

He had stroked Bessie's hair, but Bessie had escaped from his touch and run to her mother. He had tried, too, to make friends with Baby Carl, but had failed, as the tender-hearted, timid child was afraid of him. Billy, looking on, pitied his father, so he sought in some way to speak a word of comfort.

"Father," said he, gently, "we're going to have an entertainment to-night at Thorn Hall; I'm going to take part, and I'd like to have you come and hear me. Will you?"

"What can you do—a drunkard's son? And what would I do—a drunkard—in Thorn Hall?"

"I'm going to make a speech, father. As for you, I wouldn't want you to go as a drunkard; but you're sober. I'll cut your hair and brush up your clothes, and—and—father, you're nice-looking when you're sober. I wouldn't be ashamed of you anywhere."

Mr. Duncan's lips quivered, his heart being touched with the tenderness of Billy's words and tone. But he asked:

"What are you going to make a speech about, drunkenness? If you are, I won't go."

"Oh, no, father; I'm not going to say a word on that subject. I'm going to talk about George Washington."

"What do you know about him?" wonderingly.

"Harry Thorn lent me a book, 'Life of George Washington,' and I studied it up to please the boys, they've been so kind to me. They were kind enough to say I'm the best speaker in the Boys' Brigade. I hope I am, for mother's sake."

"Why?" with interest.

"Because there is a rich uncle of Harry Thorn's going to be there, and he's to give a prize to the boy who makes the best speech."

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Thorn Hall was brilliantly illuminated, and all was expectation, although there were present the usual number of croakers, who prophesied, "the whole thing would be a failure," and said dismally: "What else can you expect when a lot of boys get up an entertainment?"

Presently the "New Band" struck up a grand march, a beautiful thing, and from behind a curtain the Boys' Brigade, in the full glory of blue broadcloth and gilt buttons, marched on the stage and took seats.

Next, Harry Thorn, as president of the society, made a pleasant address of welcome in his genial, winsome way.

This was followed by a cornet solo by Sam Weller, after which a bright paper on "Washington and '76," was read. The new band played again, and the curtain dropped. When the latter was raised again, a series of tableaux on the "Life of Washington," were given. Then the Brigade sung some stirring songs. It was now time for the prize contest.

Six boys took part, the best speakers of the Boys' Brigade. As it was announced that a cash prize would be given to the best speaker, great interest and close attention was given to the speeches. One after another of the competitors came forward, made a speech and retired, until all but one had spoken. Last of all came Billy.

Glancing downward upon the sea of faces, he caught his mother's eyes with their loving, proud look, and his father's expression of amusement. From that moment he seemed inspired. He had not a moment to linger, but although no words of prayer formed in his heart, the burden of his desire went up to God, as if he had said: "Oh, Lord, help me, for mother's sake!"

All eyes were upon him. He made a fine appearance—a beautiful boy, with earnest, glowing eyes and waving brown hair, and dressed in a new blue military suit. But his speech far outstripped his competitors, it was so bright, so earnest, so interesting that when it was over, the other speakers could not wait for the verdict of the committee, but rushed forward and lifted him to their shoulders amidst the clapping of the audience, while the band struck up the "March of the Victor."

I wish I could tell you of the speech made by Harry Thorn's uncle, the generous man who gave the "George Washington Prize," but it would take too long. The prize was fifty dollars in gold. Billy paid Mr. Lake for his own clothes after all, for he told the boys he would rather do so, and the rest of the money was given, with great joy, to "mother."

But I cannot stop without telling you of another great joy that came to faithful Billy. His father was so touched and stirred by Billy's appearance on the stage that eventful night, so proud of his bright speech and engaging ways, that he resolved, with God's help, to be worthy of such a son as Billy.—*Lutheran Evangelist*.

Even a child is known by his doings, whether they be pure and whether they be right.