

THE YOUNG FOLKS.

A Great Sermon by A Little Preacher.

PAPA GOES THERE.

"Mayn't I go with you, papa? Oh, please say I may, won't you?"

The words were uttered in a plaintive and sadly entreating tone, the hands of the speaker clasping the knees of the listener.

It was a boy of seven years who slipped down a beautiful boy, with fair hair, high forehead, and eyes that sparkled with a glorious wreath of amber curls; with dark flashing eyes, cheeks ruddy with health, lips like the cherries of summer and a voice like the birds that taste them. The eyes were full of tears then, and the lips quivered.

It was a man of some thirty five who listened to this plea; a man who had been of a noble and princely bearing. Ay, had been, but he was now a man of the people, his face was lined with the wrinkles of a man of the people, his hair was graying, his eyes were dim, but his heart was as true as the steel of a sword; there were furrows on his forehead, and a bright expression was on the once handsome lips. Twice did the little boy address him ere he answered. Then, pushing the child rudely from him, he said, in a stern voice, "No, no! It's no place for you."

For a moment the heart of the inebriate seemed to wake from its sleep. He shuddered as he thought of the character of the place his parent would send him to. He took the child tenderly in his arms and kissed him as of old; then putting him down he said kindly:

"You must not ask me again to take you there. It is no place for little boys, and seeing his hat hurried from the room, murmuring to himself as he paced the way to the brilliant bar-room, "and no place for men, either. Would to God I had never found the way."

For a long time Willie stood just where his father had left him, then turning to the few eunuchs that faintly gazed upon the hearth, he sat down in his little chair, and resting his head upon the sofa, he murmured to himself, "I don't believe she will, though, 'cause may be you wouldn't have come home so soon, and she does love to have you at home so much. O, I feel just like crying, I feel so glad."

"And I feel like crying, too," said the father solemnly. And ere midnight he died, and his wife, but they were holy tears, washing his heart of the dust that had gathered on its beauty, and hers of the sorrow that had draped it like a pall.

"Mind the cradle now, Willie; I'll come back soon, and then you shall have some supper, and a nice fire to sit by, too," and taking a large basket of ironed clothes she went out. A wealthy mother would have troubled at the bare idea of leaving so young a child at nightfall all alone with an infant to care for, and an open fire to sit beside. But poor Mrs. M. knew well she could trust Willie with his sister, and as for burning up there were not coals enough to thaw his fingers. No, she did not fear to leave him for he had thus been left many a time and had carefully obeyed her.

And he meant to now; but poor fellow his thoughts would wander to that brilliant corner store, where he knew his father always went at evening, and his brain was busy with eager wanderings. He knew his father loved to go, and it never came home till long after Willie was asleep. What lay behind those curtained curtains was a mystery he sought in vain to unravel.

At length he whispered eagerly, as if to encourage a longing wish:

"Papa used to tell me if I wanted to know anything very bad to persevere and I should find out. Now I do want to know what makes him love to go to that place—I know there must be pretty things behind those windows. I shouldn't wonder"—and his cheeks were glowing—"I shouldn't wonder if it was a fairy house. Why can't I go?"

Poor Willie! Temptation to know was too strong to be resisted; so he handed through the door a candle, and his little Willie was a thoughtful little fellow and would not leave his little sister to the only danger that could menace her. He found a bit of tallow dip and lighted it, drew the stand close to her, that the flame might scare away the rats and mice should they sally out on her return.

"I won't stay long, pretty dear," said he, pressing a tender kiss on her sleeping lips, and drawing the blanket closer over her fair arms.

"No, I'll come back soon, but I so want to take just one little peep."

Swiftly his little feet bore him over the pavement, and in a trice he stood behind the curtained window.

"How light it is, and how they laugh and talk. It must be funny there."

A cold November blast swept around the corner as he spoke, penetrating his thin summer clothing and causing his flesh to quiver and his teeth to chatter.

"I don't believe they'd hurt me if I should go in awhile, I'm such a little boy, and I am so out here," he said as he pushed the door carefully from him, slipping in and closing it without a "brush of noise." For a moment he was bewildered by the light and clutter but finding that no one seemed to notice him, he strode toward the glowing grate and spread out his purple palms before the blaze. The group of men that encircled the bar were drinking about the room.

"Hillo!" and one in a loud tone as going to the fire he spied little Willie.

"What are you doing here, my little fellow? Who are you and what do you want?"

"I don't want anything only to see what you do here. My name is Willie M. My papa loves to come here and it looked so pleasant through the window I thought I'd come too. But I must not stay long for I've left the baby alone."

The man's tones were softened as he spoke to him again.

"And where your mother, my little boy?"

"Oh, she's gone to take home the wash, sir. Papa don't get as much work as he used to once, and we are very poor now, and she has to help him."

"And does it look as pleasant in here as you thought it would, my child?"

"O, yes, it does, sir. I don't wonder papa loves to come here, it's so cold and dark at home. But I should think he would bring mamma and me and little sis. How she would laugh to see this, and all these pretty bottles, and those flowers with lights in them. Please, sir," said he earnestly, and he seized the rough hand of the listener, "please sir, tell me why little boys can't come here with their fathers?"

"For God's sake don't tell him Bamford," said a deep anguished voice. "He thinks me pure and good; but, oh, heavens! what a wretch I am. My boy—my boy!" and Willie was clasped in his father's arms.

"You have saved me from earth's vilest hell, for here with my hands on thy sinless brow, I promise never again to touch the cup. And my brothers in sin, as you value your souls' salvation, do not tempt me to break my vow. Help me, heaven—help me, men, so to live hereafter that I may never blush to take my boy with me," and taking the boy in his arms, he went swiftly out.

Silently the door closed after them, and silence dwell in the saloon behind them. The preacher had been there in cherub form, and crazy, loose, unholily thought, or light and ribald jest was hushed. One by one they stole away to their homes, and many a wife wore smiles that night; nor did the old bar-tender, even, curse the little one who had robbed him of so many dollars. The memory of a little boy whose curly head had been for many years lying under the soil in the churchyard was too dear, and he murmured to himself, as he stirred the fire:

"Who knows what I might have been had my little boy been spared to me?"

"Don't you like me, papa? Are you cross at me?" asked little Willie, while they stood a few moments on the pavement; for the scene in the room was an enigma to him, and he feared a reproof.

"I was wondering what mamma would like best for supper," said the father.

"Was you?"

"Yes, you know you ain't cross. O, get oysters, and crackers, and tea, and paper and candle, because there's only a little bit of a place. And please, papa, tell mamma not to be cross with me 'cause I left the baby. I don't believe she will, though, 'cause may be you wouldn't have come home so soon, and she does love to have you at home so much. O, I feel just like crying, I feel so glad."

"And I feel like crying, too," said the father solemnly. And ere midnight he died, and his wife, but they were holy tears, washing his heart of the dust that had gathered on its beauty, and hers of the sorrow that had draped it like a pall.

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Drugs and Chemicals.

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Stoves and Tinware.

NEW STOVE AND TIN SHOP.

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