

The Little Boy That Went Away.

"The little boy that went away," she said.
The while she lifted her gray eyes to mine,
Drenched to the rim with sacred light
that shed
A ray of holy faith that seemed divine.

That went away, e'en while the grasses
slipped
Their emerald blades up thro' the
tangled hedge,
And while the water-lilies gently tipped
Under the silver streamlet's shelvy
ledge.

That went away, while thro' the woody
dell
The trees like stately priests their
censers swung,
And while o'er mossy rocks the waters fell
In liquid rhythms to the songs he sung.

"The little boy that went away," she
said—
The mother bending o'er his empty
chair;
Her simple faith could never deem him
dead,
But gone away, and awaiting for her
there.

—Christian Advance.

Lost Opportunities.

Such was the heading of an article I read aloud one cold winter evening in the pleasant family circle gathered about the great, old-fashioned fire-place in the sitting-room, where the cheery log fire crackled and leaped and roared up the capacious chimney, and sent up great showers of sparks in hot and riotous defiance of the cold north wind whistling and howling outside. The little story I was reading embodied a very touching and pathetic incident, and carried with it a very strong moral lesson; nevertheless, I was somewhat surprised, before I had quite reached the conclusion, to see Cousin Mary, who was one of our number, suddenly remove her glasses to wipe from her eyes the fast-falling tears.

"Why, what is it, Cousin Mary?" I said, affectionately, laying my hand on her shoulder.

"Only this," she replied, with quivering lips; "the little incident you were reading brought so forcibly to my mind an opportunity I once lost, that for a moment I seemed to be living the whole sad story over again."

"Well, indeed, it doesn't seem possible, my dear cousin, that you could ever in your life have lost an opportunity of doing good," exclaimed Lou; "would you mind telling us about it?" she supplemented, gently.

"No," said Cousin Mary, who had now recovered her composure; "I don't mind telling it, and I was just about your age, Lou, not quite sixteen, at the time of the unhappy occurrence."

"It was in the early part of the civil war," she continued, "and I had gone with a lady friend of my mother's to visit one of the hospitals in my native city where there was a large number of sick and wounded soldiers. It was my first visit to an institution of the kind, and my tender, girlish feelings were greatly harrowed by the sad scenes I witnessed. The pale faces of the brave sufferers, many of whom had lost an arm or a leg, and others parched with fever, calling deliriously for the far-away 'loved ones at home,' brought to my mind a more vivid realization of the 'cruel war' than I had ever before experienced. Suddenly, from a cot near which I stood, came a feeble voice calling for coffee. The kind nurse in attendance hastened away and presently returned, bringing the beverage in a tin cup. As she bent over the sick man to raise his head that he might drink, he motioned her back, murmuring piteously: 'Ah, no; not that, not that; if I only had a drink of good coffee, rich with cream and from a china cup, like my mother's coffee, I think I would try to get well.' The nurse, treating his fancy as the vagary of a fevered brain, smiled and turned away, while I, choking back the sob in my throat, stepped quickly to his side and said: 'You shall have it—just such a cup of coffee as you want; I will go right home and get it and bring it to you, and you shall have it every day till you are strong and well.' A feeble smile fluttered about the pale lips, and he tried to thank me as I left him. I hurried my friend off, but it was already getting late in the afternoon when we separated at the gate leading into the hospital grounds, and I turned my steps toward home some two or three blocks distant. I was walking rapidly and thinking soberly enough for all I had seen and heard, when a merry voice suddenly called from a doorway across the street: 'Mary, Mary Winston, stop; you are the very girl I have been wanting to see for an hour!'

"I can't stop now, Dolly; I replied, stepping across to where pretty Dolly Crawford stood framed in the open doorway of the stately Crawford mansion. 'Oh, yes, you can,' said Miss Dolly, imperatively;

'I've something to tell you that won't keep;' and, springing lightly down the marble steps, she laughingly caught me by the hands and fairly pulled me into the house and on to the drawing-room, where I found a gay party of young friends of both sexes assembled, and all chattering like magpies. I was quickly surrounded, and importuned to take a prominent part in an amateur concert, to be given for the benefit of the sick soldiers, the concert to be followed by tableaux and charades. My mother, greatly to my delight, had permitted me once or twice to take part in entertainments similar to the one now proposed, and this time my sympathies were quickly enlisted and my interest at once aroused.

"In the lively discussion of ways and means that followed, everything else was for the time forgotten, and when at last the merry convulse broke up it was quite sundown. I was accompanied home by Dolly Crawford and her brother, and a young lady visitor of Dolly's, the girls desiring to look over some things that might be utilized in presenting the tableaux. They remained until after tea, and then there were other callers, and, strange to say, not once did I think of my promise to the sick soldier until my guests were almost ready to depart. I felt miserable enough when I did remember, and drawing Dolly Crawford to one side, I told her of the promise I had made, and broken. 'Oh, well, I wouldn't worry over it now, Mary,' said Dolly, compassionately; 'you can send it to him early in the morning, you know, and it will be all right.' And so the subject was dismissed, but after I had gone to my room to retire for the night, I was so persistently haunted by the pale face and hollow eyes, and reproached myself so bitterly for my thoughtlessness and neglect, that it must have been almost dawn before I fell into a troubled sleep, from which I was aroused by the ringing of the first bell. I sprang out of bed, and, making a hasty toilet, astonished the household by appearing in the breakfast room several minutes before the breakfast bell had sounded.

"Mother was already in her place behind the coffee-urn, and to her I poured out my story, declaring that I would not and could not eat a morsel until I had carried the sick man his breakfast. Mother did not say much, but quietly set about the arrangement of a tempting breakfast on a pretty tray, for Jim, the colored boy, to carry, with white sugar in a dainty silver bowl, and thick, yellow cream in the little pitcher to match, and a cluster of bright flowers in the center of the tray. My father went with me, but I carried in my own hand the little silver urn of steaming, fragrant coffee, to be turned into the delicate china cup at the right moment.

"We reached the hospital at last, and as soon as we were admitted into the building and gained permission to deliver the breakfast, I hurried on between the long row of cots until I reached No. 42, the one I was in search of. As I approached, a nurse, who was bending over the cot, raised her head and said to a grave-faced physician standing near: 'Poor fellow, it is all over; he is gone.' I heard the words, but did not grasp their full import until I caught sight of the still, cold face on the pillow. Then I think I must have shrieked aloud, as my father caught me in his strong, kind arms and carried me away. It is needless for me to dwell upon the terrible remorse I suffered," continued Cousin Mary, "or to tell you of how for years there seemed to ring in my ears those piteous words: 'If I had a drink of coffee from a china cup, rich with cream, like my mother's coffee, I think I would try to get well.' And I can not help thinking to this day that perhaps if his wish had been gratified, he might have rallied even then, as near death as he was. You will hardly wonder now," she added, "that I am always so eager to seize at once every opportunity of doing a kind deed, and why I am so determined never to neglect for even one hour the performance of any duty."—*Journal and Messenger.*

Prayer in Sickness.

Does God hear and answer prayer, or does he not? Hezekiah was sick unto death; he prayed for his life; God heard him, and added fifteen years to his lifetime.

"But," says someone, "I don't believe the Bible." In any argument, if you would be successful, there must be some common data to start from. It is foolish to try to prove to a man that twice three are six, provided he does not admit the multiplication table; or that two and two are four, if he does not admit the addition table.

Prayer has helped many a blundering doctor through with a case which would otherwise become completely unmanageable. There is such a thing as hygiene, as Christian pharmacy, as Divine *medicatio medica*. That is a foolish man who,

in case of sickness, goes only to human resources, when we have these instances of the Lord's help in the sick-room. Before you call the doctor, while he is there, and after he goes away, look up to Him who cured Hezekiah. Let the apothecary send the poultice, but God makes it draw. Oh, I am glad to have a doctor who knows how to pray. God send salvation to all the doctors! Sickness would be oftener balked, death would be oftener hurled back from the door-sill, if medical men came into the sick-room, like Isaiah, with a prescription in their hands and the word of the Lord in their mouths.

If God made our bodies, when they are broken he is the one to mend them; and it is reasonable that we should call him in to do it. If my furnace in the cellar breaks down, there is no one so competent to repair it as the manufacturer. If my watch stops, there is no one so competent to set it going as the one who made it. If the body is disordered, call on the Maker of it. It is not all, as the physicians tell us, a matter of ventilation or poisoned air, or cleanliness or dirt, or nutritious diet or poor fare. I have known people to get well in rooms where the window had been six weeks down, tight shut; and I have known them to die right under patent ventilators. I have known children sickly who every day had their baths, and I have known children robust the washing of whose faces would make their features unrecognizable.

God did not make the law and then run away from it. What is the law of nature? It is only God's usual way of doing things. But he has said if his children ask him to do a thing, and he can consistently do it he will do it. Go on with your pills, and plasters, and rostrums, and elixirs, and your catholicon, but remember that the mightiest agency in your recovery is prayer.

I would have you also see that our prayers must also be accompanied by means. We must work while we pray; devotion and work go together. Luther came to Melancthon's bedside and prayed for his recovery, and insisted at the same time that he should take some warm soup—the soup being just as important as the prayer. In the time of the great plague that came to York, of England, the priests prayed all night and day for the removal of the plague, but did not think of clearing out the dead dogs and cats that lay in the gutters, causing the sickness. We must use means as well as supplication. If a man has "evening prayers," asking for health, and then sits down to a full supper of indigestibles at eleven o'clock at night, his prayer is a mockery. A farmer has no right to pray for the safety of his family when he knows there is no covering on the cistern. Paul said to the passengers of the Alexandrian corn ship that they should get safe ashore; but he told them they must use means, and that was, "Stick to the old ship!" God is not weak, needing our help; but God is strong, and asks us to co-operate with him, that we may be stronger too.—*Talmage.*

The Sceptic and the Italian Girl.

She sat behind her neatly arranged fruit stand—a girl of fourteen—absorbed in reading the Bible.

She did not hear the footsteps of a gentleman who was passing by; and was startled by his question, "What are you reading that interests you so much?" She timidly replied, "The Word of God, sir."

"Who told you that the Bible is the Word of God?" he inquired. "God told me himself," she replied, with childlike innocence.

"God told you? Impossible! How did he tell you? You have never seen him, nor talked with him. How then could he tell you that the Bible is his word?"

For a few seconds the girl seemed confused and was silent. The man, who was a sceptic, and took delight in undermining the faith of people in the Scriptures, felt confident that he had confounded the simple-hearted girl. She soon recovered herself, and her ready wit came to her aid. There was a flash in her dark eyes as she asked: "Sir, who told you there is a sun yonder in the blue sky above us?"

"Who told me?" said the man, smiling somewhat contemptuously, for he fancied that the girl was trying to hide her ignorance under an irrelevant question. "Who told me? Nobody; I don't need to be told. The sun tells this about itself. It warms me, and I love its light. That is telling enough."

"Sir," cried the girl, with intense earnestness, as she stood before him with clasped hands; "you have put it right for both Bible and sun. That is the way God tells me this is his book. I read it and it warms my heart and gives me light. I love its light, and no one but God can give such light and warmth through the pages of a book. It must be his. I don't want more telling; that's telling enough, sir. As sure as the sun

is in heaven, so sure is God shining through this book."

The sceptic was abashed. The earnest faith of the young fruit seller amazed him. He could not but insinuate doubts into the minds of those who have only given an intellectual assent to the truth that the Bible is God's book, but the girl's heart experience of the power of God's Word was an evidence he could not shake.—*Messiah's Herald.*

"Any In Heaven, Too?"

Little Mary was sitting with her Uncle George one afternoon. Uncle George had told her to sit quiet, as he had some accounts to look over; so Mary busied herself with a picture-book. For an hour all was still: then Mary heard her Uncle say: "There! I have quite a nice little sum laid up against a time of need."

"What are you talking about, Uncle George?" asked Mary. "About my treasures, little girl, that I have laid up."

"Up in Heaven?" asked Mary, who had heard her father that morning read about laying up treasures in Heaven.

"Oh, no, Mary; my treasures are all on earth—some in banks and some in other places," answered Uncle George.

"But ain't you got any in Heaven, too?" asked Mary.

"Well, I don't believe I have," said Uncle George, thoughtfully. "But run away to your mother now, for I am going out."

Uncle George went out, and was gone a good while; but all the time he was thinking that, after all, perhaps he was not so well off, if he had no treasures laid up in Heaven to be ready for him when he left this world and his money behind him. He was so impressed with the thought that he wisely determined to lay up treasures in Heaven. He did so. Little Mary never knew until years after—when she also, with a clearer understanding of what it meant, began herself to lay up treasures in Heaven—that it was her childish question that started Uncle George on a generous, active Christian life.—*Zion's Herald.*

A Remarkable Marriage.

A man in Lebanon, Indiana, prominent in business, is married to a totally blind woman, who was blind when he married her. He was younger then by ten years than he is now, but he was prosperous, ambitious, and successful. She has never seen the sunlight. She was as handsome as Nydia and as poor. He married her, and they have lived together in a peace that passes understanding ever since. They have two bright children, healthy and perfect, a good home, a thriving business, a little fortune they have earned themselves, and a public regard that has no limit. She would give one half of her life just to see her husband and her children. It would touch your heart to see how gentle he is with her, how tenderly they lead her here and there. In this age, when marriage means so little, when scarcely a thought is given to the only thing worth thinking of—the love that levels and exalts—when a husband true and a wife content are such exceptions, is it a wonder I bared my head in that presence? How noble a man he must be! What loyalty must possess her soul! No life can be commonplace with a love like that.—*Lutheran Evangelist.*

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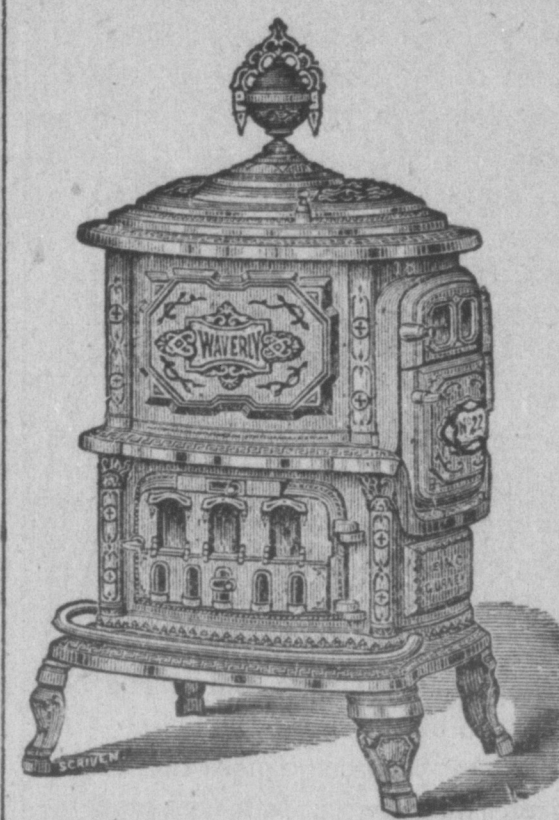
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