

The Story Page

A Timely Rescue.

It is a sad pity that, in the face of all the evil in the world, men have sometimes persecuted those who were really trying to serve God, even though their way may have seemed mistaken. Men have tried to force their own beliefs and ways of worship on others, with the result that those who could not bring themselves to submit have sometimes had to leave their home and country to find freedom elsewhere.

It was from this cause that Randal Osborne and his servant Andrew Garvey found themselves with many of their fellow countrymen in Holland. But, though safer there than in England, Osborne had at home an enemy who greatly wished to get him into his power, and who left no stone unturned to accomplish his purpose.

Returning to his lodging one evening, Osborne heard from Andrew that two men—fellow Scotsmen—had been asking for him, as they were the bearers of an important letter requiring his presence at home. On hearing that he was not within, however, they had refused to leave the letter, saying that Osborne might find them at the sign of the "Peacock," when, if so minded, he might take passage with them to Scotland.

But, added the faithful Andrew, "rainy, hard, canny!" If you'll be guided by me, ye'll no gang near them. I air spoken through they be fair, muckle, mair than if they're no baird emissaries of Satan sent to enslave ye. There was a glint in their een that sartinly wad their errand."

But Andrew's words were not short by his impetuous Master, who refused even to allow him to accompany him to the tavern. It was with difficulty that Andrew persuaded him to take his sword, which had been laid aside for many a day. And, after Osborne had gone his way, Andrew went to Ham Holmney, a worthy miller, who had taken an interest in the exiled Scot, and who would probably help on this occasion.

The miller saw that the danger was real, and sent two of his men well armed, with Andrew. Thus accompanied, the faithful fellow made his way to the "Peacock," only to find that his master and the two strangers had left half-an-hour before, leaving no clue as to whether they had gone.

At this instant a man on horseback rode up to the door, asking whether two travellers from Scotland were within. On being told that they had left, he turned his horse's head and galloped off, taking no notice of Andrew and his companions. The latter, however, took notice of him, and followed him as fast as their limbs would take them.

Fortunately, though the horseman gained rapidly upon them, the busyness of the country enabled them to keep him in sight. By-and-by, he stopped at a lonely house, where he dismounted.

Following at their utmost speed, Andrew and his companions found the house to be a wayside tavern. Approaching very carefully, Andrew peeped in at a back window, from which shone a feeble light.

Once seated at a table, drinking and making merry, he at once recognized the two men, who had visited him that evening. Near them sat his master, his arms tied behind his back, and his feet bound together.

Andrew's first impulse was to rush in upon the rascals three and then, but caution would, he knew, serve his purpose better. "They're sotted wi' drink," he whispered, "an' gin I can lay my hands on them, I'll be even wi' the twa o' them. But we maun settle yir birkie first," pointing to the man they had followed, who was busying himself about his horse's harness.

Watching his opportunity, when the horseman was stooping with his back to them, Andrew sprang upon him, and struck him a blow with the haft of his sword that felled him. Then, arranging their plan of attack, the rescuers rushed upon the two men in the room. Taken completely by surprise, the ruffians had not time to draw their swords before they were overpowered, disarmed, and pinioned. The cords with which they had bound their prisoner did service in their own case, and in a few minutes they lay helpless on the floor.

Summoned by the noise of the conflict, the landlord appeared, professing to know nothing about the matter. But he failed to impose on the shrewd Scot, who did not lose any time in getting his master on horseback and back to the town, where, when somewhat recovered, Osborne told the story of his capture.

On arriving at the "Peacock" he found only one of the men, who told him that the other man, who had the letter, was at a barber's close by having his beard trimmed, to which place they had better follow him. Seeing nothing suspicious in this Osborne did so, but, while reading the letter, he received a violent blow on the head, his sword was snatched from him, and his arms bound fast behind his back. He remembered nothing further until he found himself a prisoner in the tavern where Andrew had come to his rescue.

Undoubtedly the plot had been to deliver him over to his enemies at home, and but for Andrew's shrewdness it would have been successful. To his faithful servant, he owed, un-

der God, his liberty, and probably his life. The friendship between master and man thus became cemented by the strongest ties, and Osborne vowed to show his gratitude to his Divine Preserver by dedicating more completely to his service the life he had mercifully prolonged.—Friendly Greetings.

How John Paid Nan.

BY NICHOLAS EMENS.

The family were at the supper table when John came in with his skates. After supper his father said to him:

"John, you have been gone all the afternoon. You did not get your work done. It must be finished tonight, you know."

John went out into the shed with a gloomy brow. It was not long however, before the tones of his voice came in very cheerfully through the closed door into the sitting-room.

"Is that Nan out in the shed with John?" asked Janetta. Her mother smiled and nodded.

Janetta was almost grown up. She felt herself to be wise and often liked to give her mother advice, as most of us have liked to do in our time. She gave her some now.

"I think, mother, that you ought not to let Nan help John so much. She will spoil him. It is no girl's work for her to be carrying wood for him down into the cellar. She never seems to mind what she does, if it will make things easier for John."

"He pays her for it pretty evenly, I think," said Mrs. Neville, quietly.

"Pays her!" repeated Janetta in surprise, looking doubtfully at her mother. "How?"

"Keep your eyes open and see," said Mrs. Neville.

John, said Nan, when they had come back into the house and were warming themselves luxuriously. "Eva Hastings can't go to the singing class, because she hasn't anybody to take her home. We could walk just that little distance round the corner, couldn't we?"

"Where's her brother Jim? Why can't he go for her?"

"He'll not be bothered, he says. You always come after me anyway. So I thought that it wouldn't be very much farther to take Eva home."

"I suppose it wouldn't," said John. "All right."

Janetta looked across at her mother. But Mrs. Neville's head was bent over her work.

The next day at noon John was full of a plan which the boys were making at school.

"We are going to get up a sleigh ride—just we ourselves. We are going to pay for, the big sleigh among us boys. Then we will invite young ladies to come with us."

Janetta contended to show a little interest. She usually felt herself much above John and his friends, but if it was a question of having a sleigh ride when sleigh rides were few, perhaps she might forget her dignity for once to advantage. John noticed this. He was divided as to whether to feel flattered or to grumble.

"Yes, of course, some of the fellows want you, Janetta," he said. "They know that generally you don't remember that they are alive, and it is just possible that now and then you slip out of their memory for a minute or two at a time. But on an occasion like this we can make believe all round. You see it adds something to the style to have girls on board with long skirts and their hair put up."

Nan was listening, wistfully. Her skirts were not long and her hair was in a pig tail. Still, she oughtn't to be selfish; it was nice for John and Janetta, and her turn would come by and by.

"In my own case, though," John continued, "I didn't choose my girl for style. I have more sense. She is young; she may fall asleep during the proceedings, but she is the nicest girl in town, for all that, of any size—except mother—Nan is."

"Oh, John, you didn't!" cried Nan, joyfully. "How perfectly, perfectly lovely of you!"

Janetta thought of several things, of which the sleigh ride was only one. Meantime, Dr. Neville had come in for his dinner.

"John," he said, "I hope you have not been making friends with those two Barbour boys."

"I haven't," said John; "Nan would not let me. I couldn't see anything bad in them; and they're awfully entertaining. But Nan made such a fuss that I had to give in."

"Well, you may be very thankful to Nan," said his father. They have got themselves into a miserable scrape. They were picked up on a back street drunk last night and put in a common jail."

While the others exclaimed and questioned, John was uncommonly silent. At the end, before he started back to school, he said soberly:

"A fellow doesn't lose much by taking Nan's advice. Maybe if Harry and Phil Barbour had had a deacon for a sister, they never would have got into such bad ways."

In the course of the afternoon Janetta drew her chair up close beside her mother's.

"Mother," she said, "I have watched and I see. Nan gets high pay from John for hewing wood and drawing water—the highest."

"I knew that you would see it before long," said her mother. "A girl can not do better work than build little fences of kindness and love and goodness about her brother, that will help to keep him safe. Even if she roughens her hands a little at it, and works rather more than her share, it is well worth while. Isn't it?"—Sel.

The Girl Who Failed.

"You do not mean to tell me that Lena has failed?"

"Well, not exactly failed, Ida, but she missed the goal."

"I am surprised," was the answer. "There was no one in the class better qualified to take the prize. What could Lena have been about to have all wred it?"

Lena, the subject of this conversation, was in her room, busily packing her trunk to return home. Many of the girls had already left the institution; tearful good-byes had been said, and vows of eternal friendship exchanged. It had been a year of pleasant memories and hard work, and now the uncertainty was all over, there was not even the commencement day left to look forward to. There was a happy smile on Lena's face, although she paused now and then to brush the tears from her eyes. "I do not see where I am ever going to put them all," she said.

"What, dear," her room-mate asked quizzingly, "your dresses?"

A merry laugh greeted the words. "Well, hardly," she said. "It's these keepsakes, I mean, I'm cramming them into every conceivable corner, but still the problem battles me."

"That's the penalty you pay for being popular. Really I thought I should give the college yell this morning, when cook gave you that necktie. I just got a glimpse of it, it looked as if the colors of the rainbow had been struck off."

"Oh, Dora, hush! That gift must have meant a good deal to cook, and I appreciate the thought."

"Well, don't forget your diploma, anyway, here it is. Lena, what a queer girl you are! Excuse me for repeating myself, I think I have said the same thing fifty times before."

"I think you have, dear; but why do you say it?"

"Why do I say it? Oh, because in this intellectual race you were the swiftest runner of them all, but stopped to wipe away tears, to bind up wounds, and to spend your hours in loving, Christ-like service. Don't say a word," she remonstrated, as Lena lifted a warning hand, "I mean to finish what I have to say, if only to relieve my own mind. Right in the midst of preparing for that advanced geometry examination, didn't you stop and spend several hours with Lillian Adams, who was not half as ill as she thought she was?"

"But she was really suffering and I held to give her relief."

"No doubt of it. I was suffering that same evening, too, I remember, with a troublesome tooth; but no one came to my relief."

"All are not like you, dear. You do not demand the sympathy of every one."

"Fortunately all are not like me, but you are mistaken about my demands on sympathy. I like it just as well as the next one, but trust I have been too well brought up to make exorbitant drains on my friends. And what is the result of your labors? I just ran across Ida and Belle in the hall, talking about you as the girl who failed."

"You have not delved down into the baser side of my nature," she said smiling. "One of my weaknesses is an overmastering desire to excel in whatever I undertake. When I first came here there was a prayer foremost in my mind, and it was something like this: 'Save me from myself.' I used to breathe it very often, as I found before I had been here very long, that there was more need of it than ever I had anticipated. The first shock came when I found my reluctance to give up any chosen task for the sake of others I fought many a battle, dear, and often my soul's life was dwarfed and threatened thereby. Yes, I failed in ranking with the leaders," she continued, with a quiet smile, "and am very sorry to disappoint my friends; but I am not unhappy."

"Unhappy! Well, I should say not. You have done more toward uplifting the moral element of the class than any ten students in it. While the rest of us have been selfishly striving for the goal, each in her own way, you have been living the religion of Christ."

"Hush, I have only striven to sacrifice selfish desires."

"And God has blessed you for it," was the heartily spoken answer.

"How did Lena rank in her class?" asked an inquiring friend, of her mother.

"Lena has not told me, but I always have the happy assurance that she will do nothing short of her best wherever she is placed."