

SUNDAY STORIES

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Sunday Stories by Howard N. Brown

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HOWARD N. BROWN

**SUNDAY
STORIES**

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SUNDAY STORIES.

BY *Howard N. Brown*
REV. HOWARD N. BROWN.

32

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CONTENTS.

	Page
I. THE STAR IN THE EAST	1
II. TENDER-HEARTEDNESS	13
III. TRUTH	29
IV. HUMILITY	44
V. TEMPER	58
VI. GOOD AND BAD SEED	72
VII. THE HEAVENLY VISION	86
VIII. MODESTY	99
IX. THE ONE THING NEEDFUL	114
X. SELF-DEVOTION	128
XI. LOYALTY	141
XII. HOW HARD IT IS TO BE GOOD	154
XIII. FIDELITY IN LITTLE THINGS	167
XIV. PATIENCE	179
XV. SINCERITY	193
XVI. EVERLASTING LIFE	208

PREFATORY NOTE.

The following pages are taken from discourses of the Rev. HOWARD N. BROWN, of Brookline, to the children of his parish, in Sunday School; and are now published, with his leave, by some of his parishioners, who desire to extend to a larger circle, the pleasure and the benefit they have derived from them.

SUNDAY STORIES.

I.

THE STAR IN THE EAST.

We have seen his star in the east.—*Matthew*, ii. 2.

WHEN JESUS was born in Bethlehem, says the Gospel narrative, wise men came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east." And afterwards, continues the story, the star went before them and guided them to the place where the child Jesus was.

In those days there were many beliefs about the stars which we do not hold now. If one of them shone with more brilliancy than usual, as they sometimes do, people thought it a sign that something unusual was to happen on the earth.

It is not surprising that at a time when all the Jewish nation was looking for the Christ to come, these wise men should take the star to mean that he had come; nor is it strange that the star should seem to lead them to the spot where Jesus was born.

Some of you may have travelled far enough under the stars to have noticed how they seem to go before you. Just over the brow of the next hill, as you ride, will hang a bright, trembling, little eye of light, and it seems that before long you will be directly under it. But when you have climbed the summit of that hill, there is the star, winking merrily away just over the brow of the next. And so as on you go, down into the valleys, and up over the hills, always the star seems just before you; and always it seems to go backward as you advance.

Is it not a pretty picture, these wise men of the East in their priestly robes, mounting over the hill-sides of Judea, in the full splendor of a cloudless night, their eyes fixed upon the great burning star, which shone down upon them with a solemn, holy light? How their hearts must have swelled at thought of the noble man and the great things which that star portended, and how very eagerly they must have followed its rays, until they came to Bethlehem, and to the infant Christ!

For each one of us, my dear children, there is a star in the heaven, which points us the way toward Christ and God, and it is about this star that I am going to tell you.

We see it always in our childhood. Happy for us if our eyes do not wander from it to some earthly light; if clouds do not hide it from our gaze, or if we

find not the road too rough to follow its lead. It is the star of goodness and truth, and it shines down upon us, and touches our faces as they are turned up toward it, with the light of faith.

Let me tell you what this star does for us. Out upon the wide ocean, far away from land, where the wind brings no scent of flowers, but only the cold breath of the white-capped waves; where is neither song of birds nor hum of bees, but only the monotonous, unending murmur of the waters; where the sun in his setting tips no hills with his glory, but seems to put out his light as he dips himself into the billows, and the stars seem like white bits of foam that have blown up from the surface of the sea and stuck themselves upon the sky, rides a ship, rising and falling with the heave of the waves, while her white sails silently and gently stretching out with the breeze, urge her silently onward.

It is fine weather, and a merry party are on deck. One by one the stars are coming out against the darkening background of the sky, and low down in the west, toward which they are sailing, the evening star shines like a beacon light. The passengers are thinking of home, for they are almost there; and that star hangs directly over the loved ones who await their return. Perhaps they too are watching it, over the fading glow of sunset, and wondering how many times it must look down upon them