

## Young People's Column

### BARTLEY'S BRIGADE

"I say, Ted Freeman, you have got to cut school tomorrow; do you hear?"

"Got to cut what?" Ted was a dull fellow, and rather a new comer, too; he was not quite up to all the school slang.

"Got to cut school—stay away, you know." "What for?"

"Oh, all the fellows have agreed to do it. We asked old Laird, the teacher, for a holiday, and he wouldn't give it to us; so we're going to take it, and, you see, if every boy in the school stays away he just can't do anything to any of us."

"All right," agreed Ted. "I don't see that I've got to; but if the rest do it, I guess I will too."

"You haven't got Bartley Cox, Ned—here he comes now," said Tom Davis.

"Oh, Bartley's all right. Hello, Bart, come and take your oath of allegiance to this grand alliance."

Bartley came up gaily—a frank, merry-looking lad—unstrapped his books, and sat on the top step.

"What's up?" he asked.

Several boys, all talking at once, disclosed their plan of wresting a holiday from their teacher by this highly revolutionary measure.

"What's it for?" asked Bartley, looking puzzled; "anniversary or anything?"

"No," said Ted, boldly; "just because we want it, that's reason enough. What right has one man to oppose the whole school?"

"Taint reason enough for me," said Bartley, coolly, "I say you are talking bosh."

Angry voices broke out on all sides—threatening voices; Bartley's anger rose too:

"Oh, I say," he cried, "go on with your nonsense; I'm not trying to get you out of it; you can stay away all session for what I care; but I'll do as I choose, and I choose to come to school. I don't see a grain of sense or justice in your picking out a day and trying to force Mr. Laird into giving a holiday; that's his concern, and I don't propose to join a rebellion."

"Oh, good little boy, what Sunday School do you go to, sonny?" The voices all turned to mockery now—which was, of course, much harder to stand. "Tied to mammy's apron strings; double bow-knot; did she wash your face this morning, honey?"

Bartley tried hard to keep cool, but he felt furious; he would have given anything to "lick" the whole nineteen.

"As for that," he cried, when there was a lull in the uproar, "if I've got to mind somebody, I'd a long sight rather it should be my mother than you."

But the clamor rose again, and this time more angrily:

"I'll tell you what, Bartley, if you set yourself against us in this thing, we'll buck you within an inch of your life," said Ned, with an ugly scowl.

"Perhaps I'd better have you bound over to keep the peace," answered Bartley, scornfully; and then the school bell ordered them to work.

It was quite likely that these hot words would have turned to blows if chance had been given for it after the day's session was over, but it happened that half the school was kept in, Ned and Tom among the rest.

Bartley, who was a good student, was never kept in; and Ted, in spite of his slow wits, made a fair show today by the side of his more excitable comrades, whose heads were daft with the holiday scheme.

He joined Bartley on the road home and aired the subject of the holiday, but in an uninterested way, which was always Ted's way, and without giving any decided opinion himself. One or two of the smaller boys followed after them listening.

It was all very well to set himself against the plan while he was facing the crowd, and while his blood was up; but Bartley felt blue enough about it the rest of the day. He didn't say anything about it at home; an invalid mother and two little sisters were Bartley's home; it would only have made the mother nervous and anxious, so the boy kept his discomfort to himself. He did not know how plain to those mother-eyes, the signs of trouble were, nor that she was already fighting on his side, in that prayer for his protection and support and guidance which "availeth much."

It was by no means a pleasant prospect. "Bucking," as practiced at Highhill, was catching a boy by head and heels, and bumping him against a tree; it was usually done in fun and in cautious moderation, and was not a comfortable experience then. But Bartley knew that, in the present temper of the crowd, he would be roughly handled.

"Pshaw, I'll put it out of my head," he said to himself. "I did the right thing—I'd do it over again;" and in spite of anxious thoughts, that would not stay out, Bartley tasted that sweet, strong, secure feeling that is the certain privilege of one who can honestly say, "I did the right thing, I would do it again."

It was with a good deal of feeling of a soldier going down to battle, that Bartley set out for school the next day; the boys would probably lie in wait for him near the school house, and give him his punishment before they set out for the day's picnic. Every rustle in the hedge made him start, though he was ashamed that it should; he whistled as he went along, trying to pretend to himself and the world that here was nothing to mind.

Nobody interrupted his whistling, and, to his surprise, he found the boys in high debate in the school yard.

"I'll give him an extra bump," Ned was saying, in a high voice, "for tampering with the boys in this mean way; here is our plan going all to pieces, because these small fry ars sneaking after Bartley; I don't know how he's got his brigade so well drilled, but here he comes; and now for the fun, boys."

Bartley threw down his books, and prepared to resist as manfully as he could; but Ned was stopped from another quarter:

"Hold on," said slow old Ted, stepping in front of Ned and Tom. "It always takes me about a week to think out things, and, when you sprung this holiday plan on me yesterday, I didn't see the whole of it; but now I'm with Bartley; if you buck him you'll have to buck me; stand back there till I see who else belongs to Bartley's brigade, as you call it. I say, fellows, anybody that knows he has no business to cut school, and would rather do the right thing if he only had Bartley's pluck to say so, step over to this side."

Slowly and somewhat shamefully the crowd divided, and about half the boys crossed the imaginary line, the very real line, truly, that divided wrong from right.

"Ha!" cried Ted, "this look as if we'd have some show. I'll count fifty now, and give any boy a chance to come over, who knows he is under Ned White's thumb in this thing, and is being bossed by him. One—two—three," but before he had counted half his fifty Ned had only three boys left him! And when the rest filed in to school, Bartley's brigade, sixteen strong, Ned and his sullen followers had nothing to do but go along with them.

"The strange thing is, mother," said Bartley, telling the story that afternoon, "that I hadn't said a word to persuade any of those fellows to give up their silly plan; not a word."

"No," said mother, with a happy smile, "but thank God, simply doing one's duty is about the most persuading thing in the world."—Selected.

### GRACE AND GRIT

(Continued from Page 8)

course she will read and pray before we go to work. You'd better sit down."

Nothing daunted, the saved but persecuted woman, without a murmuring word, set herself to the untried work, read a chapter, and kneeling alone, prayed. As the son was leaving the room, the father said:

"In an hour you hitch the gray horses to the cutter. Your mother and I are going to C—for a visit."

Ordinarily he was a kind husband, consulted his wife about social and business affairs, and few were in better accord. But this was the first intimation of the proposed visit. Should she submit, and thus be ignored? Should she leave the meetings, where she hoped her children would be saved? These and similar questions were pressed on her conscience, yet somehow she believed God was to be glorified, even through this abuse. In an hour she was seated by her husband, and silently they drove twenty miles when he reined up at a hotel and ordered dinner. When they entered the dining room a few boarders and half a dozen commercial travellers came in. With a knife handle the man rapped, and as the company looked about, he said:

"My wife says she was converted last night and she will not want to eat unless she says grace."

Although faced by twenty strangers in this cruel arraignment, yet she would not deny her Lord, and in stammering utterances thanked Him for the food before them, there was no jest uttered and the meal was eaten in silence. An hour later the team was brought and the man turned their heads toward home. After they had gone a few rods the wife said:

"This is not the way toward C—"

"I know it," and bursting into tears he said: "Wife, I've used you meanly, but you have got the real thing, and I'm going to the schoolhouse tonight to see if I can get converted."

The rest of the story is short. The days were but few before the whole family, including the hired help, was converted, and she who was put to such unjust and unnatural tests, but who demonstrated her conversion by unflinching courage, has seen her husband a leading and worthy official in the Church of God for many years.—Way of Faith.