

Poetry.

HAD NOT.

BY HOLDS FREEMAN.

The world had clung too closely round our hearts,
Through long and anit years,
And life had been too beautiful to yield,—
Had not the God sent tears.

The summer day had wearied with its length,
Though swift its hours and bright,
We had not known the freshness of the morn,—
Had not the God sent night.

The flower glaze of the noon-day sun would blind
Had we no tempest rain,
We should not seek our Father's face did He
Send down no mist of pain.

Life's road had been more rugged still and rough,
More dull than the heavy hours,
More weary still our drooping eyes and hearts,
Had not our God sent flowers.

Sin would have been less deadly in our sight,
Had not the floating breath,
Left the chill eye, and we had never looked
With awe-struck eyes on death.

And life itself had been too hard to bear,
The crown of heaven too hard,
Had not the God of love looked down on earth
And sent to us His Son.

The Fireside.

TOM'S BAIT.

BY KATE SUMNER GALE.

Tom was sauntering up the street, both hands in his pockets, hat a trifle on one side, and whistling "The Blue Bells of Scotland" with all his might, when some one came up behind him.

"Good evening, Tom."

"The Blue Bells of Scotland" wound up abruptly. Tom's hands came out of his pockets in the twinkling of an eye, the faintest smile was respectfully lifted, and set down straight, while Tom's face beamed with genuine pleasure, for Mr. Granger, the minister, was a favorite with the boys. They chatted pleasantly for a few minutes about Tom's school, and then Mr. Granger said, "What success have you had fishing lately, Tom?"

"Haven't been this winter, sir; mother doesn't like the idea of my fishing through the ice, but I'm going now the first chance I get."

"Yes, but I meant the other kind of fishing."

Tom's face grew very blank.

"I don't think I understand you, sir," he said after attempting to recall any other kind of his favorite sport.

"You remember what Christ said to Simon and Andrew, do you not, when he called them?" asked Mr. Granger with a smile. "Come, and I will make you to become fishers of men—that's the kind I mean; what success are you having at that?"

Tom's browsed cheeks flushed rosily.

"I'm afraid I haven't tried that kind of fishing, so of course I haven't had any success, and I shouldn't know anything how to go to work at it."

"What's the first thing you would do if you were going out to Shaker Pond to-morrow fishing?" asked Mr. Granger.

"Get my bait ready," was Tom's prompt reply.

"Exactly, but since you are not going to Shaker Pond to-morrow, suppose you get about your bait for this other kind of fishing."

If ever there was bewilderment and surprise written on a face, it was on Tom's. Mr. Granger could not resist a little laugh at it, but his face sobered almost instantly.

"My dear boy," he said, "what is there strange about that? You would not think of going off on a fishing expedition without bait; isn't the Lord's business worthy as much care and forethought as a day's fun? And do you not believe he calls you to win souls as surely as he did Simon and Andrew?"

They went on quite a little way before Tom spoke again; it was such a new idea to him,—he a "fisher of men!"

"I do not understand about the bait," he said finally.

"Not? But you do not expect to catch trout without it, neither must you expect to win souls to your Saviour unless you hold forth some inducements to make them desire him,—must you?"

"No," replied Tom, "I don't see how I can; only I never thought of it before."

"Well, think it over now, and remember, too, that you use different kinds of bait for different kinds of fish. Good evening; God grant you success, my boy."

Tom went on his way slowly and meditatively.

There was Ned Ashley,—dear old Ned! there was not anybody in the world, beside his father and mother, so dear to Tom as Ned. It was only recently that Tom had sought and found the Saviour; how he did want to have Ned with him in this as they were in every thing else. But though he had prayed for him ever since he had learned to pray for himself, still Ned did not seem one bit nearer. What more could he do for him? Was there any other way of fishing for him? and what bait could he use?

As he walked slowly on, pondering the question, there came before him a vision of Ned, with his brown eyes so full of fun, and his face fairly brimming over with good nature and frolic.

Tom suddenly came to a standstill.

"I see," he said to himself; "I must let Ned see I was never so happy before in my life, and that is because Christ is my friend. Of course, that is just what I must do, for Ned would never want anything to do with what would make him unhappy."

He was away just now, had been for two months, and though Tom had written him all about his change of feelings, Ned had made not the slightest reference to it in his replies. But Tom knew he would watch him closely, and to-morrow he was coming home.

"Hallo, old fellow! Well, I tell you, I am glad to see you!" and Tom put out both hands as Ned sprang lightly from the car stage.

"That's!" was the reply, with almost a look of relief. "Didn't suppose you'd care much."

"I should just like to know what gave you that impression," said Tom; but to this Ned made no reply.

"Oh, we must see about organizing a ball nine to-morrow!" said Tom, turning back after he had said good-night for the third time.

"Do you intend to join?" asked Ned.

"Of course I do; should think you had known me most long enough to know that I had rather have a game of ball any day than a Thanksgiving dinner."

"Oh, yes! I haven't forgotten your failings in that direction, but I supposed you had got over that now."

And then, before Tom could say a word, Ned sprang up the steps with a merry good-night.

"Just the same as ever,—jolly if anything," was his decision mentally, as he closed the door. "And I don't understand it."

"He thinks, just as I used to, that because a fellow's a Christian he must put on a long face, and grind out pious-tyne all the time," soliloquized Tom, on his way home. "But I'll show him he's mistaken."

The day drew into week. Tom struggled bravely. He played ball as though it was the one thing to him to him; he was first in everything, and thought of more fun in a day than he had in a week before. But Ned felt that underneath it all there was a strong, earnest purpose that made an entirely different Tom of him, even when he was just the same as ever. Lessons and duties

were never neglected now, and there was a new thoughtfulness for others; but, above everything else, Tom was happy,—thoroughly so.

"I verily believe he enjoys his dinner better because of this new freak," exclaimed Ned in verse. "He, in spite of himself, it both vexed and perplexed him. He did not want to be a Christian, he was determined not to be; and yet, in spite of himself and his determination, he felt a strong desire, every now and then, to be like Tom. But he would not confess it to any one."

"Happy?" he said to Mr. Granger. "Why, of course, Tom's happy; he has everything in the world to make him so. Just let things go wrong with him, and then see how happy he'd be."

The opportunity for proving Tom's sincerity came sooner than Ned expected. One day his father was supposed to be the wealthiest man in town, the next they knew that he had lost all his property. Ned was horror-stricken. Could this have happened for his benefit?

"Well, I shall have to give in if he bears up under this,—but he won't,—a fellow couldn't under such a change. I declare, I'd rather take the worst whipping I ever had than go to see him."

But as no one offered to relieve him in that painful manner, there was nothing left for him but to proceed. Tom met him with his brightest smile, though his lip would quiver in spite of him, and his voice was a trifle husky.

"I say, Tom," said Ned awkwardly, a week or two later, "I shall have to give in; I said I would if you would pull through anything hard; but I declare to goodness, I don't see how you can be so happy over it."

"I couldn't myself, Ned. You see, He helps over the rough places, and then I know it's all right. I guess it's something like when I was getting over the scarlet-fever; I wanted a piece of mince-pie the very worst way, and, of course, mother wouldn't let me have it. I thought it was awful cruel to her then to refuse me, but I know now that it wasn't. I suppose I'll understand this, just the same, some day. O Ned! won't you love Him too?"

Ned grasped Tom's outstretched hand.

"I'm thinking about it, and I expect to keep on thinking too," he said. "I've watched you about as close as I know how, and I've made up my mind you've got something worth having."

"You're right there," replied Tom, gravely and earnestly. "I have something worth more than anything else in the world."

"The secret of it?"

Oliver Meeker was a womanly, helpful child of ten years. Her mother said she was her "right hand," for she was always close by to help when she was needed, and could always be depended on; for whatever she did to do was done just as well as she knew how to do it, whether people were looking at her or not.

"She is no eye-servant," her mother said; "I can rely upon her as I could upon a woman."

What a reputation for a little girl to have! I have seen so many children who would never think to help mother at all unless she asked them, and would object or pout or fret—or, if they did what she asked, would take no pains to do it well—that when I became acquainted with Oliver, I admired and loved her.

At one time I was visiting at her mother's house. We were expecting company, and were all very busy getting ready. Mrs. Meeker had given Oliver and Crispy (my little daughter) permission to go into the garden and cut flowers to fill the vases to decorate the room.

"Go now," she said, "while Arthur is asleep, and there'll be no trouble."

But they had not cut half the flowers they needed before a little cry rushed them from the nursery.

"That's a sign," laughed Oliver.

"A sign of what?" asked Crispy.

"Why, that there is no more cutting and arranging of flowers for me. Didn't you hear Arthur?"

"The little nuisance!" said Crispy. "Let him cry; I wouldn't go."

"Mamma is busy; I must go," said Oliver; and away she went. She tried to hush the little fellow in the cradle, for I could hear her sing little baby-songs in a low, soft tone, but he would not be kept down; there was no sleep in him.

"He always seems to know when I want him to sleep for any particular reason," she said afterward, good-naturedly; "I think he smelled the flowers this time."

So, finding it was useless to try any longer, she and Crispy hushed him, and took him down to the piazza. Crispy had brought in the basket of flowers and was putting them in on bouquets, and Oliver longed to help her. She put Arthur down on the foot-stool and gave him his play-things, but nothing would satisfy him but flowers; and when she gave him a handful of flowers, the little tyrant looked as cross as before.

"Poor little thing! I guess his teeth hurts him," she said; "I must try to soothe him."

I watched the child to see if her good-nature would hold out. It never for a moment failed. I knew she wanted to be beside Crispy at work with the flowers but she gave it all up to take care of that cross baby, and she did not fret at all, notwithstanding her fretting and spiteful ways. She was as bright and sweet as the roses and lilies themselves, and tried to please her baby-brother until mamma came and took him away.

"Thank you darling, mamma said when she carried him in; and Oliver smiled and looked so happy."

Then I talked with the little girl. I said, "You wanted to be at work with the flowers, didn't you?"

"Oh, yes," she answered; "but that was nothing. Mamma says that babies are worth more than flowers; and then, you know, we want them to grow sweet-tempered, and he can't, if we are cross with him."

"I noticed you spoke very low to him. I should have spoken loud."

"Mamma says the crosser he is and the louder he cries, the more careful we should be to speak softly; that's to teach him, you know. He takes lessons from us every day, and we must give him only the sort we want him to learn. That's mamma's doctrine."

A very good doctrine. I wish all the little girls who have to help mother and nurse baby brothers or sisters would take lessons from Oliver and her mamma.

But I learned the secret of Oliver's helpful, happy ways later one day when I was talking with her mother.

"Why, Oliver is a little Christian," said Mrs. Meeker. "She loves Jesus, and tries to please him in all she does."

"Ah! that is the secret of it. I see it all now," said S. Vinton.

A TALK WITH TOM.

You want to know, Tom, what is the first quality of manhood?

Well, listen. I am going to tell you in one little word of five letters. And I am going to write that word in very loud letters as though you were deaf, so that you may never forget it. The word is "truth."

Now, then, remember truth is the only foundation on which can be erected a manhood that is worthy of being so called.

Now, mark what I say, truth must be the foundation on which the whole character is erected, for otherwise, no matter how beautiful the upper stories may be, and no matter of how good material they may be built, the edifice, the character, the manhood, will be but a sham which offers no sure refuge and protection to those who seek it, for it will crumble down when trial comes.

Also, my boy, the world is very full of such shams of manhood, in every profession and occupation. There are lawyers in this town who know that they have never had any training to fit them for their work, who yet impose upon the people, and take their money for giving them advice which they know they are unfitted to give. I heard of one lately who advised his partner "never to have anything to do with law-books, for they would confuse his mind!"

There are ignorant physicians who know that they are ignorant, and who can and do impose upon people more ignorant than themselves. There are preachers without number pretending to know what they have never learned. Don't you see that their manhood is at best but a beautiful deceit?

Now, I want you to be a man, and that you may be that, I want you first and foremost to be true, thoroughly true. I hope you would care to tell a lie, but that is only the very beginning of trouble. I want you to despise all sham, all pretence, all effort to seem to be otherwise than we are.

When we have laid that foundation then we can go on to build up a manhood, glorious and god-like, after the perfect image of Him the perfect Man, who said that He was born that He might bear witness to the truth.—Bishop Duffley.

SABBATH-BELLS.

Back to the Sabbath-bells are ringing,
Back to the soft and balmy air,
All ye nations cease your toiling,
Tis the sacred hour of prayer.

Come, ye weary and forsaken,
Come, ye needy and oppressed,
Come with all your guilt and sorrow,
He alone can give you rest.

Come, oh come! thou careless sinner,
Holy angels mourn thy fate;
Come to Him who bids thee welcome,
Open wide stands heaven's gate.

Come, oh come! ye gay and youthful,
Ye unknown to care and strife,
Come ere sorrow frowns upon you;
Seek ye first eternal life.

Come ye blood of every nation,
And to God your homage pay;
In the book of life 'tis written,
"Thou shalt ever watch and pray."

SAMIE REESOR.

"BLUE SKY SOMEWHERE."

Children are eloquent teachers. Many a lesson, which has done our hearts good, have we learned from their loving lips. It was but the other day another took root in memory. We were going to a picnic, and, of course, the little ones had been in ecstasies for several days. But the appointed morning broke forth with no glad sunshine, no song of birds, no peals of mirth.

There was every prospect of rain—even Hope hid her face and wept.

"Shan't we go, mother?" I exclaimed a child of five, with passionate emphasis.

"If it clears off."

"But when will it clear off?"

"O, look out for the blue sky!"

And so he did, poor little fellow, but never a bit of blue sky gladdened his eyes.

"Well, I do not care, mother," said he, when the tedious day had numbered all its hours, "if I haven't seen it, I know there is a blue sky somewhere."

The next morning there was blue sky, such as only greets us after a storm.

"There, mother, didn't I tell you so?" cried a joyous voice, "there is blue sky!" Then the little head bowed for a moment in silent thought.

"Mother," exclaimed the child, when he again looked up, "there must have been blue sky all day yesterday, though I never saw a bit of it, 'cause you see there ain't no place where it could have gone to. God only covered it up with clouds, didn't he?"

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