

The Bridge.

BY HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

I stood on the bridge at midnight,
As the clocks were striking the hour,
And the moon rose o'er the city
Behind the dark church tower.

Among the long, black rafters,
The wav'ring shadows lay,
And the current that came from the ocean
Seemed to lift and bear them away.

As sweeping and eddying through them,
Rose the belated tide,
And streaming into the moonlight
The seaweed floated wide.

And like those waters rushing
Among the wooden piers,
A flood of thoughts came o'er me,
That filled my eyes with tears.

How often, oh, how often,
In the days that had gone by,
I had stood on that bridge at midnight,
And gazed on that wave and sky.

How often, oh, how often
I had wish'd that the ebbing tide
Would bear me away on its bosom,
O'er the ocean w'd and wide.

For my heart was hot and restless,
And my life was full of care,
And the burden laid upon me
Seemed greater than I could bear.

But now it has fallen from me,
It lies buried in the sea,
And only the sorrow of others
Throws a shadow over me.

Yet whenever I cross the river
On its bridge with wooden piers,
Like the odor of briars in the ocean,
Comes the thought of other years;

And I think how many thousands
Of care-encumbered men,
Each bearing his burden of sorrows
Have crossed the bridge since then.

I see the long procession
Still moving to and fro,
The young heart hot and restless
And the old subdued and slow.

And forever and forever,
As long as the river flows
As long as the heart has passions,
As long as life has woes.

The moon and its broken reflection,
And its shadows shall appear
As the symbol of love in heaven,
And its wav'ring image here.

Matie's Bicycle.

M. CLARE WARNOCK.

"O, if I only had a wheel, I would be the happiest girl in the world!" exclaimed Matie Walworth, as she stood at the front gate one Saturday afternoon, gazing after some riders who had just passed.

But Matie had uttered the same thing concerning a thousand other coveted treasures during her short life-time, and no one paid any heed to this, not even mamma, who sat by the window sewing, or brother Ben, who was a traveling salesman, earning "lots" of money, and at present spending his summer vacation at home. Matie was seventeen, and perhaps she was too old to care for such things; but we must bear in mind that she had just returned from an Eastern school, where "all the girls" (or, rather, most of those who were her associates) had been learning to ride the wheel, and Matie had hoped that when she returned home her father would buy one for her.

But, alas! How vain are all things! The first time she mentioned "bicycle" to him he laughed at her and said, that whenever she wished to take a ride "Roscoe" and the carriage were at her service. Mamma thought a young lady's place was in the house learning to be a woman, while brother Ben pinched her cheek and said: "Pshaw, Sis, what do you want of a wheel? You would only break your arm, or possibly your neck, in learning to ride, and you couldn't learn to ride, any way."

But on this particular day Matie had felt a fresh enthusiasm on the subject, and resolved to try a new plan. Mr. Walworth was a wealthy man, and often spent money for Matie for various things which she did not need nor care for. Besides, every month he gave her twenty dollars for spending money. She had never realized that there was such a thing as saving any of this. But now she decided to "lay up" as much as possible each month until she had enough to purchase the longed-for wheel. Of course it was possible to save it all, though it would be very hard to deny herself all the sweetmeats and knick-knacks which she was accustomed to buy with her money.

"O, if I only had a wheel I would be the happiest girl in the world," and Matie ran into the house and up stairs to her room. She drew out a little drawer from her writing desk, took out a small purse and counted the money which it contained. Only three dollars and fifteen cents left from the twenty dollars which she had received at the beginning of the month! She

hesitated a moment; then placing the fifteen cents back in her purse to put into the Sunday-school collection the next day, she dropped the remainder in a little jug labelled "A Missionary Contribution." She knew the money was in safe keeping there, since the only way of getting it out was by breaking the jug, and she would not suffer herself to do this until it was full.

Then she ran lightly down stairs, fully resolved that papa and mamma should not be any the wiser until she had saved enough to buy her wheel. Then she thought that after the sacrifice it would have cost her they could not refuse. Several months passed by. At the beginning of every month fifteen dollars had gone into the little jug and five dollars into Matie's purse for Sunday-school and other collections. But no one questioned her as to how she spent her money, so she went on undisturbed.

One day several months later, as she was going down town, she was saying to herself that when papa should give her her next month's allowance, she would have seventy-five dollars. Then she would show Ben that she could learn to ride a wheel.

Just then she met Mr. Myers, pastor of the Third Avenue Church, of which the Walworth family were members.

"O, going down to the church, are you, Matie? Well, I am glad of it. I am going over to tell Sister Ford about the meeting."

"Why, no sir, I wasn't going to the church. But what is going on?"

"You had not heard of it then? Well there is to be a special meeting of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions this afternoon, and Sister Willis, the State president is to give the ladies a short talk. There is some new opening for missionary work on which she is greatly interested. As it could not be announced on last Lord's day, the sisters have appointed me a committee of one to notify the members and others. But you would better go down, Matie. I am sure it will be an interesting meeting. I will stop and tell your mother about it."

Matie attended the meeting. Mrs. Willis was a fine speaker and touched the hearts of the hearers as she related the pitiful story of two little children in Southern India, of whom a friend had written her. Their parents had been converted and shortly afterward they were murdered by some angry natives among whom they were living. A kind missionary and his wife had taken the children and were doing all for them that they could. But more money was needed for their support. An appeal was made to the sisters of the Third Avenue congregation. Could they not raise three hundred dollars for this cause? Some believed they could, and Matie was one of that number. When the subscription paper was passed around and reached Mamma Walworth, who had arrived late and had taken a seat near the door, she was surprised to read near the head of the list: "Matie Walworth, \$75.00."

No one but Matie knows what a struggle it was to give up the wheel. But after she had explained the matter to papa and mamma and had talked it over with them she felt very happy, and almost admitted that she could get along without it.

Mr. Walworth was in the habit of giving a large amount of money for missions, and had often insisted that Matie could find it in her heart to give more for that purpose, though he had never asked it of her. But now he was very proud of his daughter.

One week later, as Matie was bidding her parents and brother good bye for another year at school, and was about to take the train, Mr. Walworth said: "O by-the-way, Matie. I will send your new wheel by express as soon as the imported saddles arrive," and brother Ben pinched her cheek and said: "After all, our little missionary deserves a wheel, and I really believe she will learn to ride."

ROBIN.

How cold it was! The wind blew piercingly along the track, the sparrows huddled together on the telegraph wires, and the sky was of that dull November gray which threatens snow soon.

Robin stooped down, blew on his fingers, and held them over his toes, which were far out of his ragged shoes; but his hands were too cold to be of any comfort to the toes, and he rose again and stamped on the sleepers softly—it hurt to do it hard.

"Whew!" blew the wind as it rushed by, stinging sharply through the boy's tattered garments.

"Whew! What good can your little thin breath do when I am blowing? See, I have chilled it before it reaches your fingers. Whew! whew! I could almost blow you away." And the wind, with a sudden vicious dash, almost lifted him from his feet.

It seemed to Robin he must go home, he ached so from head to foot; but he thought of his mother stitching away in the cold room, and of how she needed the fire, that she might sew faster to get food for them.

Coal was high that fall, and by the bucketful, as the poor people had to buy it, came so dear that many could not afford it at all. Robin, then, was only one among many who came daily to the tracks to pick up the stray pieces that might be found there. It was scanty picking at best, but today every one seemed to have been before him, and he didn't remember ever to have been so cold before.

The thought of his mother, however, made him pick up his bag and start on again.

"The north wind doth blow,
And we shall have snow."

'Twas only the tune in a boy's shrill whistle, but Robin knew the words; his mother had sung them often the fall before. She didn't sing anything any more; it was too cold to sing.

Along the street that crossed the track just there, came the owner of the whistle. Robin could see a pair of rosy cheeks emerging from a great collar, well turned up, and two bright eyes shining from under the edge of a fur cap.

"And what will the robin do then?" continued the merry whistler.

"I should like to know what I shall do," thought Robin, fitting the words to himself. "There isn't any barn for me to sit in and keep myself warm."

He stood a moment looking after the boy as he strode by, hands deep in pockets; then he went on, colder than before.

"Oh! I say," called a cheery voice, "you must be awful cold, ain't you?" and Robin turned to find the boy close beside him.

Before his surprise gave him a chance to answer, the new-comer was pulling off his mittens and holding them out to him.

"Here, put these things on, won't you? I can put my hands in my pockets."

Robin's mother, who was a sweet, gentle woman in spite of her hard life, had given her boy much of her own spirit. "The little gentleman," the neighbors called him.

"I thank you," he said, in his high, sweet voice, looking longingly at the warm mittens. "I should like them very much, but I am afraid your mother wouldn't want you to give them away."

"Oh, goodness!" exclaimed the other, "go on! take 'em; mother'd be awfully glad for you to have 'em, 'pon my word!" and he thrust them into Robin's hands.

"What are you doing anyway?" he queried, looking at the bag on the ground. "Picking up coal? You can't find much along here."

"No, I can't," said Robin, as he pulled on the mittens at last and shivered from their very warmth, "but mother must have some fire to sew by, and I'm the only one to get coal for it. I'm the man of the family you know," and he drew himself up to the full height of his ten years.

"Well, come on, let's go to work, and I'll help; I haven't anything to do," said his new-found friend. "But say, hold on a jiffy! I'll tell you what. I'll take off my jacket—I shan't miss it with this great coat—and you can wear it while we work."

He was already pulling it off, and paid no heed to Robin's objections.

"Put it on quick," was all he would say. "Then we'll take turns using the mittens. My name's Jack; what's yours?"

The plan went well. They each wore one mitten and kept the other hand in a pocket, while one carried the bag and the other picked up the coal.

As they worked they talked, confiding to each other the stories of their short lives, and comparing notes on likings and wishings.

A considerable spilling over of coal from a passing train filled their bag for them at last, a mittened hand seized each end, and faces were turned homeward.

It was quite dusk when they reached Robin's house, and sharp, icy flakes were already driving through the air and stinging the faces of the hurrying people.

Robin opened the door and called through the dark entry, "Mother, mother!" Then, turning to ask Jack to come in, he saw a mitten lying on the bag he had dropped on the doorstep, and down the street, through the ever faster falling snow, a vanishing fur cap and great coat.

Back on the wind came brokenly, in the same merry whistle,

"—in the barn,
—him—warm,
And hide—der
—wing—thing."

—AGNES GODFREY GAY, in *Christian Union*.

God has never been able to make much use of people who have no business of their own to attend to.

Have Confidence in Boys.

There is something wrong in the home training when a boy goes entirely outside of his own family for counsel. A mother need not compel him to come to her with all his little affairs, because if she is always ready to listen to and sympathize with him he will do this on his own accord.

A very common cause of the withholding of a child's confidence is the desire on the part of the parent to dictate in matters that are of no importance except to the child himself.

All children, and boys especially, like to plan their own affairs, and where there is no question of right or wrong involved, should be allowed and encouraged to do so.

With children who have strong will power the constant directing of all their little plans and ideas is exasperating, and opposition with ill-humor is often the result.

With children of a sensitive nature, or with weak will power, the child's own individuality is perhaps crushed out of him, or else he retires within himself and shuts his lips tightly against the confidence which every parent craves from a child.

Let a boy feel that you are always interested in his plans, no matter how absurd they may be; the time is coming when you can no longer command him, and this will be the strongest hold you can have upon him.

Take him into your counsels; ask his advice upon family matters. His self-respect and judgment will grow because he has been looked up to by older people.

If he prefers to spend all his leisure time with his companions at their home rather than his own, look for the reason in yourself rather than in the boy, and never "twit" or "nag" him because of it.

Rather let him feel that the household is not complete without him, and let your love and trust in him shine through your welcome upon every return.

He may not be worthy of it, but he will grow to it, and will come back to you and to his home. He can not help it if you are faithful to your trust in him.

Good Manners at Home.

The presence of good manners is nowhere more needed or more effective than in the household, and perhaps nowhere more rare. When ever familiarity exists, there is a tendency to loosen the check upon selfish conduct which the presence of strangers involuntarily produces. Many persons who are kind and courteous in company, are rude and careless with those whom they love best.

Emerson says, "Good manners are made up of petty sacrifices," and certainly nothing can more thoroughly secure the harmony and peace of the family circle than the habit of making small sacrifices, one for another. Children thus learn good manners in the best and most natural way, and habits thus acquired will never leave them.

Courtesy and kindness will never lose their power or their charm, while all spurious imitations of them are to be despised.—*The Republic*.

Nothing will do more to put wrinkles in your face than worrying about things you can't help.

It would demoralize heaven for the angels to go in company that some church members consider good.

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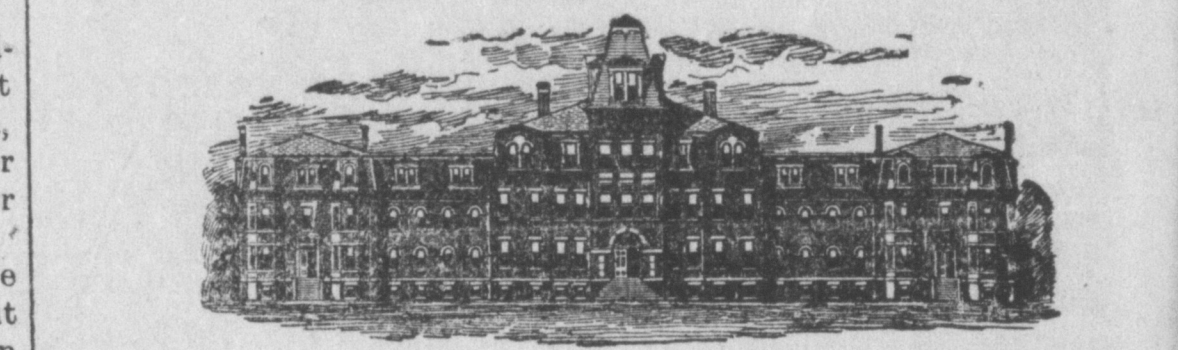
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