

Father And Son.

"I must look to the sheep of the field, see that the cattle are fed and warmed, So, Jack, tell your mother to wrap you well, You may go with me over the farm. Though the snow is deep and the weather cold, You are not a baby six years old."

Two feet of snow on the hillside lay, But the sky was as blue as June, And father and son came laughing home When dinner was ready at noon— Knocking the snow from their weary feet, Rosy and hungry and ready to eat.

"The snow was so deep," the farmer said, "That I feared I could scarcely get through."

The mother turned with a pleasant smile— "Then what could a little boy do?" "I trod in my father's steps," said Jack; "Wherever he went I kept his track."

The mother looked in the father's face, And a solemn thought was there; The words had gone like a lightning flash To the seat of a noble care; "If he treads in my steps, then day by day How carefully I must choose my way!"

"For the child will do as the father does, And the track that I leave behind, It will be firm, and clear, and straight, The feet of my son will find; He will tread in his father's steps and say, 'I am right for this is my father's way.'"

Oh, fathers, leading life's hard road, Be sure of the steps you take; Then the sons you love, when gray-haired men, Will tread in them still for your sake; When gray-haired men their sons will say, "We tread in our father's steps to-day." —Plank and Platform.

The Scarred Hand.

BY HARRIET NELSON in *Chris. Advocate*.

"You are bad, totally, thoroughly, horribly bad, all the way through." The speaker paused for a moment; his listener made no reply.

"You are a disgrace to me, and have been for years. You were a disgrace to our mother while she lived, had she but known it; you broke your father's heart," went on the accuser, growing more and more impassioned with each additional word.

Still no word of reply.

"How many times have I come to your assistance; how often have I excused you to others and to myself; and to what end? Only to have you laugh me and my counsel and my help to scorn, and to see you plunge into some new devilry. And this time is the last! I have done with you."

He flung out his hands with an impatient gesture, and, walking to the window, looked moodily down upon the street below. Such a dreary day outside, with its canopy of gray, storm-filled clouds, and its driving, pelting rain, that froze as it fell upon the streets and pavements. The young fellow of twenty-three or four, who had been sitting there for the past half hour, listening to what was so old a story to him, namely a category of his misdeeds, stirred uneasily in his chair, and gave a quick glance of appeal at the stern relentless figure at the library window. Such a boy he seemed, after all, to be so great a sinner, with his blue eyes and chestnut locks, and only a suspicion of hair upon his upper lip. He half started up with an eager word of protest, then the light faded out of his face, and he sank back again into his chair, covering his eyes with one hand, stared gloomily into the fire.

The elder brother once more broke the silence that was growing oppressive, and if there was even the faintest tremble in his voice, his auditor attributed it to anger, pure and simple.

"Your share of the property has gone long ago. It has taken it all to pay your odious extravagances, as you well know. My own share is only a fraction of what it should be, still, I will not let you go away altogether penniless. There," tossing a roll of bills across the table, "there is fifty dollars. Take it and go."

"Jack!" The younger man staggered to his feet. His face was haggard in its surprise and remorse. "Jack, old fellow. Just give me one more chance. I know it's hard to trust me after the way I've deceived you, but try me just once more."

"Go," said the other, sternly. "I promise you, Jack, I'll never touch liquor again. I give you my word."

"The word of a liar," said the other, laughing miserably. "I tell you, I've done with you. You're all the relative I have in God's world, but even so, I spurn you. Take the money, I say, and go."

And then, for the first time, the sinner looked as if he it was being sinned against, as he turned to the door. "Good-bye, Jack," he said huskily; "I'm off, then, for good. I shan't trouble you again. But keep the money. I shan't need money where I'm going. And if you think of me at all in years to

come, remember me as a little chap when mother was here to look after us both and we were boys together. Good-bye, my brother." Then he went out a few moments later the street door closed heavily, and Jack from his library window, watched him as he fought his way through the storm and passed out of sight. And then he turned away impatiently, and in the work that awaited him at his desk strove to forget.

Such a dreary day on which to be driven from home, and yet it was Sunday. Even as the outcast turned the corner that hid the home of his boyhood from view, he could hear the bells as they sent their message to all within sound of their voice.

"Come to God! Come to God!" "Come to church! Come to church!"

"Come! Come!" repeated the young man, half unconsciously, as he listened. "Mother taught me that when I was only five, I remember. And I used to love to go to church with her when I was a little chap. I'd kind of like to look inside of a church again before I go," for he had decided, upon the impulse of the moment (that quick yielding that so often had been his undoing in days gone by), that life for him had become an utter failure. He had sinned hopelessly, he felt. Jack, who had been as a father to him, who had helped him out of many a boyish escapade—with many a word of indignation, it is true, and many a stern warning—had at last turned him off. He had by his folly, lost the companionship of the good; he had no longer any desire to seek his evil associates; there seemed only one refuge, and his steps were bent thither, down to the foot of a street he well knew, where the river was deep and dark, and would take him gently to itself and lay him down in his last long sleep. He planned it all as he walked and thought and listened; then once more the bell in the steeple of the great church he was just passing sent down its invitation. He paused and considered a moment.

"Come! Come!" ended the bell, the tones dying away softly.

"Mother would like it," he murmured, "and it's not Jack's church, so no one will know me. I'll drop in and rest a bit."

No one noticed the rather shabbily clothed stranger in a back pew, no one save the minister, perhaps, himself a young man scarcely out of the divinity school, who had come to supply a vacant pulpit, and who was rather nervously rehearsing the main points of his sermon. He had an opportunity to study each face in his audience, for the severity of the storm prevented a large attendance, and he noticed the stranger who entered so hesitatingly, and then sat down so near the door, who listened so intently to the singing of the hymns and so reverently bowed his head during the prayers. Then came the sermon—a sermon full of Christ and Him crucified, a sermon that was full of pathos and urgent entreaty for all who had not yet begun to serve the Master to do so without delay, a sermon that had been most carefully prepared and prayed over, and which the earnest young orator felt must carry home something of truth to his audience. Then he closed the Bible, for he had reached the end of his manuscript, and gazed longingly into the expectant faces before him.

"Dear friends," he said, and as he spoke his lip quivered and his voice throbbed with emotion, "the Master seems very dear to me as I speak this morning. Will you pardon me if I give you a bit of my own experience, just to tell you how Jesus Christ first enlisted me in His cause?"

"I was the younger of two children. My brother was five years my senior; a fine, handsome fellow he was, perfect in his beauty save one blemish. His one hand, the right one, bore a great, unsightly scar. Much as I loved him, I still could not endure the sight of that disfigured hand, for as a child I was peculiarly sensitive to any physical defect, and he, knowing my dislike, would keep his hand concealed from my gaze whenever it was possible. One day when I was old enough to understand, my mother told me the history of the scar. 'I had left you,' she said, 'asleep in your cradle while I went up stairs to attend to some household duty. Edgar was six years old, but so trusty in every respect that I felt not the least uneasiness at placing him in charge of you. I was gone for half an hour or more; when I returned you were lying on the floor on the other side of the room, carefully wrapped in a shawl. The cradle, scorched and charred, stood empty, the blankets and mattress were in blackened fragments, while Edgar, his poor little face distorted in his endeavor to bear the pain bravely, was starting in search of me, and seeing me fell fainting at my feet. Your cradle must have been too near the stove, for from some cause it suddenly began to burn. Your brother, young as he was, placed you in safety,

then fought the flames, and actually, alone and unaided, put out the fire that but for him would have been so serious; but his poor little hand was burned terribly. Never think of that hand, my boy, save as a thing of beauty, for remember it was scarred for you.'"

(Concluded next week.)

The Trials of the Oversensitive.

"That dear child is so sensitive," said a mother, pityingly, as her eleven-year-old daughter, with tear-filled eyes, stumbled out of the room, knocking over a footstool in her haste to be gone. "I am always on the alert to save her. But few days pass in which Ethel does not suffer keenly. Her father and brothers will not always be considerate, and the child's gentle spirit is easily wounded. Now she will cry for a half hour, and be wretched the remainder of the day, and all because papa was vexed that she forgot to call at the post office on her way home from school."

"Is it part of her daily duty to bring home the mail?" I asked.

"Yes," said the mother, a little reluctantly, "but you know how it is with schoolgirls. They are at the age when it is not possible always to remember an engagement. Their little lives are so full of pleasures, and they have not yet learned to assume cares, these little girls. I tell papa that Ethel will be more thoughtful by and by, and that we cannot expect as much steadiness of her as of her great, strong brothers."

This golden-haired Ethel, her one daughter and her youngest child, was the darling of my friend and the very apple of her eye. She lingered about a few moments, restless and uncomfortable, and then stole out of the room, and presently I heard her moving about overhead in Ethel's pretty little chamber. Down the street I caught from the window a glimpse of papa, whose hasty speech had wrought the mischief. His broad back and plodding steps seemed pathetic to me, as I thought how tired he was after his day's work, and knew that he was wending his way to the post office to perform Ethel's neglected errand. Everybody made to feel more or less in the wrong because one petted child had been reproved, and had gone off grieving in consequence! It did not appear quite fair.

It was not of Ethel's little fit of the sulks nor of her mother's mistaken tenderness that I thought longest on that sweet autumnal afternoon, for one thought starts another, and I recalled this person and that, who had gone much beyond childhood, enduring keen and often needless anguish because of a disposition too readily sensitive to blame or fancied unkindness. Such a disposition torments its possessor, inflicting pain to which the blows of a whip would be light by comparison, yet, strange to say, it would almost appear that the unfortunately oversensitive person watches for slights and welcomes wounds, so often are they received when none are intended.

In the family the opportunities for hurting the sensibilities of the easily injured one are manifold. A chance word at the table, a word unsaid when praise or compliment was desired, a bit of criticism however gentle, an absent or preoccupied look, will upset the dear one for the day, and the atmosphere will become electric. It is always the dear one, mother, elder sister, sometimes father or brother—though rarely, for the stronger sex are less given than ours to what in children we call tantrums—whose feelings are hurt. Singularly, in most households the ill-tempered and pesky are more studied and in effect more beloved than the amiable and the sensible. There are gray-haired Ethels, who have gone on through long lives, exacting forbearance and consideration from their relatives on the score of their remarkable sensitiveness, and so they will do to the very end.

And in the larger family of the Church, who does not know the brother or the sister whose feet are too easily trodden upon, who withdraws from this and the other department of work, and will no longer support his pastor or continue in fellowship with the friends in the society, hitherto his comrades and trusted companions, because he has been ignored or opposed or wounded? It becomes each of us to ask whether we have never erred in this way, whether we have at no period put a stumbling-block in a brother's road through our jealousy for ourselves.

Oversensitiveness is often the product of a morbid love of self. Vanity takes fire at a touch, and vanity is resentful and implacable. Except in the earliest years, outside help avails little to overcome a defect so grave; children may be guided toward a better and happier life, and taught to cultivate the charity that seeketh not her own; but in older persons this kind goeth no

out but by prayer and fasting. If, as may happen, you or I are oversensitive, is it not worth while at once to set about eradicating a fault so grave and with consequences so undesirable in our social intercourse? —Margaret E. Sangster, in the Congregationalist.

Monday Musings.

FROM THE PEW.

They didn't yell worth a cent! A college boy was talking of a match game of foot ball which had been lost by a visiting team.

There were three car-loads of people that came down with them. But they didn't yell worth a cent. Why, they ought to have yelled every good move their team made. We had out everything in town that could make a noise, tin horns and bells and horse fiddles and a great circular saw that they pounded on. And we had companies organized to yell. I tell you it helps, lots.

Wise boy, thought I. Verily the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. Just imagine the people crowding around their church and Sunday-school officers, whom they have put in the field to fight the battles for their honor and permanence as an institution, and cheering every good point they score. Too often, instead of recognizing heartily the good that has been done, and the efforts that are being put forth, and encouraging them to push on, criticism is heard, or, it would be a good thing, but it can't be done. Do you want to make the officers of the church and Sunday-school doubly efficient? Don't forget the yell. Have they been doing good work? Tell them so. The best men of our churches are serving them year in and year out, giving care and thought and time, sadly alone as far as moral support goes, scarcely receiving a word of recognition unless in a formal vote of thanks at the close of their labors. I wonder how that would work on the foot ball grounds—a vote of appreciation by the bystanders after the game is over. How it would entuse the boys.

But the man in the church who is most alone is the pastor. His position separates him in some ways from the people about him. On Sunday he stands in the pulpit and delivers his message. He has prayed over it. He has put his heart into it. He has thought of us by our names. He has prepared for us a word of comfort or a note of warning or reproof, an appeal or a bit of instruction. We sit in the pews listening or listless as the case may be, yawning and looking at our watches if we think he is talking too long. When he is through, we pass out and go our ways, never thinking that the man is human. One man, or maybe a woman, comes to him to say, "That was good!" or we needed that lesson!"—the lesson it had perhaps been so hard for him to give. It is not every Sunday that he gets this much. Sometimes he goes weeks without a word to tell him he has helped one soul. So he cherishes this one in his heart and carries it home to tell to his wife. Then he goes to work with greater courage for next Sunday. What if, instead of one, a dozen had said to him, "Good! that was what we needed!" The college boy said, "We had organized companies to yell." Suppose the church were divided into four companies, one for each of the four Sundays of the month, and it should be the duty of each person in one company to say to the minister the best thing he honestly could, on one Sunday, and another company on the next, and on the fifth Sunday every one in the whole church should try to get in an encouraging word. If that church didn't have a good minister it wouldn't be their fault. "I tell you, the yell helps lots."

The earnestness of life is the only passport to the satisfaction of life.—Parker.

Every man's life is a fairy tale, written by God's fingers.—Hans Christian Andersen.

While man is growing life is in decrease, and cradles rock us nearer to the tomb.—Young.

Long life is denied us; therefore let us do something to show that we have lived.—Cicero.

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