

'Come outside,' she said in a low voice. 'This is no place to talk.'

He obeyed her, tottering after her. She turned on him with heaving bosom.

'Have you not harmed me enough?' she began. Have you not? What brought you here? Tell me. What brought you here?'

'Susan,' he said wearily, 'I am dying.'

She did not answer.

'I came back to see you. Just once. And the little ones—Kittie and Jem. Is that Jem? Jem was so like him—but he'd ought to be older—' He passed his hand over his forehead. 'I don't know, I don't know. I meant to ask some one where Susan Pennywell's house was, and then in the night to steal up quietly and look at you all. I knew I'd die after that—it was all was keeping me alive. Don't tell Jem or Kittie, Susan—I don't want them to see me. They'd only hate me.'

'No,' said Susan Pennywell, mechanically. 'They wouldn't hate you.'

'No?' with trembling eagerness. 'Then you didn't tell them I was bad to you—a drunkard—'

'No,' said Susan Pennywell. 'No.'

'God bless you,' said the man huskily. 'God bless you, Susan. And perhaps—would you maybe let me see them; talk to them—'

His hesitation was pitiful.

'Come home with me and have some supper,' said Susan. Her heart was aching with a new pain—her heart, that had not ached for her own sorrows for so long a time. 'And as for Jem and Kittie—'

'Yes, Susan.'

'They've been dead this eighteen years, John,' said Susan, softly. She put her one arm about his shoulders. 'They died within twelve months after you left me, John.'

There was silence. Then sobs began to shake him from head to foot. His limbs gave way beneath him, and but for Susan's supporting arm he would have fallen to the ground.

'Don't mind,' she said, in a very gentle voice. 'They've been watching, John, and they've been praying, too. They brought you back to where you could throw yourself on the mercy of God. Come now, come home with me, and Father Luke will bid you welcome, and make things easier for you than a poor ignorant woman like me knows how to do. Come home and get ready to die in peace—don't cheat Jem and Kittie this night of their prayers for you.'

Father Luke prepared the man for the death that he felt was imminent. Stayed with him hours, going over the long-past years with him. Shortly after that the poor creature's mind began to wander, and he thought that little Joe Daly was indeed 'Jem,' and would lay with the child's hand in his—content and happy only when he was in the room. Father Luke gazed long into Susan Pennywell's shadowed countenance.

'Had you not found him he would have died unshriven, Susan,' he said.

'Jem and Kittie were taking care of that, Cousin Luke.'

'And you forgive him, Susan?' he asked; there was a thrill in his voice. 'You forgive him—after all?'

'He led me a hard life, I know,' she answered. 'But his own life's been harder since, and I felt that Kittie and Jem would pray for his soul. Yes; it isn't anything but the soul that counts. Every day 'twas my prayer that God would listen to his two innocent children—'

'He certainly has,' said Father Luke, thoughtfully. 'He certainly has.'

'After all,' said the priest, 'we each have our apostolate.'

But there was a new feeling of reverence always in his thoughts for the cheerful woman who had so cheerfully wiped out from her memory, for the sake of one man's soul, all those long, long years of ill-treatment and neglect.—Benziger's Magazine.

A BOY'S GOOD DEED

Money was not very plentiful in the Walcott family—that is to say, though there was enough for actual needs, the luxuries of life had either to be earned or to be done without.

Six-year-old Tommy knew this quite as well as did the elder members of the household, and therefore as he felt that he really could not do without the miniature motor car that, when wound up, ran all along the counter of the big toy shop in—steet, he plainly saw that he must just set to work and earn the money that was the price of the coveted toy.

But a dollar is a large sum for a six-year-old to earn, even when father and mother do their best to help. The cents came slowly to swell his little hoard, for it was only by running errands in his playtime, and by helping his mother and sisters in the house, that he could earn anything, and it was with cents and dimes that his money box was filled.

So the fall passed by, and one day when the shops had on their Christmas faces, for it was the eve of the Nativity, Mrs. Walcott told Tommy that the time had come to break the little china dog that for so long had guarded his treasure. For a moment the thought of this damped all his pleasure as Tommy's heart was very tender, and he had little faith in the use of glue; but when he saw the dollar bill that his father was ready to give him in exchange for the contents of his poor doggie, he gave way, and at last—at long last—his desire was on the point of being accomplished, and he had the price of the toy for his own.

It was a proud moment for Tommy when he stood all ready to start on his shopping expedition, wrapped up in his thick coat and woollen muffler; and the cold, muddy streets seemed part of a very happy world to the little lad as he trudged manfully along at his mother's side.

The tram-car that they entered at the corner of their own street carried them right away into the city, and for some time Tommy's attention was taken up watching the passers-by. Then, when the light outside began to fade, he turned his eyes on his fellow-travellers, leaning up against his mother's warm cloak as he did so. There were the usual mixture of people sitting on either side of the conveyance, but it was a boy of about his own age that he found the most interesting. Unconsciously his hand tightened in his mother's and he sat straight up and stared at the child opposite.

The threadbare suit that the other boy wore was torn and patched and torn again; a cotton rag of a shirt, collarless, buttonless, left the thin neck bare to the bitter wind that blew through the doorway; the blue-red hands were stuffed into the ragged pockets in vain hopes of getting a little warmth into their numbness; and through the gaping holes in the tattered remnants of boots the toes were plainly visible. The mother seemed no less wretched, and one wondered to see them in the tram at all.

But Tommy only looked at the poor boy, and as Mrs. Walcott stole a glance at the baby face that she knew so well she felt what was passing in her son's mind as clearly as he did himself. The color deepened in the soft rounded cheeks, the eye grew big and pitiful; every detail of the street Arab's misery seemed to be slowly impressing itself on Tommy's mind.

He looked down at his own strong leather boots; then at the tattered footgear opposite. Hesitatingly he opened the fingers that clasped the dollar bill which he had earned, which he had given his playtime for weeks and weeks to earn. The sight of it brought back the remembrance of what it was to buy, and every attraction of the toy came back to him. Once more his hand closed, a little stubborn line showed round his mouth and he raised his head half defiantly, but in so doing he met the sad, hungry look in the child's eyes opposite, and again his expression changed. His eyelids quivered and his lips began to tremble; then, with a sudden rush, as if afraid of his resolution giving way, he scrambled from his seat and darted to the poor boy's side.

'Buy boots,' he said; and, thrusting his cherished bill into the grimy hand, he was back in his seat again before any one but his mother realised what he had done. But he did not lean against her now; he had acted by himself and he must bear the consequences alone. And something seemed to engross his attention out in the street, for he turned his head right away and pressed his face against the glass; yet if the truth were known, he saw nothing of all that passed, for the sight in his eyes was blurred and misted with tears. He had fought and conquered, but the victory had its sting.

Mrs. Walcott had watched the struggle and its sequel with a beating heart and a choking in her throat, but she said nothing, only she put her arm round her little hero and held him tight.

She was not the only witness of the act: the other passengers had seen it too. A big, prosperous looking man stood up and spoke aloud.

'Ladies and gentlemen,' he said, and his voice was rather husky. 'Shall we let that baby shame us?' And diving down into his capacious pockets he pulled out a handful of loose change, and putting it into his hat he passed it round to his fellow-travellers, who all followed his example, and added more or less to its contents.

The little cold boy, not following what was going on, received the money in a half-dazed silence, and even