Two Evening Trains

The first train leaves at 6 p. m.
For the land where the sleep flower blows
And mother, dear, is the engineer,
And the passenger laughs and crows.

The palace car is the mother's arms;
The whistle a low, sweet strain;
The passenger winks and nods and blinks,
And goes to sleep on the train.

At 8 p. m. the next train starts
For the pleasant land afar;
The summons clear falls on the ear.
All aboard for the sleeping car.

But what is the fare to this pleasant land?
I hope it is not too dear;
The fare is this—a loving kiss—
And it is paid to the engineer.

I ask of Him Who the children took
On his knee in kindness great,
To charge, I pray, of the trains each day
Take leave at six and eight.

And 'keep watch o'er the passengers,' thus I pray,
For they are very dear;
And have special ward, O gracious Lord,
Over the gentle engineer.'

—Harriette R. Manvel.

The 'Boys' Brigade.'

BY ERNEST GILMORE.

All of the boys, with the one exception, who belonged to the 'Boys' Brigade,' of Englewood, had fine uniforms, of which they were justly proud. That one exception was William Duncan, familiarly called 'Billy.' Of course it was poverty that prevented Billy from having a blue coat with brass buttons.

Billy's home was not a typical drunkard's home, although his father was a drunkard. Billy's mother was a woman of strong character. It was a mystery many how she could keep up her courage amidst such surroundings, but she realized that her children's future depended, in a great measure, upon the home and their mother. Consequently the home was as pleasant as it was possible to make any home where drunkard lives. When the latter was present, as he was most of the time, Billy and children had happy hours together.

Billy was his mother's right-hand man. If it had not been for his industry and devotion the wolf would have entered their door long ago. He had had many a paying job. He had been obliged to give up school to keep the domestic wheel moving.

Times were hard, so Billy had no regular work, but still he earned many an honest penny. He cut kindlings for several families, getting the wood at cheap rate from a lumber yard in the vicinity; selling it by the barrel. He often delivered meat for the butchers and groceries for the dealers sometimes he carried papers, distributing them at the doors of subscribers. In one way and another Billy provided for the dear ones at home, mother and sister Bessie and baby Fred, aged three. Sometimes the latter bought a few provisions for the family, but he could not be depended on.

When the Boys' Brigade met at Harry Thorn's house to talk over the proposed celebration, Billy was present. 'We might have a parade to begin with,' Harry suggested; 'we could show off our new uniforms.'

'I think the boys thought a parade would be just the thing,' and all said except Billy. He remarked, without particle of envy.

'I would like to parade, but of course I don't be in it, 'cause I haven't any coat.'

'Oh, I beg your pardon, Billy,' said Harry. 'I forgot about that. I'm real sorry. I wish my suit would stretch so you and I could both get into it,' The boy laughed good-naturedly.

'Never mind Billy.

Before the meeting closed Billy had been to 'clean an office' for a lawyer.

Sooner had he gone than Harry said, 'the floor.

'There isn't a better or brighter boy in Englewood than Billy Duncan,' he said, 'and we must have him in our band.

'How he'd look in his old clothes!' replied one boy.

'Besides, he wouldn't march,' said Harry; 'he'd think he'd spoil the effect of the procession; and he would, too, if he had a new military suit.' He spoke as if Billy already had one, 'and that's what he must have.'

'But is he going to get it?' asked Fuller.

'Let's give up buying all that trash we need about, and have an entertainment. I'll get father to let us have the hall rent free. We can have recitations and music and tableaux.'

'That's that got to do with Billy's suit?' called out one of the boys.

'Why,' continued Harry, 'I think I can ask Mr. Lake to let us have a suit of clothes, if we promise to pay for it when we can charge an admission to the entertainment, you know; we can do something that way.'

A week passed by; the eventful day had come. The Boys' Brigade was in great excitement all day long, and when Mr. Lake's son, Jim, who belonged to the new band of Englewood, said that 'the band would play for them without pay,' it was difficult to keep their enthusiasm within bounds. In fact, a good many of them stood on their heads in their joy.

At 7 o'clock in the evening the Boys' Brigade, bearing lighted torches and headed by the new band, paraded through the streets of Englewood and on to 'Thorn Hall,' which they entered. Billy, clad in a beautiful new military suit, was in the parade. His fine blue eyes were glowing with delight, for he had never felt so proud and happy before.

At half past 7 the hall was filled. The families of the members of the 'Boys' Brigade' and the 'New Band' had free tickets, all the others paid. Billy Duncan's folks were all there; even the 'drunkard' was seen, although Billy had not at first intended to invite his father. It had come about in this way: His father was sober that day, and when not under the influence of drink he was always kind.

He had stroked Bessie's hair, but Bessie had escaped from his touch and run to her mother. He had tried, too, to make friends with Baby Carl, but had failed, as the tender-hearted, timid child was afraid of him. Billy, looking on, pitied his father, so he sought in some way to speak a word of comfort.

'Father,' said he, gently, 'we're going to have an entertainment to-night at Thorn Hall; I'm going to take part, and I'd like to have you come and hear me. Will you?'

Mr. Duncan's lips quivered, his heart being touched with the tenderness of Billy's words and tone. But he asked:

'What are you going to make a speech about, drunkenness? If you are, I won't go.'

'Oh, no, father; I'm not going to say a word on that subject. I'm going to talk about George Washington.'

'What do you know about him? wonderingly.

'Harry Thorn lent me a book, 'Life of George Washington,' and I studied it up to please the boys; they've been so kind to me. They were kind enough to say that I'm the best speaker in the Boys' Brigade. I hope I am, for mother's sake.'

'Why?' with interest.

'Because there is a rich uncle of Harry Thorn's going to be there, and he's to give a prize to the boy who makes the best speech.'

* * * * * *

Thorn Hall was brilliantly illuminated, and all was expectation! Presently the 'New Band' struck up a grand march, a beautiful thing, and from behind a curtain the Boys' Brigade, in the full glory of blue broadcloth and gilt buttons, marched on the stage and took seats.

Next, Harry Thorn, as president of the society, made a pleasant address of welcome in his genial, winsome way.

This was followed by a cornet solo by Sam Weller, after which a bright paper on 'Washington and '76' was read. The new band played again and the curtain dropped. When the latter was raised again, a series of tableaux on the 'Life of Washington' were given. Then the Brigade sang some stirring sons. It was now time for the prize contest.

Six boys took part, the best speakers of the Boys' Brigade. As it was announced that a prize would be given to the best speaker, great interest and close attention was given to the speeches. One after another of the competitors came forward, made a speech and retired, until all but one had spoken. Last of all came Billy.

All eyes were upon him. He made a fine appearance—a beautiful boy, with earnest, glowing eyes and waving brown hair, and dressed in a new military suit. But his speech far outstripped his competitors', it was so bright, so earnest, so interesting that when it was over, the other speakers could not wait for the verdict of the committee, but rushed forward and lifted him to their shoulders amidst the clapping of the audience, while the band struck up the 'March of the Victor.'

I wish I could tell you of the speech made by Harry Thorn's uncle, the generous man who gave the 'George Washington Prize,' but it would take too long. The prize was fifty dollars in gold. Billy paid Mr. Lake for his own clothes after all, for he told the boys he would rather do so, and the rest of the money was given, with great joy, to 'mother.'

But I can not stop without telling you of another great joy that came to faithful Billy. His father was so touched and stirred by Billy's appearance on the stage that eventful night, so proud of his bright speech and engaging ways, that he resolved, with God's help, to be worthy of such a son as Billy.—Ex.

The Children's Stories.

BY A. D. WALKER.

Three or four children were playing in our sitting-room and we had the pleasure of listening to their chats with one another. At length one of them proposed to the others that they should sit down and tell stories.

All agreed, and we will repeat here some of the stories. Jamie's story ran like this:

'There was a man going through the woods, and they were very dark, thick woods, with not much of a path. After awhile the poor man stepped upon a place where the leaves lay very thick—yes, much thicker than in the other places. Here to his surprise he began to sink, and down, down he went till he landed in a sort of a den. He groped around, wondering where he was. At length he found out it was a bear's den, and in a corner was a litter of young bears.

'How could he get out? It was deep and all straight up and down.

'He thought and thought what to do. After much thought he took the little bears and piled them up on top of one another and in that way made a ladder or steps and climbed up to the top on them and got away.'

Louise's story was of some children whose mother went away and left them to keep house. After a while they found that the furnace fire was all out and it must be kindled.

The servants were gone away, too. There seemed to be no kindling wood for them to get hold of, and they did not know what to do. At length they went to their mother's wardrobe closet and took her two best dresses and stuffed them into the furnace, and with them kindled the fire.

Hazel's story was like herself, a quaint little recital. 'One time there was a little girl and she was very plain looking. She did not have a nice skin; it was all full of freckles. Her nose did not turn down enough—'

'How did it turn?' interrupted Jamie.

'It turned up,' replied Hazel, shortly. 'Then her eyes were little and they have enough blueing in, and her mouth was too—too stretchy.

'Mirandy, that was the little girl's name, felt so bad 'cause she wasn't pretty that sometimes she cried 'bout it.

'Well, one night a beautiful lady—a real fairy came to her room.'

'Oh, did she?' cried Louise; 'did she? And how did she look?'

'Oh, she had on a dress made of silver spots or something and it shone awful bright. Then she had on a gold crown and shoes, and she had in her hand a silver handle'

'A wand!' cried Louise.

'Oh, yes, a wand. Well, she waved the wand and said in tones like singing: 'Mirandy, what do want?'

'Now, Mirandy wanted to be very good and very pretty, but she concluded that by trying she could be good, but she knew she could not be pretty, even if she tried ever so hard. so she cried out:

'Oh, Mrs. Fairy, I do want to be pretty so much. Do make me pretty.'

'Then the fairy waved the silver-handle over Mirandy——'

'Wand!' cried Jamie.

'Oh, yes, wand, and the fairy said: 'Now, in the morning you'll be pretty, but the first time you're naughty all the pretty will go way and you'll be plain again.' Next morning Mirandy came down stairs with long golden curls, bright blue eyes, and her nose turned down right, and her mouth made as little and sweet as she wanted it.'

'Oh, what did her mother say?' asked Louise eagerly.

'Her mother said, 'What little vain, stuck-up girl is this come here instead of my dear little homely Mirandy?' Now, Mirandy wasn't pleased at such talk, but she tried to act good, though she had forgot to say her prayers. She meant to be good all the time so as to keep her pretty looks; but you know how easy it is to forget to be good, don't you?'

'Yes,' cried Jamie, 'I do!'

'Well, after breakfast Mirandy's mother wanted her to amuse the baby, and Mirandy forgot and began to cry, and said she thought a beautiful little girl ought not to take care of a baby, but sit in the parlor to be admired. And then she cried more and said she wouldn't, and the beauty all went away, and she was little plain Mirandy. And the fairy came once more to her and said: 'Little girl, you were foolish to wish to be pretty instead of good. Don't you know to be good will make you pretty!'

'It wouldn't turn her nose down,' cried Jamie.

'Nor make her mouth little,' followed Louise.

'Well, it would make her pretty, any how,' insisted Hazel. — Chris. Intelligencer.

Great men are they who see that spiritual is stronger than any material force.—R. W. Emerson.

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