

blue eyes were raised to his astonished gaze, but a voice that old man Toop would never forget vibrated through the log schoolhouse. 'I found the ball, and throwed it, sir,' said Johnny Toop; 'and I'm here to take three thrashin's—one for smashin' the window, one for upsettin' the ink, and one for not bein' fair and square.'

'You?' cried the teacher, 'you, Johnny Toop?'

'Good morning, sir,' said old man Toop a little later, as he shook hands vigorously with the young school-teacher outside the door of the log schoolhouse wherein the best speller had just been thrashed. 'I come down here to listen to Johnny spell such long words as "patter" and "clatter" and the like, and I heered him all right, though he done it in a voice as timid as his mother's. And this day I seen Johnny Toop thrashed by the teacher, but first I heerd some'n better'n the spellin'; I heerd him with my own ears prove himself honest like every one of the Toops, and I'm proud and happy to be his grandfather. Good mornin', sir.'

Inside the schoolhouse, sitting at a rude desk on a small part of a rude little bench, was Johnny Toop, with a new strange life within him—the courage of the Toops swelling his veins.—Louise R. Baker, in the 'Sunday School Visitor.'

Good Friends Afterwards.

In the early part of his ministry, Spurgeon was asked to preach in a neighboring village, and when he arrived on Sunday morning Mr. Brown, the pastor, said:

'I did not know you were such a boy, or I would not have asked you to preach.'

'Well,' was the reply, 'I can go back.'

'But,' said Mr. Brown, 'the people have come from all parts in all kinds of vehicles'; and then he put his hands under his coat tails, and asked what the world was coming to when boys of this age went about preaching.

However, 'the boy' did preach; and Mr. Brown sat on the pulpit stairs.

Spurgeon read a passage from Proverbs and upon coming to the words, 'The hoary head is a crown of glory,' he said he doubted that, for he knew a man with a grey head, who could hardly be civil; but the passage went on to say, 'If it be found in the way of righteousness,' and that, he said, was a different thing.

When he came down from the pulpit, Mr. Brown said to him:

'Bless your heart! I have been thirty years a minister, and I was never better pleased with a sermon; but you are the sauciest dog that ever barked in a pulpit'; and they were good friends afterwards.—Australian 'Christian World.'

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A Recitation.

This helpful poem, by C. F. Richardson, will make a beautiful recitation or reading for the meeting.

If suddenly upon the street
My gracious Saviour I should meet,
And He should ask, 'As I love thee,
What love hast thou to offer me?'
Then what could this poor heart of mine
Dare offer to that heart divine?

His eye would pierce my outward show,
His thought my inmost thought would know;
And if I said, 'I love Thee, Lord,'
He would not heed my spoken word,
Because my daily life would tell
If verily I loved Him well.

If on the day or in the place
Wherein He met me face to face
My life could show some kindness done,
Some purpose formed, some work begun,
For His dear sake, then it were meet
Love's gift to lay at Jesus' feet.

Half a Point Wrong.

A gentleman crossing the English channel stood near to the helmsman. It was a calm and pleasant evening, and no one dreamed of a possible danger to their ship, when a sudden flapping of a sail, as if the wind had shifted, caught the ear of the officer on watch, and he sprang at once to the wheel, examining closely the compass. 'You are a half point off the course!' he said sharply to the man at the wheel. The deviation was corrected, and the officer returned to his post.

'You must steer very accurately,' said the on-looker, 'when only a half point is so much thought of.'

'Ah! half a point in many places might bring us directly on the rocks,' he said.

So it is in life. Half a point from strict truthfulness strands us upon the rocks of falsehood. Half a point from perfect honesty, and we are steering for the rock of crime. And so of kindred vices. The beginnings are always small.—'Christian Standard.'

How the Rainy Day Cleared for the Girls.

(Annie James, in the Brooklyn 'Eagle'.)

'Oh, mercy me! It's pouring rain! Isn't it just too bad for anything?' And Jenny Burton sprang out of bed and ran to the window to look down on a street that was sheltered overhead with umbrellas and made disagreeable under foot by a beating downpour of rain.

'Well, I'm glad it's Saturday and we are not obliged to go to school,' said half-awake Margaret, rubbing her blue eyes open as she sat on the edge of the bed. 'My goodness!—it is raining pitchforks, isn't it, though?' And Margaret came to the window to see the splatter of drops that washed in a torrent against the panes. 'We are lucky to be able to stay indoors—that's one thing to be thankful for.' And Margaret returned, yawning, to the bed and sat down to draw on her stockings.

'Why, goosie, don't you remember to-day is the date set for our going to the woods to gather autumn leaves and cat-tails?' asked Jenny, with some impatience in her voice. 'I feel vexed enough to cry, so I do.'

'Oh, so to-day is the day,' replied Margaret, now getting fully awake. Then a cloud of disappointment spread over her pretty face. 'Pshaw—it is provoking!'

'Yes, it is,' asserted Jenny. 'I always feel

blue when I can't get out. And I particularly dislike staying indoors on Saturday—the only day we can call our own during the school session.'

But just then their mother entered the room to see if her little daughters were dressed for breakfast. 'Oh, mamma, isn't it just too mean for anything—this horrid rain?' cried Margaret. 'We had planned to have such a jolly time—and here is this hateful weather putting a stop to everything.'

'Why, dearie, the old earth must have her baths, regularly, or she would get bald-headed; that is to say, nothing would grow on her surface. We depend on crops for food and beautiful flowers. Those things depend on the rain to feed them. But—come, cheer up! I've got bright news for you. Since it is raining so that you must abandon your country excursion Fate has been a good old dame and sent us a scrap of good news. Who do you suppose is coming to-day?'

Both little girls stopped in the midst of their toilet and began to guess. 'It can't be—Cousin Ned?' And Jenny looked for answer in her mother's face.

'Oh, it is Cousin Ned?' exclaimed Margaret, her voice hopeful.

'No one else,' said their mamma. 'I just had a wire from him saying he would be here to spend Saturday and Sunday with us. He arrives on the 11 o'clock train.'

'Oh, goody, goody!' cried little Margaret, dancing about the room with one shoe on and one foot bare. 'I don't care if it rains snakes and toads—if only Cousin Ned will be here. Won't we have a jolly time?'

'Oh, it's a lot nicer to have Cousin Ned than sunshine and a trip to the country—he's always so jolly.' And Jenny lent her enthusiasm to her sister's.

'And why is it that everyone wants your Cousin Ned?' asked mamma. 'Don't you think it is because he is always so bright and happy under all circumstances? Rain or shine he finds plenty to do to entertain himself and any others who might be about him?'

'Yes, mamma, dear, you are right.' And Jenny brushed a stubborn tangle out of her fair hair. 'I'm going to try to cultivate a "Cousin-Ned disposition," so I am.'

'Now, I'm going to let you two girls fix up the guest chamber for Cousin Ned. That will keep you pretty busy if you get it done before his arrival,' said their mother. 'Ned loves a cheerful room to keep in tune with his cheerful thoughts. I'll trust to your taste to make the apartment cozy.'

After breakfast the two little girls ran up stairs to the guest chamber and began their preparation for the coming most welcome visitor.

'We'll put a lot of bright cushions on the couch and in the big chair by the grate,' suggested Margaret. 'And we'll bring one of the hall palms up for the bay window and a lot of flowers for the mantel.'

'Yes, and all the late magazines from the library, so Cousin Ned may run through them while alone, if he wishes to,' suggested Jenny, as she pinned a pretty tidy of her own making on the back of a rocker.

And so they worked away, robbing various rooms of bits of furniture, flowers and draperies, and at last, just as they were taking a farewell look to see if all was perfect, there sounded the hall bell. Down the stairs the two happy girls flew to meet Cousin Ned on the hall threshold and to be grabbed up in his great, strong, damp arms, for all the world as though he were a bear.

'Heigh-ho!' he cried in his cheery voice as