

'But what can I do?' he asked, anxiously. 'I said I'd help you, but I don't see how I'm going to do it. Of course, I can turn around and behave myself, but that would be only a drop in the bucket. What can one do among so many?'

Miss Dexter spoke quickly. 'Never say that again, Joe. That idea does ever so much harm in the world; so many people neglect their duty because they think one does not amount to anything. One can do what is right; let the rest take care of itself.'

Joe still looked doubtful. 'I'll do my best for one,' he said, 'but I'm afraid it won't be much help.'

'Thank you, Joe,' said Miss Dexter, heartily. 'And now we must go; it will be dark soon.'

Two days later several boys were walking home from school. Joe Prentiss was one of them.

'What's come over you, Joe?' asked Alf Crosby. 'You behave like a model of propriety in school, and we can't get even a smile out of you. It's no fun sitting next to you any more.'

'That's so,' echoed the others. 'What has made this change of heart?'

Joe flushed a little. He wanted to tell about finding Miss Dexter in tears, but he was doubtful how the boys would take it. 'I've got sick of being a rowdy all the time,' he said. 'Our room is a disgrace to the whole building. It worries Miss Dexter like anything, and I don't think it's any way to treat a lady. I made up my mind that she shouldn't have any cause for complaint against me, for one. Besides, there's time enough for noise and fun outside of school hours. I'll beat you to my gate!' and with a wild whoop he went tearing down the road, the others after him.

From that time on there was a steady improvement in Miss Dexter's room. To be sure there was, now and then, a bad day; but, on the whole, the improvement was rapid. It was noticeable that the quietness and order began at Joe Prentiss's seat, gradually extending like a widening circle till it included the whole room.

Miss Dexter often felt Joe's eyes following her anxiously, and when any little unpleasantness occurred she noticed that it seemed to fret him a good deal.

One night Joe came back to the school-room after the class had been dismissed.

'Do you think we are doing any better, Miss Dexter?' he asked, going up to the desk where she was at work.

'Yes, indeed!' said Miss Dexter emphatically. 'You are doing nobly. You see now what one can do. If it had not been for you I should have had to resign.'

'I think there's still room for improvement,' said Joe. Then, hesitatingly, 'Do you ever get discouraged now?' and he looked at her searchingly.

'No,' she answered, coloring a little. 'I haven't cried once since that time you caught me at it.'

'That's good,' said Joe, and he went out and clattered down the stairs, whistling as he went.

Miss Dexter smiled as she listened. 'He must have forgotten to be quiet,' she said, 'but I will overlook it this time, he has done so much for the school and for me.'

## Freezing Out.

(Frank H. Sweet, in the 'Presbyterian Banner'.)

Thomas Brady and Patrick Lawson were bright, energetic young men who had received their business training in the same house. They had entered as cash boys and gone up step by step until they were thirty, and by that time they had saved enough to go into business for themselves in a modest way.

A booming town in the West was selected as the scene of their operations, and it so happened that they rented stores on the same street and exactly opposite each other. Goods were purchased and clerks engaged, and then they resorted to the various means known to experienced salesmen to attract trade. Elaborate displays were made in their show windows, and dodgers and posters and newspaper advertising were resorted to freely.

They were shrewd and discriminating buyers, as well as good salesmen; but there their similarity ended. Brady instructed his clerks to 'watch for the A-1 trade.' And Lawson told his to treat all customers alike. Within a week Brady's clerks knew that they must not let nice scruples interfere with business, and Lawson's were equally well aware that anything but a straightforward course would cause their prompt dismissal.

The town of Rustle was in the second stage of its evolution, and ladies in seal-skin sacques and rancheros in spurs and revolvers, mingled freely on the sidewalk with blanketed Indians and rough, unshaven men from the mines. Dress was the last thing an 'old stager' would take as an indication of a person's wealth or position.

But new arrivals were apt to learn this by slow degrees, and Brady's policy often got him into corners from which only ready tact and quick wit could extricate him.

One day a rough-looking, heavily bearded old man came in, accompanied by a plainly-dressed woman, whose face was hidden by a sunbonnet. A clerk was standing behind the nearest counter, paring his nails. Brady was at his desk writing.

The couple waited patiently for some minutes, then the old man rapped sharply on the counter. But at that moment a carriage stopped at the entrance and a richly dressed woman swept in, followed by an attendant. Brady looked up significantly and the clerk hurried forward with an obsequious bow.

The old man and his wife waited another ten minutes, then the richly dressed woman turned petulantly from the counter, saying that country stores were a nuisance, anyway, and that she would send to the city and have her ribbon matched. The clerk shrugged his shoulders and sauntered lazily toward the old couple.

'Anything I can do for you, daddy?' he inquired.

'No, I reckon not,' the old man answered, shortly. 'We jest came in here for the fun of it. Still, I s'pose you might let the old woman have a paper o' pins. I never like to go into a store without buyin' suthin'.'

The pins were wrapped up, and as the

couple left the store Brady laughed sarcastically.

'It'll be a good thing to freeze out that kind of people,' he said. 'They just take up room and bother other customers, and their trade isn't worth shucks.'

More customers came in, and the clerks were kept busy for some time; then there was a temporary lull, and they went to the entrance in search of fresh air. Presently they were joined by Brady.

A waggon stood in front of the opposite store, and the clerks were regarding it listlessly.

'Rather an ancient looking vehicle,' one of them said.

'But a magnificent pair of horses,' another remarked. 'Hello! here comes the old man, and the woman in the sunbonnet. Reckon they have been after some pins.'

'Got trusted for them, likely,' said the first clerk. 'No,' as the old man unfastened the horses and turned the waggon wheels so that his wife could climb in, 'if there isn't Smithers coming out with his arms full of bundles. And—great Scott! Thompson following with his arms full, and Lawson coming behind with his arms full and his face as smiling as though he'd sold out half the store.'

Brady did not say anything, but the sarcastic expression had left his face. He watched the old man climb in and pick up the reins.

'Hello there, Pat!' he called suddenly, as the waggon whirled down the street, half hidden by a cloud of dust, 'who is that old codger?'

Patrick Lawson made a few notes in a book he carried before answering.

'Why, that's Primus Biglow, the great land owner, who lives up the river,' he called back, cheerily. 'He owns half the ranches in the country, and more mines than you can count. He's a fine man, and makes himself as common as common folks. He told me that his daughters were coming back from the East, where they have been educated, and that the silks and jewellery and things he has bought are for them. He seemed very much pleased with the goods, and said that I should have all his trade after this. He has been having things sent from the city but tells me that he would rather buy in the home market if he can find goods to suit. Come over and let me show you the list I have sold him—nearly a thousand dollars' worth. Best day's work I've done since I've been here.'

Brady only shook his head and muttered a dolorous 'Land o' Goshen!' under his breath, as he turned abruptly and went back into the store. But his clerks noticed that he never said any more about 'freezing out.'

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