

for a long minute, her small, sunburned, hands folded on her lap, and one little foot swaying slowly.

'I'll be right back,' she said, rising suddenly. 'It won't take me long to run home, and I know mama'll let me come.'

Guarded by Angels.

A TRUE STORY.

(By M. S. Burke, in 'The Independent'.)

'It is folly to work here for seventeen dollars a month, when I can get double elsewhere,' said John, in an apologetic tone, as he strapped his carpet-bag fast to a stout hickory stick.

'I know it, my son, replied his mother. 'But it is very hard to let you go away alone like this; a mere boy, among strangers.'

'I am twenty-one,' said he, drawing himself up proudly.

'And at that age a boy feels older than his mother, and father both,' said his father, slapping his fine, stalwart son, good-naturedly on the shoulder.

'Oh, I know I'm not Methuselah,' John replied with a laugh; 'but, then, a boy at twenty-one is a man, in law, and should know how to take care of himself, if ever he will.'

'I only wish I were going along,' said Harrison, the next younger, a lad of twelve.

'Me do, too,' piped the baby reaching out her chubby hands toward her brother, as though ready to start at once.

'That's right, my little Florilla,' said John, dropping his carpet-bag, and catching her in his arms to give her the toss she so dearly loved. 'You might go if mother can spare her little girl.'

'Mother cannot spare one of her brood,' said the mother, with a suspicious tremble in her voice.

'Well, I will not be gone long; only a year or two, at most,' said John, with an air of bravado somewhat out at the elbows. 'And I shall be all right, too; I can easily foot the thirty miles to Pittsburg, with a lift now and then from teamsters on the road, and then I shall take the cars as far as my money goes, if necessary; for I mean to travel until I find a region where the man who ploughs brains is as valuable as the man who ploughs the earth, at least, if I have to walk all the way.'

'I think myself that you will do better among strangers, John,' said the father; for it is not alone a want of appreciation of the value of education that you have to contend with here, but the familiarity of old acquaintance, too; for "A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country," you know.'

'Well, I must be off now,' said John, putting baby down and looking wistfully around the homely apartment, that served at once for parlor, library, family sitting-room and the old folks' bed-chamber. Never had the little log house of four rooms looked so beautiful; for he was about to leave it, and it was home. This was the first parting, too, and this Christian household was an affectionate, united family. In fact a large part of the religion taught by their old-fashioned Church was love, human love — the kind that teaches its disciples to bear each other's burdens. Such people never part lightly, for parting is a serious thing, that might be forever. So as John went from one to the other of that little group he embraced and kissed each one, father and brothers, as well as mother and sisters, while great tears were streaming down his cheeks. He was not ashamed of those tears either; and, in fact, he had plenty of company, for they all wept with him.

'It will be a year, at least, before I see it

all again,' glancing around the room, where everything looked so pure and clean, with a touch of art in the little attempts at ornamentation, which made it apparent that somebody there had a keen eye for the beautiful. That cleanliness is next to godliness, was also a part of their unpretending creed; but the belief that 'Pride goeth before a fall,' had usually sternly repressed the love of art in their sect lest it prove a pitfall and a snare. But John had an artistic sense that would not be repressed, and the simple ornaments had all been purchased out of his salary, notwithstanding the fact that he had been hoarding for months, to get the means to start out into the wide world to seek his fortune. There was a look of keen regret in the boy's blue eyes that shone through the tears, as he took it all in, and then walking to the door leading into the other of the two lower rooms, viewed the dining-room and kitchen combined, the wide, open fireplace, the embers smouldering beneath the blackened crane, the deal table, as white as soap and water, aided by sand and Pennsylvania industry could make it, the window with its snowy sash-curtain drawn aside to let the sunshine in on a pot of verbenas, bringing the rebellious artistic spirit even into the kitchen; for John had inherited his love of the beautiful from his mother, although her plain costume of gray stuff, with three-cornered white kerchief pinned across her bosom, gave small hint of that fact.

He was only twenty-one; but he had a man's purpose to conquer fate, a good education, and temperate habits; so his youthful air-castles were built on a somewhat practical plan.

He had in the carpet-bag, just strapped to his stout walking-stick, a change of clean linen, made by his mother's own hands, too, so warranted not to rip; he was provided, also, with a substantial luncheon in the capacious pocket of his coat; and his mother put a bible into the pocket on the other side.

'To balance it properly,' she said. 'And there is one passage in this book which has always seemed very beautiful to me: "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone;" which proves very conclusively to my mind that the angels do watch over those who are committed to their care.'

'Well, good-bye mother,' said John, with a toll-tale quaver in his voice, slinging the stick, with carpet-bag attachment, across his shoulders.

'Farewell, my son, May the good angels guard my boy when Mother can no longer minister to him! I shall ask it every day of him,' she concluded, clasping her care-worn hands upon her breast and raising her tearful eyes heavenward.

'Oh, I'll be all right; never fear, Mother,' John answered, as he strode out of the gate, waving a last farewell, then disappeared down the road.

'I feel just like going with him,' said Harrison. 'It don't seem fair for him to go off alone like that, while we are all here together.'

'He has the Lord with him, children; don't forget that, though I did myself a while ago,' said the mother, 'and it is that thought which gives me courage to let him go at all, Isn't it so with you, father?' But the father had disappeared, for men are wont to hide their grief.

Alas! if they knew the dangers through which their loved one would pass inside of a fortnight they would have needed more than ever all the courage they could call up.

What a sight for our country lad was the busy depot at Pittsburg, with the panting

engines, the rattling trucks and the hurrying people; and his heart gave a great plunge that almost suffocated him as the train started at last. How queer it all was, as trees, houses and towns seemed to fly past; and the strange experience soon dried his tears, the ephemeral tears of youth.

Then suddenly the train stopped and there was a strange commotion outside. He arose, and going out on the platform was horrified to learn that a hand-car on which six men were riding had been run down by his train, and five of the men instantly killed.

And he seemed to hear his mother's voice saying, 'I shall ask it every day of him'; and John thought, 'I wonder if anyone prayed for them.'

At Delaware, O., he stopped off to try his chances, and finding no vacancy, decided to go on at once; but as no train was due for several hours, he concluded to while away the time by a visit to the county fair, then in progress; and the many exhibits he saw there gave another new experience, while some of them were a great treat to his art-loving nature.

But here he was again brought face to face with death, as standing in the crowd around a stationary engine, it exploded, killing eleven persons, while he remained unscathed.

'May the good angels guard my boy when Mother can no longer minister unto him,' he whispered, with a look of awe upon his face; for a young man about his own age was stricken right at his side.

He pushed on that same evening toward Circleville, where he attended a political meeting next day—the church meetings at home being the only kind of gatherings known to him, hitherto—and his pulses began to tingle at the wild huzzas that rent the air, from each faction in their turn, as their favorites made what seemed to them good points. It was a debate between 'Sunset' Cox and Samuel Galloway, and the keen wit of the former was a treat, indeed, to the country lad, with his sober training.

Here the railway ended, and he took the stage to Chillicothe. This consumed the last of his money, save a few dollars to furnish food; at Chillicothe, therefore, he took to the road, walking along the tow-path of the canal, and, crossing over the river to the Kentucky side, on a flatboat attached to a rope that stretched from shore to shore, he went up to Greenupburg, and passed the examination there with credit; but the engagement was given to another aspirant. So concluding that the towns were scarcely the place for so primitive a teacher, he made up his mind to temper his ambition and content himself with a country school; and as he had heard that an examination was about to take place at Wheelersburg, O., for teachers in the country schools, he retraced his way as far as Ironton.

It was now late in the afternoon; but if he tarried until morning it would take his last cent to pay for a night's lodging; so he crossed the river again and started over the mountain that lay in his route, whistling to keep his courage up, as he trudged along. But how dark and lonely the way became as the day waned, for the moon was on the other side of the hill, and as the shadows fell thicker and blacker, they seemed to enwrap him in a mantle of doubt, as well as of darkness, and he felt a sudden, overpowering dread, of something, he knew not what. 'I shall ask it every day of him'; the sweet words breathed through his heart. 'She prayed for me to-day,' he said, 'I am not afraid'; and he strode on, his step growing firmer and more assured.

But suddenly he became aware that he was no longer in the path. Frequent ob-