

"BRAVE LADS."

BY A. EDNA MALONE.

Submitted in The Tribune's Short Story Contest.

IT WAS just at the close of a warm summer's day. The scene was one which an observer would long remember, especially if he knew how soon it was to be changed from one of joy to one of sadness. A little village situated between two mountains. The sun was just setting behind the western horizon, reflecting the beams on the eastern hills and casting long rays of mellow light over the landscape.

In the shady street, in front of a neat white cottage, stood two boys, mopping great drops of perspiration from their foreheads. They had just finished a game of ball, and were then laughing and disputing who had caught the greater number of times. Their mother, who had just summoned them to the evening meal, was standing in the doorway, watching them with motherly pride.

"Is papa coming home tonight?" asked Harold, the younger of the two.

"Yes," answered his mother, "but it will be so late when he gets home that we cannot wait supper for him."

"Where is Lawrence?" again queried the child.

"Lawrence is here, dear, but come now to your supper."

The lads followed their mother into the house and, as they partook of the food prepared for them, let us learn more about them.

The scene of our story is located in one of the many mining towns of Northeastern Pennsylvania. The father of our heroes was a miner. The family consisted of seven members: Mr. Akerson, who worked in the mine, and his mother, who lived eight miles from the one where he made his home; Mrs. Akerson, and five children. Lawrence, the oldest, is a teacher in the High school of his native town; Mildred, or Milly, as she is commonly called, is a young woman of twenty; Nellie, who is still a school-girl; Robert, aged fourteen, and Harold, aged eleven.

It was Saturday night and the family were expecting the father home to spend Sunday with them. Little did they think that in a few short moments he would be carried home seriously wounded.

As they were enjoying a social chat before arising from the table, they heard the sound of footsteps on the gravelled walk, the low murmur of voices, and above all, the groaning of some one who had been injured.

An awe-stricken hush came over the merry group and each cast frightened glances at the other. With a cry of "O, Harris," Mrs. Akerson sprang from her chair and followed by her children hurried into the hall. Few were met by the gray-haired pastor of her church.

"Dear sister," his voice trembled and he laid his hand gently on her shoulder, "it has pleased our Heavenly Father, in His righteous judgment, to afflict you with a child."

Be brave and strong to bear the worst, and still do your duty. Brother Akerson was severely injured at his work this afternoon."

He spoke hurriedly, while Mrs. Akerson gazed in speechless astonishment at the man who was carrying the mangled, bleeding form of the husband and father.

"Mrs. Akerson," it was young Dr. Harvey who spoke, "compose yourself and show us where we can make him as comfortable as possible. With a mighty effort she collected her scattered thoughts and led the way to a cozy little bedroom off the dining room.

The children were so frightened that they scarcely realized what had happened. They stood gazing about mindlessly into space, or trying helplessly to make room for those who bore their father to pass.

As the crushed body was laid on the bed, Lawrence cried, in a hollow, unnatural voice, "Oh, we are fatherless, what shall we do?"

This seemed to awaken them to a realization of their position, and tears streamed down their faces. They had been a helpless family, depending on "papa" for everything, and it seemed as if all the joy had been taken from their lives when they saw their father helpless, torn and bleeding, and heard his moans of pain.

But among the number was one who did not speak or weep. She stood staring wildly at the floor, her face ghastly white, her hands clasped tightly together. The sight of her awful grief made it harder for the others to bear. That one was Milly.

In a few moments Rev. Mr. Spencer stepped from the bed room. For an instant he stood looking about him, his first at one then at the other of the children, and then at the neighbors and friends who, having learned of the accident, had dropped in to offer condolence and assistance. At last, raising his hand as if to pronounce a benediction, he murmured, "God bless you, my children."

When he had finished speaking he crossed to where Milly stood, and spoke to her in low, comforting tones.

"Daughter," he said, "I know your grief is great. The doctor thinks it is better that you should know that he does not expect your father to stay with you long. But you should try to bear it bravely, looking for strength from Him who has promised to comfort the mourner."

"Oh! can't he live?" she cried, wringing her hands in her agony. "No," answered the minister, "and we all think that it is better that you should know the worst. The shock will not be so great when he is called home."

She gazed at Mr. Spencer in silence for a few seconds, then pressing her hands tightly to her breast she answered him in a voice which, though steady, was strangely low and harsh.

"Mr. Spencer, you do not know all there is to make me grieve, as I do. If you did, I do not know whether you would pity me or ensure me."

"Mildred, I do not think you have done anything for which I could very well censure you."

"I have not spoken to my father in nearly ten months."

"Milly?"

"It is true. I was disobedient and he reproved me. This made me angry, and I said I would never speak to him again until he apologized. I see now, and her voice trembled and the salty tears coursed down her cheeks, "I see where I was wrong; where it was I who needed to apologize, not papa."

"And, Oh! Mr. Spencer—the cry pierced the heart of every one who was in that room—"Oh, do you really think I can ever ask for pardon; do you think it will ever be granted if I should ask?"

Great sobs shook the heart-broken girl and she looked imploringly at Mr. Spencer.

"Mildred," Mr. Spencer spoke very slowly and gently, "Mildred, your father's pardon would be freely granted you, were he conscious so you might ask for it. I only hope that you may be forgiven before he goes. Ask God's help and blessing and then wait for a moment when he may forgive his willful, wayward daughter."

"I'll watch for that moment while there is one spark of life in his body," and with firm step, Mildred Akerson walked into the room where her dying father lay. For a short time she gazed at the mangled form and pale white face. Then she gently stroked his forehead.

"Oh, please tell me," she asked, at length.

"Yes, Miss Akerson, I can tell you. I was near your father when the accident occurred." The speaker was a plain looking man with a miner's lamp fastened to his cap.

"Oh, please tell me."

"This afternoon we were working in one of the nearest places in all the mine; and your father had expressed his doubts as to the safety of our lives. But," he added in his cheerful way, "let us hope we are safe for you know there is our habit to care for and we are needed so much at home that we can't hardly be spared."

"We had worked on for perhaps fifteen minutes, when Jack Anderson turned to speak to your father. As he turned he uttered a cry of alarm, and we saw a heavy rock fall on poor Harris. We sprang to his assistance and called for other help."

"In a short time we had the rock removed, but beneath it lay, crushed, bleeding, moaning and unconscious the best man and the best miner in our mines."

"We carried him out and brought him home, as soon as possible, but I am afraid his journey has tired him very much, but perhaps he will be better in the morning."

"He won't never be no better," sobbed Harold who was standing at the foot of the bed.

"Oh, we hope he will be soon!" said the miner.

"Do not deceive my children," Mrs. Akerson said, "the doctor thinks it is best that they should know he cannot live but a short while."

"But," she continued, "it is God's will and we must be reconciled to it."

During that long night while all was still and no one awake save the anxious watchers at the bedside, Milly, despite the efforts made by the physician, the minister and her mother to get her to retire, sat by the side of the father whom she had so wronged.

How she hoped and prayed that she might receive pardon. They promised to call her if he became conscious, if she would only lie down and rest.

"I could not rest if I do lie down, so what is the use," she would say over and over to them. "I must receive his forgiveness before he goes."

Perhaps you wonder, dear reader, in what way this poor girl had disobeyed her father.

About ten months before the time of our story, some of the young people of the town had given a masquerade ball. Milly had been invited to go, but as Mr. Akerson disapproved, not only of the ball but also of the company it led one into, he refused to let her go.

The ball was to be on Tuesday evening, and Mr. Akerson left for his work on Monday morning sincerely trusting that Milly would not go.

When Tuesday evening came, Milly prepared to attend.

"Mildred," said her mother, "you remember your father said you should not go."

"Papa's an old-fashioned crank, and I'm going," was the retort.

Mrs. Akerson argued, but in vain. Mildred scolded and coaxed, till she won the day, and went to the ball.

When Mr. Akerson came home on Saturday evening, he asked if Mildred had obeyed.

"No, sir," she said, defiantly. "You're too slow, papa; I did not have to stay at home."

"Melissa," said Mr. Akerson, addressing his wife, "you know Milly was not to go to that place; you knew that was not only opposed to a masquerade, but I am also bitterly opposed to some of the young people who attended this, so why did you let her go?"

"Because, she scolded and coaxed till I couldn't help it."

"No, sir," but she never erred. When she was compelled to chide her he did it as gently as possible.

Truth always hurts, and Mildred, with a naturally hasty temper, told him she didn't have to speak to him, and she wouldn't.

"You need not speak to me if you do not wish to, but I am your father and your home; remember, I am not like a tyrant, who rules with an iron hand. I only ask that my children shall respect me and obey my commands as long as those commands are reasonable. Remember, I am your father and you are my daughter, and that my home is your home until you leave it for a better one. As soon as you are ready to speak you may do so, but you must ask my pardon for the way you have acted."

The sad tone used by her father touched the heart of the girl, but she remained firm in her determination not to speak to him. As time rolled on, father and daughter saw less of each other. Mildred was never heard to speak his name and she avoided him as much as possible, while he, on the contrary, often asked her mother about her. Alas! now, when it is too late she sees her folly, and prays that he may be himself long enough to forgive her.

Sunday morning dawned bright and beautiful, but the happiness of the Akerson home seems to be gone. All day Milly watches and prays. In the evening, as the church bells are pealing out their sweet music, Harris Akerson, with one long-drawn sigh, passed to be with the everlasting.

For a few moments Milly sat quietly where she had sat so long, then she suddenly arose, pressed a kiss on the forehead of her dead father, and said, "You will forgive me from Heaven, papa." With this, she left the room. Her grief was intense. Dr. Harvey, Mr. Spencer, her mother, brothers, sis-

ter and friends did their best to comfort her. She wandered aimlessly about the house and street until the day of the funeral, when, with a great struggle, she hid her own grief and ministered, as best she could, to the wants of the others.

The sermon seemed to prove a great solace to her. Mr. Spencer spoke of the forgiving nature of the deceased and then of the wonderful love and pardon given by the one who comforts the mourners.

The shock and strain were too much for Melissa Akerson to bear, and for weeks her children were compelled to watch by her bedside. But at last she rose and was once more among them, in better, but still in poor health.

Then came the momentous question of debt. Although Mildred and Lawrence had been earning money for some time, it had always been Papa who kept the home. Of course they had helped but now they must do it alone. Nellie could help as soon as she finished school, so she could teach, but they would not let her quit school to help them.

Their expenses during the summer had been large. There was the funeral expense, the doctor bill and the regular expenditures of the home. It was vacation now and Lawrence was earning nothing. Milly, who had been working for Mr. Akerson, but of late his wages had been increased, Lawrence and Milly had been paying their board, and Lawrence had been helping in other ways, so that just the month before his death Mr. Akerson had purchased the home in which they were living. They had taken a deed and given a mortgage, promising to pay it in monthly payments. Now their father was gone there was no one to pay the mortgage and they were afraid they would lose their home.

Lawrence intended doing the best he could, and he hoped Milly would help him. As has been stated, Milly paid her board, but when they proposed buying the house Lawrence had asked if she would not give something each month to help clear the place of debt.

"No," she had answered, "I will not. I only pay my board so that I am under no obligations to him." So Lawrence feared she would not help him.

It was a serious problem for him to face, but Milly came bravely to his rescue. "I would not help Papa, but I will help you for his sake," she told him sadly.

So brother and sister struggled together. The road was rough and steep, but they toiled patiently upward.

One day in early autumn Robert and Harold came in and quietly tiptoed over to where their mother was sitting.

"Well, my boys, what is it?" she asked.

"Mamma," answered Robert, "you know how we miss papa, and how much we need him back. There is no one on earth who can fill his place, but as you and Lawrence and Milly have it so hard, Harold and I have decided to help you all we can. We thought we could be bread winners, so we have house by and under and are to commence work tomorrow morning."

"God bless my lads," cried their mother, as with tears streaming down her cheeks she drew them to her and kissed the boyish brows.

"But," she said, "her emotion had passed, 'boys, you must not leave school; we will not allow you to do that.'"

"But Lawrence must keep a night school here at home for us."

At first Lawrence and Milly did not want to consent to the proposition, but if they would study nights it would be better to let them work.

"Well," said Lawrence, "go, my dear brothers, and God bless you, you little know how much your wages will add us. Our night school will open tomorrow evening."

Should we visit that town today? We would see those brave boys, almost young men now, trying to fill papa's place.

One day a shadow cast over her life, but she is the better for it. She is Mrs. Dr. Harvey now, but still she cannot help but wish that she could have obtained the pardon she sought.

or brushing with a disinfectant solution would do so. There are plenty of disinfectants, preparations of carbolic, of lime, and of caustic soda, but the most harmless to fabrics, but deadly to dust germs. One of these should always be employed in paint washings, as even the most careful cleansing does not suffice to eradicate its stains and we are only just discovering how much the common house fly and mosquito can do in the way of mischief.

PETRIFIED FORESTS.

Those Recently Found in Arizona Even More Remarkable Than That in New Mexico.

From the Chicago Record-Herald.

Results of investigation in the wonderful petrified forests in the northern part of Arizona have been reported by Dr. J. N. Pulver and a party of scientists who have been studying the geological formations of that part of the Territory for several months. The remains of the ancient forests are in the heart of the San Francisco Mountains.

"If a house of wood is filled with perishable, dust-holding materials, it must follow that there is created a condition of things always harder to clean and needing constant renewal."

The portion of the forest where the finest of the gems are found is in Apache county, seventeen miles from Holbrook. The "bridge" is a trunk, transformed into the finest agate, which spans a chasm sixty feet wide.

This precious gem is 10 feet long and five feet three inches in diameter at the base, tapering to three feet at the apex, and contains enough material to give labor to all the lapidaries in the world for the next generation. This log is one of thousands, many of them broken into huge fragments. It is impossible to conceive of the marvelous beauty of this region, for the ground is covered with amethyst, red and yellow Jasper, topaz, onyx, carnelian and gigantic specimens of agate of every variety—gems as big as flour barrels and steam boilers.

Dr. Pulver reports that there is a fine group of big logs in the foothills, about twelve miles east of Winslow, and probably forty-five miles distant from the agate bridge. He was hunting lost horses when he came upon sandstone cliffs, notable because of their unusual perpendicularity. These cliffs have worn away, leaving exposed huge trees, which may be observed from a distance of a mile or more from the valley, standing out in bold relief, like the pillars of some ancient temple. A closer view shows these trees to be from four to six feet in diameter and often twenty or thirty feet high, with their great roots running off into the solid rock. A great niche in the face of the wall marks the place from

DISGUISED DISEASES THE CURSE OF THE WHITE RACE

Slowly and stealthily the mantle of ignorance clothes the unhappy victim of doctors' mistakes, until death ensues, and both the patient as well as the physician, errors through lack of skill, are soon buried and hidden from view.

There Is No Such Disease as Dyspepsia

Dyspepsia is a term used by doctors for nearly every class of stomach disease. It is simply a term used to hide ignorance. Ignorance of the true character of disease surely can never be expected to aid in its cure. Consequently so-called dyspepsia and other stomach troubles have never been cured. The word "dyspepsia" means "difficult digestion," nothing more, nothing less, and treating a symptom and not the disease is wrong treatment, and ineffective treatment that has allowed the world to become filled with persons suffering with constipation, dark circles under the eyes, loss of appetite, pain of fullness after meals, heart burn, belching up gas, lack of vitality, loss of proper sleep and, in fact, a host of other difficulties. The old plan of doctoring for stomach diseases consisted in purges, emetics and worthless digestive ferments—drugs that irritated or inflamed the stomach, that increased the suffering, and was really like heaping dry fuel on a smouldering fire.

Under the Velpau System of Medicine Methods of Treatment

The inflamed and diseased lining of the stomach is first soothed and quieted by the use of proper remedies.

The sore and inflamed parts are healed and the lining of the organ is restored to its wonted tone and healthy condition.

Under this plan, healing drugs quiet the sore and inflamed spots that have been throwing out quantities of sticky, slimy mucons that is mixed with the food and has coated it over, thus preventing the gastric juices from dissolving and digesting it.

When once healed, the lining of the stomach is enabled to serve the purpose that nature intended it to serve.

Beginning immediately after the introduction of the proper and correct treatment, the symptoms of disease of the stomach pass away one by one.

The hawking and spitting in the morning becomes less, the appetite for breakfast returns, there is no more nausea where there should be desire for food, the heartburn and waterbrash pass away, the bloating in the stomach after taking a full meal, and there is no longer discomfort experienced while the hearty meal is in the process of being converted into nourishment for the blood.

The foul gases that were belched up are no longer formed and the bowels become regular.

The entire system experiences new vigor from the abundance of nourishment absorbed in the blood, where foul poisons had previously been offered it.

The Velpau System of Medicine Means Making Health Possible to All.

It gives you proofs, not promises. All patients are treated by the latest scientific remedies, whose virtues are known. No experimenting with the sick and unfortunate; but gives a prompt, perfect, positive and permanent cure.

In order to further show the superiority of the new treatment for diseases of the stomach over all other treatments, all persons suffering from stomach disease who apply at our offices before 9 p. m. Saturday, June 15, will receive consultation, applications, inhalations, sputum, urine and other examinations, with services and medicines, at the uniform rate of 50c for each visit. This will afford every sufferer the opportunity of testing the marvelous remedies which have cured so many hundreds during Mau.

THE VELPAU SYSTEM OF MEDICINE

Permanently Located at 134 Wyoming Av., Opposite Hotel Jermyn, Scranton, Pa.

HOURS—9.30 a. m. to 12.30 p. m.; 2.30 p. m. to 6 p. m.; 7.30 to 9.30 p. m.

SHANGHAI WOMAN'S CLUB.

Literary Society Composed of American Women.

When it is born in mind how women's clubs have multiplied and prospered in the United States it will not be difficult to realize that others are springing up wherever American women have formed communities in foreign countries. Shanghai is called the metropolis of the Far East. The official circle, which revolves about the consulates, takes precedence socially, after which come the wealthy bankers, merchants and shipowners. In all these circles Americans are largely represented, the American consul being the deacon of the Diplomatic Corps.

English women living in Shanghai do not "go in" for culture or intellectual distinction to any marked degree; absorbed in entertaining, dancing, card playing and attending the races, they read little, and have a general horror of it is said, of being accounted clever. The American women, however, are true to their traditions; they love books, and although cut off from friends and country, they do not propose to read in Shanghai and in 1898, and which has been well sustained, is evidence of this.

As the American Consulate is common ground, the meetings have been held in the large drawing-room, which will easily accommodate several hundred people.

The object of the club, as stated in its constitution and bylaws, is to promote a higher and broader intellectual culture and to unite more closely the women of the American community in Shanghai. It is called the American Women's Literary Society, and any American woman may become a member who has been recommended by the Executive Committee and receives a two-thirds vote of the members present at the meeting in which her name is proposed.

The programme is arranged for the year by a committee, but it is subject to revision at the discretion of the society, to which it is submitted as a whole. The annual elections are held in May and the officers chosen serve for one year. The meetings are held at 3 o'clock on the first and third Mondays of each month, and on these occasions there may be seen waiting before the main entrance of the Consulate not a line of carriages, but of junkies.

Non-residents only can be invited as guests, but once a year, at least, the club gives a reception or dinner, to which the husbands and friends of the members are invited.

The club was instituted originally by Mrs. Elizabeth Goodnow, the wife of the American Consul-General, who was aided in the work of organization

CAUGHT WHITE CATFISH.

From the New York Sun.

Arrivals at the Aquarium last week included a horned dogfish about two and one-half feet long, and an angler about two feet in length, caught on the fishing banks off the Jersey coast, and white catfish, dipped up in a bucket from the East river, opposite Williamsburg, from the steamer Angler.

The catfish is a little less than a foot in length. How it got into the East river nobody knows. It is possible that it came down the North river, or out of some stream emptying into the bay from Jersey.

Besides being a strange kind of fish to find in the East river, the white catfish is less common than some other kinds of catfish in fresh waters hereabouts in which catfish abound. The white catfish has a very nearly white underbody and white barbels, differing therefrom from the common catfish, more properly called black barbel, and sometimes horned pout, which has a dark underbody and black barbels.

The white catfish is more common in the Susquehanna and in the Potomac rivers, from one or another of which the specimens exhibited in the Aquarium have usually been found.

Mr. Henneque—I suppose you know, Maria, that there is a great increase of confidence in the stock market lately. Hark! Hark! You keep right on getting into this house by 10 o'clock nights or you'll take away my latch-key—Judge.

Head Feels Like Bursting.

Maybe you were out late last night? If you had taken a Krause's Headache Capsule before retiring your head would be cool and clear this morning.

Take one now and you will be all right in an half hour. Price 25c. Sold by all druggists.