

Somebody's Mother.

The woman was old and ragged and gray, And bent with the chill of the winter's day. The street was wet with a recent snow, And the woman's feet were aged and slow. She stood at the crossing, and waited long. Alone, uncared for, amid the throng. Of human beings who passed her by, Nor heeded the glance of her anxious eye.

Down the street with laughter and shout, Glad in the freedom of school let out. Came the boys like a flock of sheep, Hailing the snow piled white and deep. Past the woman, so old and gray, Hastened the children on their way, Nor offered a helping hand to her, So meek, so timid, afraid to stir. Lest the carriage wheels or the horses' feet Should crowd her down in the slippery street.

At last came one of the merry troop— The gayest laddie of all the group; He paused beside her, and whispered low, "I'll help you across if you wish to go." Her aged hand on his strong young arm, She placed, and so, without hurt or harm, He guided the trembling feet along, Proud that his own were firm and strong. Then back again to his friends he went, His young heart happy and well content. "She's somebody's mother, boys you know, For all she's old and poor and slow; And I hope some fellow will lend a hand To help my mother, you understand, If ever she's poor and old and gray, When her own dear boy is far away."

And "somebody's mother" bowed low her head In her home that night, and the prayer she said Was, "God be kind to the noble boy, Who is somebody's son and pride and joy!" —Anon.

Maud's Reminder.

"Oh, exclaimed Maud impatiently, 'I wish mother wouldn't! Why can't she let things alone?'

Out of the window she had caught sight of her mother working in a flower-bed which was an intruding mass of periwinkle with its multitude of foot-occupies, progressing runners threatened to occupy to the exclusion of the right-ful plants.

"I'd sooner let that old flower-bed go than work out there," thought Maud, "I wonder if its necessary for me to go help her? I don't want to come bit! Gardening is such a bother."

She turned away from the window. "I don't believe I will," she concluded. "I want to read that paper Uncle Franz sent, with all those pictures in it of the fireworks at the soldiers' reunion. There's ever so much historical information in that paper, too. One ought to know about the history of one's country."

And Maud settled herself on the lounge and read her paper.

Outside in the warm sun her mother worked. She had hurried through her indoor tasks in order to have some time to spend in the garden, for she had been afraid that the ever-advancing periwinkle would root out some plants that she did not want to lose. But she was tired, and the periwinkle's interlacing rootlets seemed like shoe-strings, the knots of which she never could get rid of. She pulled and heaved and still more weeds and periwinkle confronted her.

"I'm so tired," she said to herself. No wonder, she was tired. She had hurried downstairs before six that morning to be sure to get breakfast ready before her son had to catch the train to the city. It would never do for him to be late at the store. And as for Maud's doing such a thing as running down stairs, and lighting the fire, and getting her brother's coffee and graham gems, and eggs ready, Maud's mother would have been astonished if such a thing had occurred. Maud was strong and well, but she was not much help to her mother. And yet Maud counted herself a Christian.

After seeing her boy off, Mrs. Crowell had put Maud's breakfast where it would be warm when she should come down. Her mother washed dishes, and heated some water for some flannels that must be washed, too. Mrs. Crowell swept and dusted, and made beds, and hurried through the most of the usual household work in order that she might have time that forenoon for the extra out-door toil. Her boy was in the store day and evening, and had no time to help about gardening.

Neither could Mrs. Crowell afford to hire some one every time there was something in the garden that ought to be done. And Maud never seemed to think she could help. Some way ever since she came home it had been so. When she had been attending the seminary she could not have done much but study, and her mother toiled bravely, ready to work beyond her strength if Maud might have an education. But now that Maud had graduated and come home, was she ungrateful for all the patient days of toil her mother had borne?

"She used to help me when she was a little girl," murmured Mrs. Crowell to herself as she stood at the periwinkle. "When she was a little thing, she'd always want to hand me the clothes-pins wash-days, to 'help mamma.'"

Mrs. Crowell's lips trembled. Some way the recollection of the time when it had been baby Maud's highest ambition to "help mamma" overcame her mother just now. A tear dropped on the periwinkle.

Mrs. Crowell brushed her eyes. It was not the work, so much as it was Maud's seeming lack of sympathy and appreciation of the work that hurt her mother.

"Maud means all right," Mrs. Crowell thought now as she worked. "She cares just as much for mother, I guess, as she used to, only she doesn't think. And I can't bear to say anything to her. Oh! It must be time I went and got the potatoes ready."

And she went in to attend to the work. That afternoon Maud went out to make some calls, and on her way she met a woman, a friend, who had recently lost her mother, a very aged lady. Maud stopped to speak to her friend, and all the woman could talk of was her bereavement. She went over again to Maud the story of how the old lady had died.

"But, oh, I haven't any mother any more!" exclaimed the woman, her face quivering.

Maud looked at the gray-haired woman, and almost realized a little of what she felt.

"I haven't any mother any more!" repeated the grieving woman, "I thought if I did all I could to make mother's last years comfortable and happy, and didn't let her do a bit of work more than she wanted to, maybe I'd have her a good many years yet. But she's gone, and it seems so lonesome, it seems as if I couldn't bear to go into our house," and the woman wiped her eyes, in unaffected grief.

"It's too bad," responded Maud, hardly knowing how to express her sympathy. "I'm real sorry."

"Good-bye," said the woman, sorrowfully, as she turned away, drawing her black shawl closer about her shoulders. Maud's face grew more and more sober as she walked on alone. She was thinking about the words she had just heard, and her thoughts turned to her own mother; how much that mother was to her!

The words the woman had just said about not letting her own mother do "a bit of work more than she wanted to," gave Maud's conscience an uncomfortable feeling. She had not meant to be so careless. She did many charitable things, and belonged to several societies, and she did not like housework. Had she neglected her mother?

"I haven't any mother any more." A quivering feeling came in Maud's throat. Supposing she should ever have to say that! Maud's memory awoke.

"When I was going to school," she thought, "mother worked and worked at home, sweeping, and cooking, and washing paint and windows, and ironing and doing everything, and she was so tired at night, and yet I couldn't spare time from my lessons to help get supper, and she'd tell me to keep at my books, and she'd wash dishes, and everything. Some mothers would have thought they needed me too much at home to let me keep on going to the seminary, but mother wasn't that way. She had to hard a time getting her own education to start me on mine. And how she used to spend time hearing my lessons when I was little and wasn't strong enough to go to school all the time! Some mothers couldn't have thought they could spare a couple of hours a day to hear a child recite, but she did. And here I am, letting her do everything now! What sort of a Christian have I been? A person who didn't even profess to be a church-member might have done better."

The next morning Mrs. Crowell awoke with a kind of indistinct feeling that she had heard some one go softly down stairs a while before. But she thought she must have been mistaken. "It can't be time for Harry to be up yet," she thought as she hurriedly made ready to go down to her usual work.

It seemed to her she was tired to begin with. She was always tired. There was so much to be done. But when she reached the kitchen, she was half startled. Maud stood there, turning hot water into the coffee-pot. There was a fire. The table in the next room was set for the breakfast that was almost cooked.

"Why, Maud!" exclaimed her mother.

"I'm up early for once," returned Maud quietly. But it was not till after two or three days of such helping that Mrs. Crowell realized what had happened. One morning Maud took the broom and the carpet-sweeper out of her mother's hands, and insisted on doing the day's sweeping upstairs.

Mrs. Crowell went away by herself into the parlor, and listened to Maud's

steps as the girl went up stairs. Her mother's eyes filled with tears. It seemed so good to have a helper. "Oh," almost sobbed the mother to herself, "I knew Maud cared! I do believe she has thought, at last!" —Chicago Standard.

A Tramp's Thinkin'.

A tramp had been doing some thinkin'. 'Thinkin' don't seem to agree with yer,' said one who saw him. "Naw! it don't—it's like this, d'ye see! I'm a tramp. Now, my old school-mate, Bill, is just what I'm not!" "How's that?"

"Well, Bill is the president of a bank; he's got as pretty and handsome a home as yer'd like to see; there's flowers there, and there's a pretty wife and some bloomin' happy, curly-headed children; there's a carriage and servants and people call him 'Mister.' He's twice been elected mayor, and everything is coming his way all the time, and then look at me—different, ain't it?"

"How'd he strike it rich like that?" "I can't think of any other name for it now but good sense. We were boys together, and while I was foolin' around, having a good time, Bill, he sorter seemed to look ahead. He didn't drink or smoke; I did. He didn't care for style, and it cost me to put it on that same money that he saved. He was fond of reading, and I'd rather play cards and have fun with the rest of the boys. When I was loafin' on the street corners and in beer saloons, Bill was putting in his time at school. I blew in my money on cards. Bill saved his, an' I remember now how I used to guy Bill an' call him good-goody, and tell him how he was a foolin' of his life away without havin' any fun—but say—I was a colorin' my nose; I was getting to play a good game of cards; I was cultivating a fine stock of bad habits—among 'em was love for budge; ter make it short, pard, I was giving myself a fine education for this here business, and ain't I succeeded at it pretty well?"

"I should say!" "Well! now look at Bill. Who's having the good time now? He doesn't have dogs set on him; he ain't pulled in every once in awhile for being a tramp; he doesn't have to move on when his feet's sore, and he doesn't go hungry, and have ter saw a big pile of wood to get a meal, and sleep under haystacks; and morn' all, he hasn't got the awful, awful thirst I've got, and doesn't live in hell, as I do, because he can't get liquor. He's got manhood; wot have I got? He's got character; wot have I got? He's got friends; who's mine? Not one since I broke my dear old mother's heart, which laid her in her grave. Ain't that a record?"

"Why shouldn't I do some thinkin'?" —Selected.

Stone By Stone.

Tom and Robert were walking through the woods. They came to a stream of water; both stopped, deliberating what was best to be done. "I am going to leap it," said Tom. "I am going to work my way over, stone by stone," said the more prudent Robert.

Tom leaped, and, missing his footing, fell into the middle of the stream, whilst Robert, working his way carefully from one stone to another, landed safe and dry on the other side.

Boys, learn the lesson while yet young; the shortest way often appears the longest. Do not try to leap across the stream of difficulties that separates you from the shores of success. Perseverance, diligence, and determinations are all stones cast across the stream of life. A leap will bring you down among them, wounded and bruised. But, conquer them, stone by stone, and ultimately you will reach the other shore—the coveted land of success. Remember, do not leap; work your way across the stream, stone by stone.—Ec.

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A young man carelessly formed the habit of taking a glass of liquor every morning before breakfast. An older friend advised him to quit before the habit grew too strong.

"O there's no danger; it is a mere notion. I can quit any time," replied the drinker.

"Suppose you try it to-morrow morning," suggested the friend.

"Very well; to please you I'll do so, but I assure you there is no cause for alarm."

A week later the young man met his friend again.

"You are not looking well," observed the latter; "have you been ill?"

"Hardly," replied the other. "But I am trying to escape a dreadful danger, and I fear that I shall be before I have conquered. My eyes were opened to an imminent peril when I gave you that promise a week ago. I thank you for your timely suggestion."

"How did it affect you?" inquired the friend.

"The first trial utterly deprived me of appetite for food. I could eat no breakfast, and was nervous and trembling all day. I was alarmed when I realized how insidiously the habit had fastened on me, and resolved to turn square about and never touch another drop. The squaring off has pulled me down severely, but I am gaining, and I mean to keep the upper hand after this. Strong drink will never catch me in his net again."—Ohio Church Life.

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