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The Quarrel Cure.

BY IDA R. SMITH.

Nine days out of ten there were no better friends in the block than Molly and Mabel. They lived side by side, went to the same school, read the same stories, and wanted their best hats trimmed just exactly alike, even to the number of white spots on the gray quills, which made the blue felt sailors so very charming in the eyes of both. But on the tenth day,—oh, dear, how everything was changed! Molly went to school on one side of the street, with never a glance across at Mabel, trudging disdainfully along on the other; and from breakfast till bedtime the day was out of joint for both. To be sure, the quarrels never lasted long; but they were serious matters while they did last.

In vain the mothers took counsel together. In vain they reasoned, each with her own particular little girl. Both Molly and Mabel protested that they loved each other, and never meant to quarrel; but still the quarrels would come, and make both miserable. And they arose over such trifling things! After the "making up" the two friends never could see "how they came to quarrel over a little thing like that!"

So things went on until Molly's Aunt Frances came to spend the winter with her sister. Now Aunt Frances was Molly's ideal of everything a young lady should be. So it was no wonder that her niece sang her praises morning, noon, and night. Neither was it any wonder that Mabel, who had a young lady aunt of her own, grew tired of so often hearing the same strain, and on the fatal tenth day chanced to remark that while Molly's Aunt Frances was very nice in her opinion, her own Aunt Angie was nicer. This was the thin end of the wedge of dispute; but half an hour later Molly rushed into the house, declaring that she would never speak to Mabel any more so long as she lived,—"so there!" The wedge had been driven deep, and friendship was split wide open.

Aunt Frances listened to the tale of Mabel's presuming to think any one nicer than she, with a perfectly grave face, though her blue eyes were dancing merrily. When the story was ended, she said soothingly:—

"I wouldn't mind it so much, Molly. I'm sure I don't care if Mabel likes her own auntie best. But I'm sorry you two should have quarrelled about me. I didn't come all the way from Texas to Minnesota to cause a coldness between friends, and I shall feel dreadfully if you and Mabel never speak to each other again."

"Well," said Molly, hesitating between her disposition to "stay mad" and her desire to please Aunt Frances, "I s'pose I could speak to her,—just to 'blige you; but I'm quite sure I shall never like her so well any more."

But when Mabel's kitten ran away that afternoon and all the children in the block were looking for it, Molly could not help but look, too. And when she found it in the coal-bin,—it had fallen through the cellar window,—of course she had to carry it home. Mabel was so delighted that she hugged both her and the kitten, and the quarrel was over then and there.

That night, after dinner, Aunt Frances called Molly to her, and showed her a small pink box, with a druggist's label on the outside.

"Molly," said she, "just look here! What do you suppose I've got in this box?"

"Not medicine?" questioned Molly, who, having lately recovered from a slight illness, looked with suspicion on pink boxes of that particular sort.

"Medicine, sure enough," responded Aunt Frances, cheerfully. "You shall be my first case. Molly, my dear, I will cure you; and my fame will spread through the length and breadth of the land." (I forgot to tell that Aunt Frances was studying to be a doctor.)

"But I'm not sick any more," protested Molly, drawing away from the box before she should be asked to take a dose of whatever was in it.

"Oh, certainly not," agreed Aunt Frances. "But I want you to try the quarrel cure, dear. See! These are temper tablets, of the very best make."

She opened the box, and Molly saw the contents,—tablets about the size of a peppermint lozenge, clear, and of a lovely deep red. They did not look as though they would taste bad.

"Take one," said Aunt Frances. "My prescription would include 'one at bedtime,' so you might as well begin the treatment right away."

Molly obeyed. The temper tablet was sweet, and tasted of wintergreen.

"Don't try to bit it," cautioned the prescribing physician; "let it dissolve in your mouth. And now, Nieceums," she continued, with a very professional air, "when you feel a quarrel coming on, I want you to take one of these tablets. Don't crush it with your teeth, just let it melt in your mouth. And be careful not to speak until it is all gone. Do you fully understand the directions?"

Molly nodded solemnly. The responsibility of being a "first case" rather awed her.

"Will you treat Mabel, too?" she asked.

"It won't be necessary," said Aunt Frances, gravely, "if you take the tablets as I prescribe. And, if I were you, I wouldn't tell anybody I was being treated."

The next morning, Molly started for school with a temper tablet, neatly wrapped in tin-foil, in her small pocket. That day passed peacefully; so did several others, and Molly had all but forgotten that she was being treated, when, suddenly, one Saturday afternoon, she felt a quarrel coming on. Mabel had made a dress for her doll. Molly didn't think it fitted very well, and said so. Mabel answered tartly that she guessed Molly couldn't do as well, and Molly had just opened her mouth to say something peppery, when she remembered the temper tablets.

Hastily laying her beloved Florimonda Isabelle face down on the floor, she ran out of the room. The temper tablet was at the very bottom of her pocket, but she picked it out, unwrapped the tin-foil, and popped it into her mouth. The rosy bit of sweetness tasted very nice, and she went back to her doll feeling better already.

"Thought you'd gone home mad," remarked Mabel, with her small nose in the air.

Never a word from Molly.

"I didn't care if you had," added Mabel with a sniff. Molly rolled the temper tablet under her tongue, but answered nothing at all.

"Well, you needn't talk if you don't want to," snapped Mabel, and she gave her entire attention to putting the new dress upon its owner, Evelyn Kathryn Olivia.

Little by little the temper tablet dissolved in Molly's mouth, and, strange, to say, her anger melted with it. It was worn to wafer thinness, and Molly was wondering just what she should say when the "treatment" was over, when she heard a faint sound of music far down the street.

"Oh, Mabel!" she cried, excitedly, "there's a grind-organ, and maybe there's a monkey! Let's go and see!"

"Oh, let's!" answered Mabel, jumping up eagerly, and, a moment later, Florimonda Isabelle and Evelyn Kathryn Olivia were left to be company for each other, while their respective mothers raced, hand in hand, down the street in search of the probable "grind organ" and the possible monkey.

That night Molly told Aunt Frances the whole story, and the young lady listened with genuine professional pleasure. Her first case was doing remarkably well, she said, and the patient was advised to continue the use of the invaluable temper tablets in all similar emergencies. Molly followed the prescription faithfully, and, before spring, both she and Mabel were completely cured.

After a while, Molly discovered the reason why the temper tablets had such a soothing effect in the first stages of a quarrel. I wonder if you have guessed it, too.—The Advance.

The Prodigal's Father.

BY M. L. HASKINS.

An old white-haired man walked slowly along the road leading to the village chapel.

It was Sunday morning. The little Somerset village lay quiet and peaceful and nestled among the hills. The earth had put on her spring dress; everything was pure and fresh and beautiful.

But Andrew Strong's heart was very sore, and he kept his eyes fixed on the brown earth as he wended his way to the morning service. Last night his boy, his youngest, the son of his old age, had been brought home as no father can bear to see his son brought.

And his closest friend, his fellow-deacon and co-worker, had brought this son to the door, and had spoken harsh words, harder than perhaps he meant, to the old man whose training had not done more for the son he loved.

"Doan't preach against the zin of drunkenness no more, Mr. Strong," he had said when he left, "vur in your awn household there is much to be seen to. I brought Will'um whoam vur the pity of you, an' vur the frien'zhip we ha' knoan."

The old man, after his fellow-deacon had left, had buried his face in his hands and had cried out against the God who had given him this burden to bear, and who seemed to have turned the heart of friend from friend.

The villagers were going in little knots of two and threes through the lanes up to the chapel. Some of them stopped to speak to the white-haired deacon, but that morning they met with little response, and they passed on; others looked at him pityingly, but did not speak, for they knew the old man was in trouble, and left him to his sorrow; and a few said hard things about the senior deacon and his wayward son, and looked askance at the teacher who failed to teach his own kin.

He walked into the chapel, down the short aisle and into the corner-seat, where he had sat regularly for thirty-five years, ever since the little tabernacle had been built.

He bent his head a long time in prayer, and when he lifted it there was a look on his face as of one who had sought for comfort but had failed to find.

The hymns, the prayers and the sermon were ended at last, but the old man knew little of what had passed; his heart was crying out for the comfort which only his boy could give him, and for the friendship of the Church—not for himself, but for his son.

But it was the creed of the people to give evil men as well as evil things a wide berth, for therein many thought to find safety both for themselves and for their sons and daughters.

Richard Arch, his fellow senior deacon, stopped outside the porch and waited for him. For years they had walked home together after the Sunday morning service as far as the cross-roads at the end of the village. Then they had separated.

He held out his hand to his friend.

"Good mornin', Andrew," he said.

"Good mornin' to you, Richard," replied Mr. Strong.

They turned and walked on in silence for a short time. Then Deacon Arch coughed and began tapping the road with his stick.

"I was over nigh a bit hard last night, Andrew," he said, at last.

The old man did not reply.

"'Tis a grievous trial vur you, Andrew," he continued.

"Aye," said the old man, slowly, as if thinking.

"'Twasn't for want of a good example, neither," he went on, as if anxious to atone for the words he had spoken last night.

Andrew sighed.

"I've loved him," he said simply.

Deacon Arch almost imperceptibly drew himself up; he had an unpleasant task to do, but he must be faithful. He thought of Eli, the priest of God and Eli's sin.

"We musn't love ower much, though, Andrew," and in his voice his friend detected a note of rebuke.

"Th' fault is we don't love enough, friend," replied the old man, who saw things his friend failed to see sometimes.

"Ye should rebuke him, Andrew; the de'il takes in hand the children that bea'n't chastized."

Andrew Strong thought of times which were sacred to father and son; he remembered hours of pleading and council on one hand, and renewed promises and resolves on the other; he thought again of the bitterness and pain of the days which had seen those promises broken; of the nights of agony and loneliness he had passed as he cried over the son whom the mother had left in his care nineteen long years ago.

But of these things he said nothing, and bowed his head as he listened to the stern teaching of his friend.

They walked on in silence for some time.

Then Richard Arch spoke again. "Brother Strong?"

"Yes?"

"Maybe 'ow you'd like me to call and talk w' Will'um ower his wrong'doin's?"

Andrew hesitated. He knew his son as none other knew him.

"'Tis th' duty o' the church to warn the disobedient," continued the deacon, "an' sometimes a father kean't say all as another can."

"My heart's sore for th' lad, and I kean't bear for aught to be said more. The boy wants a friend but he wants no more counsel yet."

They had come to the cross-roads and both of them stopped.

Deacon Arch put his stick under his arm and, placing his two right forefingers in the centre of his left palm, said solemnly, "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his cryin'."

The old man looked up; there were tears in his eyes and his voice trembled as he spoke, "Richard, your son is a joy to you; he joined w' us in th' Holy Supper last Sunday; he is strong and good, my lad if weak and sinful. You love him? You are proud o' him?"

"Weel, you might find a worse lad," replied Richard, with a glad light in his eyes.

"I love my lad, but I'm not proud o' him," he continued, sadly; "what I ha' said to him an' he to me is not vor th' world to know. Thur's one thing—"

He stopped abruptly and looked at Deacon Arch with doubt in his eyes.

"Zay on, brother."

"In th' days when Will'um was mischievous but not wicked, when he was weak but was led by good because good was nearest to him—then your boy and my boy wur friends."

He stopped, but Deacon Arch did not speak, so he continued:

"Your boy led mine when he was with 'un. He was aye the strongest o' th' two."

Richard tapped the ground with his stick, as he always did when disturbed.

The old man's voice was thick with the sound of tears; but he went on:

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