

**SUNBEAM WILLIE,
AND
OTHER STORIES**

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Sunbeam Willie, and Other Stories by Mrs. G. S. Reaney

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MRS. G. S. REANEY

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"Looking up fixedly into the heavens."—*Page 16.*

BUNDEAM WILLIE

Frontispiece.

SUNBEAM WILLIE,

And Other Stories.

BY

MRS. G. S. REANEY.

Author of "Waking and Working."

WITH THREE ILLUSTRATIONS.

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SUNBEAM WILLIE; OR, GOD'S LIGHT EVERYWHERE.

CHAPTER I.

IT was a glorious summer's evening, and the after-glow of sunset was tinging the fleecy clouds with light, as they clustered together like snow-clad angels keeping the gateways of Heaven.

A little boy of ten lay on a small bed in the corner of a poorly-furnished cottage room in one of Lancashire's largest manufacturing towns. His eyes—large, beautiful, and wistful—were looking earnestly upwards towards the golden clouds behind which the sun had set with the glory of a great triumph. A shadow darkened the doorway, and Willie, sighing, withdrew his gaze. Bewildered with the light, it was a moment before he could see distinctly who it was

had entered the room. Placing his hand—thin and white, as though worn with wasting sickness—to shade his eyes, he looked penetratingly before him, and as he did so his face became a sunbeam of delight.

“Oh, sir, wasn't it beautiful?” he exclaimed, taking for granted that his kind minister must have seen and rejoiced in the sunset as much as he himself had done,—“doesn't it make you feel as if God were just smiling upon us before He closed up for the night, and meant us to take comfort from that to last us right through the darkness until morning came again?”

There was a sweetness in the childish tones which touched Mr. Capel's heart, and a tear glistened in his kind eyes as he sat down by the sick boy's bed and took his hand within his own. That was his only answer.

“Are you sad, Mr. Capel?” asked Willie in a whisper, drawing closer to him, and looking up into his manly and benevolent face with almost as earnest a gaze as that with which he had before been watching the clouds.

“I was a-while ago, Willie,” he replied, looking lovingly upon the little fellow; “I have been thinking to-day that God must have almost forgotten us. There are so many, many unhappy people, and so

many wicked ones, and the world seems so dark, so dark."

The wistful eyes grew bigger and brighter, then were dimmed for a moment by a sorrowful shadow, while memories of want and care were sadly speaking from a time too near to be forgotten; but the shadow passed, and, like the sun emerging from a dark cloud, the light shone more brilliantly than before, as Willie said, eagerly, "Oh, Mr. Capel, God never means us to feel forgotten. He sends us the sun and the stars, the birds and the flowers, to tell us He is watching and thinking and caring for us. If He took all these things away, we *might* find it hard to believe He was always there just the same; but while we have the beautiful primroses and pinks, the blackbirds and sparrows, and, best of all, the golden sunsets—why, don't they seem to tell us all the time to cheer up, God's looking after us, and won't let the bad swallow up the good, however much it may try?"

"Thank you, Willie," said Mr. Capel, tenderly, "thank you for the bright thought; you are quite right, little man; God is near, very near to us always, and thinking of us, too, very lovingly, and, as you say, speaking to us all day long. When the sparrow twitters and hops about upon the roof, He says, 'See, this little bird has food to eat in abundance, water to