity together, and join in the delights of Adoration, Thanksgiving, and Praise of Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and of the Lamb and Holy Spirit, for ever and ever."

"I would not urge an exertion beyond your ease; but when you can write, indulge me with a few of those heavenly ideas that are preparing your faithful spirit for its glorified state: that state in which you will be permitted to see as you are seen."

THE ATONEMENT.

"I am almost inclined to ask you, if I dared, *whence* drew you all the store of heavenly wisdom which enables you to open the mysteries of this astonishing Revelation? I am filled with astonishment at the disclosure of what I had not till now any idea. You seem to draw back the veil that conceals from mortals the hidden things of God.

"How purifying that contemplation! The world and its grossness sinks into contempt with these sublime and illuminating studies."

"There are two or three passages that strike me very forcibly. They dart a degree of illumination into the mind that comes very nearly to what *I have felt when perusing the pen of inspiration.*

"You are greatly favored. Oh, that I could enjoy the company and converse of a spirit so illumed! Oh, that I could catch a spark of that sacred splendor!

"I behold in my own heart the vilest of the vile.

"'I the worst of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me.'"

"It is the looking up to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith through the medium of Humility, and a due sense of our own vileness and unworthiness, that appear to me the only means of following him whither he is gone before.

"It is in this sentiment that we so cordially agree. This agreement binds us together in unity of spirit and the bonds of peace. Upon this rock let us build a temple to Friendship which time shall not destroy."

FAITH.

"I see my own unworthiness. . . . With this plea I go more boldly to the Throne of Mercy, keeping in my eye the leper, the publican in the temple, the lame, the blind—all those who came to Jesus brought by the conviction of their own misery, having *faith* and confidence in his power to restore.

"Without this hope of relief the pressure of

my sins would be a burden too heavy for me to bear."

Whilst you are under the spell of Mr. Raikes's confessions of faith, and of love of God and his Son, you will, I am sure, say you have no cause for shame that your Sunday-school Institution is founded on the exertions of such a man. But I will not ask you for any opinion whilst these words of childlike simplicity, though often of much depth and power, are ringing in your ears. All that I will ask of you is to read them again when the spell upon you has passed, and then ask yourselves—

If Robert Raikes was such a Bible student, and such a firm believer in the divine love, and mercy, and promises, is it not true that his was a religious life; and that the Sunday-school, through him, is Bible-rooted?

THE SAYINGS OF ROBERT RAIKES.

I have been able to collect a few, and I am sorry they are so few, short, pithy sentences used by Mr. Raikes. They are detached thoughts, and stand alone when separated from their context. These are thoughts thrown off without premeditation, and never afterwards polished up and elaborated for publication, like the Thoughts of Pascal, and of men whom we call "great thinkers."

These sentences were quarried by a busy man out of his own mind in moments of reflection. There may be others in existence, but these are all I find at present:—

"The wicked are the scourges of each other."

"The world conceives that notorious crimes are all that it has to guard against."

"How earnestly ought prayer to be made for power to imitate the heavenly pattern."

"As iron sharpeneth iron so doth the intercourse of friends sharpen and exhilarate."

"If the glory of God be promoted in any way, even the smallest degree, society must reap some benefit."

"It is that part of the Saviour's character which I aim at imitating: he went about doing good."

"What a delightful sensation springs up in the mind when the faculties and powers are engaged in promoting the glory of him that is invisible."

"What a wide and extensive field of rational enjoyment opens to our view, could we allow the improvement of human nature to become a source of pleasure."

"I find few pleasures equal to those which arise from the conversation of men who are endeavoring to promote the glory of the Creator, and the good of their fellow-creatures."

"The vigorous and robust in body seldom are seen to enjoy that refinement of Spirit which looks, as it were, into the invisible world."

"Such is the sympathy of minds in which the same Spirit dwells, that they never feel the barrenness of drought complained of in that desert to which the worldly-minded are driven out to ramble to and fro, without knowing where to find a resting-place."

"It is something to have the wish to be what we ought. A longing look may produce an exertion; repeated efforts may gain some ground. Let us not despond! Let us call on him to whom all things are possible. 'He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.'"

"Show wherein I may be useful, and command without reserve."

"I endeavor to avail myself of the folly of the bad to strengthen the good."

"Happiness greatly depends on promoting the happiness of others."

"If good seed be sown in the mind, as in the natural world, a plentiful harvest may be looked for, and in the same order."

"I have labored for the glory of God and the good of my fellow-creatures. . . . The pleasure cannot be taken from me."

In these brief sentences we have rules for living the Christian life, hoping on, hoping ever for the seeds of good-doing to sprout, and grow, and bear fruit. In them we see Robert Raikes, the hopeful man: "Let us not despond!" Prosperous man as he was, with a paying business, well connected, living in the style of a gentleman, fond of good society, received by Queen Charlotte, interviewed by French savants, invited to Russia by the great Catherine,* he was *not* a self-sufficient man. He read his Bible with a purpose and found strength. How often must these words of the prophet Isaiah † have comforted him when "walking alone," when ridiculed and vilified by his fellow-citizens, and when the sounds of furious opposition to his pet scheme for creating a new life amongst the neglected masses reached him from afar!

I have told you in Chapter VI. a little about the battle which raged against Sunday-schools for years, and the earnest student can find what he wishes to know in my larger volume. I will only now say the Institution passed through the fire without the smell of burning upon it. Nay, it was all the better for opposition, for it was of God.

* *Robert Raikes: The Man and His Work*, p. 130.
† Isaiah 40:29.

CHAPTER X.

LAST DAYS.

THERE is not much more to tell you now that is new. I find that in 1794, when only fifty-eight years of age, Mr. Raikes refused to increase his business, and even talked of limiting it to the printing of books for a few valued friends. In 1802, when sixty-six years of age, he transferred his business and newspaper, and retired into private life.

He went to reside in a house in Bell Lane, very near to where Whitefield was born, and scarcely a hundred yards from the beautiful old house in the Southgate Street. There was another approach to the new house, namely, through the Crypt passage which divided Mr. Raikes's lawn from the church-yard of his parish church. We may note how conservative both he and his father were in their habits, and how their affections clung around familiar places, for neither father nor son ever moved out of the parish of St. Mary de Crypt. There was hereditary stability in the blood.

The old house in the Southgate Street will always have the greatest interest for the Sunday-school world, because it was whilst living there that Robert Raikes thought out and planned his wonderful botanical gardens for the culture of child "waste." But the new house had its interest—pathetic interest—too, because it was here he drew around him with closer ties the children whom he had educated, and learned to love as the "new race," which, as the "instrument under Providence," he had called into existence.

Altogether, nine children were born to him, and eight survived. Five of the six daughters were married from the old house, so that when he removed to Bell Lane there was left one daughter (engaged to be married), and two sons at school. The eldest, Robert Napier, graduated at Oriel College, Cambridge, and took holy orders, and his second son, William Henly, entered the Coldstream Guards, and, in time, held the rank of colonel. As Mr. Raikes died in 1811, you will see that during his residence in the new house his family was very small.

The Bell Lane residence was in fact a city villa, and was, and still is, surrounded by a lawn, and shrubs, and trees; and so cut off from the noise of traffic and the streets as to

be a beautiful retreat for a reflective man, fond of books and writing, and given to thoughts of heavenly things. His library was small, and theology his study; and we have seen how prone he was to a dreamy and pious mysticism.

Here is another contrast in a man full of them—in body he was active; in his soul he was a dreamer over the hidden mysteries of the Revelation.

His heart was weak, and, I think, he had been for many years aware of it, so that he was glad to get into this retreat and develop his spiritual gifts without excitement.

He had lived to see his unselfish labors crowned with success. The new prison regulations for which he had agitated, certainly for thirty-five years, came at last. When he commenced botanizing in child life the average number of criminals to be tried at the assizes varied from fifty to one hundred: but a dozen years after the establishment of Sunday-schools and the reforms consequent on the missionary labors of Whitefield and the Wesleys, and many other good men, there was not one single criminal to hold up his hand! It was a "white kid glove assize" for judges who were so tired of condemning poor wretches to jails unnameable for their horrors, that they

often remitted the sentences which they had passed.

Is there any official record of Mr. Raikes's prison labors?—No.

Did the city of Gloucester return him thanks in a public address or service of plate?—No.

Was he ever mentioned in Parliament as deserving of honor?—No.

The man who teaches men to win victories over themselves is not usually troubled with titles or annuities, or public honors of any sort. Mr. Raikes certainly was not.

After his retirement from business he received the honorary "freedom" of the city of Gloucester. Both he and the great Dr. Jenner were elected Vice-Presidents of the "Gloucestershire Society," but that was, at the time, a philanthropic society for apprenticing county boys to trades, and he was also elected an honorary member of the Sunday-school Society, established in 1785; but these two last certainly must not be considered in the light of rewards for services to the State, the Church, and humanity.

He never sought for earthly reward, and it is certain he never received any.

He was left in peace to cultivate child life, which he did until it became not only a pleasure, but an absorbing passion.

At his new residence he had a room wherein he sat with the children and talked with them, or made them happy, in his own way, on the lawn.

He loved to hear them sing, and he made them small presents of money and books, and sometimes cakes. He knew how to make his throstles sing cheerfully! As time passed, they became more and more to him "my children" and "my flock," and he showed them off to advantage to strangers. He was not shamefaced about the good he did, or his manner of doing it, or the materials he worked on. Where Mr. Raikes was, there were his "children"—they went with him to the Cathedral, at church he was near them, and when he left his pew they crowded around him, "as though I had loaves and fishes to distribute," to use his own words.

The girls wore pasteboard bonnets, covered with white "cauls," on Sundays, and when they came to Mr. Raikes's house; and the boys were clean and decently clothed, for Mr. Raikes was helped by his two wealthy brothers—William and Thomas—in London. When the children grew up he found places for some of them, and so had them in touch like a parent who loved them.

When the end came, it came suddenly. He was sitting in his "study" reading at his table.

His spectacles were lying on some open papers. His heart beat feebly; by and by it stopped, and all was peace!

He was laid in the family vault, on the south side of St. Mary de Crypt Church, in the presence of members of his family and of the scholars he called his "own." The rest of the world took very little interest in the funeral. One aged man, in 1863, remembered that "there was a many and a respectable lot of people at the funeral," and another that the general feeling was "that Gloucester had lost a good man." It cannot be said with truth, however, that the pulse of the citizens was much stirred.

The children who followed the coffin sang, "Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust," and four other verses from Psalms 16 and 90. It was a sad moment for these little ones; but as Mr. Raikes would not have childhood saddened, they received each one shilling and a cake, as he had wished.

Mr. Raikes died on the 5th and was buried on the 13th of April, 1811. He was seventy-five years of age.

In 1862–3, when Josiah Harris (my late father) visited Gloucester, England, there were living old men and women who had known Robert Raikes from their infancy, had gone to

his Sunday-school, been taught by him, and went to his funeral, and it was mainly from these old people that he collected the materials about the man and his work, and how and when he did it, which have enabled me to write this book. There were many other sources from which information was obtained, namely, from Mrs. Weller-Ladbroke, his youngest and last surviving daughter, and from those who had been in his employ in his printing-office, and as domestic servants.

I went with my father to Gloucester and saw these old people, and remember how their eyes brightened, and how cheerfully they spoke, when they were asked about Robert Raikes and their Sunday-school days. Any little thing they possessed—a Bible, a reading-book, or anything which he had given them, a portrait of him on china, or on a printed card; any little thing that he had touched, or that reminded them of him, was sacred to them, and their eyes moistened when old memories were played upon. Moreover, it was amongst the poor, the poor only, of the city that the name possessed this charm.

He was, indeed, the friend of the poor in life, and left his name so deeply engraven upon the tablets of their hearts that nothing but death could efface it.

On the Thames Embankment, London, there is a fine statue to the "Man of Gloucester," erected in commemoration of the Sunday-school Centenary, celebrated in 1880. In the city of Gloucester a memorial tower was erected, out of reverence for so simple but grand a character, by Mr. Addison in the Crypt Lane; and there is also a memorial hall, built by subscriptions raised in the Centenary year. There are mural tablets in the Church of St. Mary de Crypt, but the real, living, enduring monument to him is the twenty-six millions of children and teachers throughout the world, who every Sabbath learn of Jesus and how to walk in his steps.

You, my young friends, are a part of this monument more durable than polished stone; but only think how small this grand living monument is, compared with the colossal pile composed of the hundreds of millions who have passed through the Sunday-school in one hundred and twenty years! Then think how small, very small, even this is to the monument of the future, for every Christian Church must have its Sunday-school. The mind reels when one tries to count the number of Sunday-school-taught children during the next thousand years.

All these will form the true monument to ROBERT RAIKES, "THE MAN OF GLOUCESTER."

CHAPTER XI.

AFTER THOUGHTS.

I HAVE told you this story of a life in order to set you thinking, my young friends. A new century opens, but we must look back if we would see how far we have traveled in a hundred years, and learn what has been done to bring nearer the new heaven and the new earth, and to help in making the former things pass away.

It seems hardly possible that the things which I have told you about the poor and their ignorance were true even within the memory of living men; but they were, for reforms came slowly, and old habits died hard. When you hear men speak the language of despair remember Robert Raikes, the hopeful man, who said, "Let us not despond!" Only the coward will despond and disbelieve in progress now that there is no such thing as human "waste," and the life of the child has given birth to the new science, which opens again the gates of Eden to those who choose to enter through the portals of the Sunday-school.

Together we have taken Robert Raikes to pieces, not sparing his little vanities, so that we may see how very human he was; and we have tried to find the secret springs of heart and soul, inspiring and directing, and sustaining him. Together we have done with him what we might have done with the imaginary watch (which we first talked about) chiming the hours; but we shall not be much the better for this story of a life and of an endeavor unless we see what we can make of it, and then assimilate some of it to our own profit.

We shall not all see with the same eyes, which is a great advantage, but we shall all admire the courage of the man who stood up for the poor, and took little children by the hand, and helped them to the higher life. We all admire courage, my young friends; and of all its forms *moral courage to do good*, in the face of opposition, is the highest. So we shall all admire Robert Raikes for fighting for the good till the dawn.

As we have pulled him to pieces, let us put him together again, and then ask ourselves, WHAT DO WE SEE IN ROBERT RAIKES?

We see a gay and sprightly man, fond of society, and fine clothes, and rational pleasure, who disciplined himself to usefulness without losing his joy in life and living. He found

pleasure in doing good, and his days were full of enjoyment; so he loved work for the pleasure he found in it.

We see a man strongly acted on by the presence of suffering and wrong; one who stood up for the helpless, but whose benevolence was under the control of a will slow to act on new lines until approved by reason.

We see a man in whom reason and will were guided by faith—faith in God and his promises; and what is worth noting is, that a man with these qualities was born into the world just when wanted, and in the very place and rank in society wherein he could be the most useful. For the Sunday-school it was necessary that its founder should be sympathetic in soul, and a printer by trade; and Robert Raikes was both. These little points of time and place, opportunity and fitness, are more than curious even for those who do not see the designs of Providence in the moral government of the world.

Then we see a man who was thorough in all things. How clean, that he must have his crossing swept; how dainty, with his laced coat and gold snuff-box! Then, with regard to his prison work and Sunday-school work, no one in his right senses can doubt his thoroughness. He risked his life when he visited

the jails, so vile were they; and he was ridiculed and vilified when he tried to raise up a new race for the glory of God! Only a *thorough* man would or could act thus.

He studied social questions, and learnt his lessons slowly; but when once he was sure he was right, then he was so determined that nothing stopped him—not even despair; and all *thorough* men are like this.

He was far in advance of his time in many things—the treatment of prisoners, and debtors, and little children among them. When he felt sure that there was no such thing as human "waste" in God's sight, then he commenced to "botanize" in child life. Many of his methods were imperfect, but there was little to guide him, and he had to make his own paths as he traveled.

All who have joined the grand army of Christian Endeavor may learn much from Robert Raikes, who did not go far out of his way to do good, but attacked the evils next to his door, and asked for no reward. We may all do like this, and be the better for our efforts, even if we fail.

I think—don't you, my young friends?—that we may sum up the life of Robert Raikes in these words:

HE WAS THOROUGH IN HIS WORK, AND IN HIS LOVE FOR HUMANITY A CHRISTIAN.

DATE DUE