

on the sermon; he was glad when it came to an end. After the benediction he stood waiting with his Bible and his Sunday school quarterly in his hand. Friends were quietly greeting one another on all sides, but no one spoke to him; he felt more than ever that he was an alien and did not belong there. A picture of the little home church came to his mind, and he would have given much to be there, where every one was his friend. Each moment increased his homesickness until it seemed almost unbearable.

Suddenly he realized that he was still standing there while the church was almost empty. He looked irresolutely from the quarterly in his hand to what he concluded must be the door to the Sunday school rooms, but somehow he did not have sufficient courage to go through it. So he walked down the aisle and on out of doors, a very lonely, homesick boy, with a vague feeling of disappointment.

All that afternoon the feeling of being friendless in the great, busy, unheeding city grew upon him. When evening came and the bell rung for the Young People's Meeting, he was irresolute. At home he had been a member of the society and had always attended the meetings, and he had expected as a matter of course to do the same here in the city, but with the memory of his experience that morning strong in his mind it seemed to require a great deal of courage to go to the strange church and hunt up the room where the meeting was to be held.

So it ended by his sitting still in his room, a prey to homesickness and the blues for some time. He roused himself before church time, however, and started out for the evening service fifteen minutes ahead of time, determined to arrive early enough to get a seat without needing to disturb any one.

The church was vacant when he reached it, so he chose a seat, sat down, and waited with a feeling of security. Soon the congregation began to arrive. Presently a man accompanied by two ladies stopped at the seat where Fred sat and looked at him disapprovingly—evidently, it was their pew he has chosen. After a moment's hesitation the trio filed into the pew and sat down, but Fred felt himself decidedly an interloper.

At the close of the service once more no one spoke to him, and he left the church and went to his room, glad the day was over at last. All the week he had felt friendless in the great city, but this Sunday had been worse than all the other days put together.

As the weeks went by, he did not grow less homesick, as he had hoped. It was not so bad during the days, for he was busy then, but before the end of the long, lonesome evenings he was always in the depths of the blues. He cared little for reading, and the long hours alone in his room dragged by drearily. The young men with whom he worked frequently invited him to spend an evening with them, but learning that cards were their principal amusement he had always refused. He had attended church regularly at First Church, but had not made a single acquaintance there, and did not feel any more at home there than he had that first Sunday.

Finally one evening when he was more than usually homesick, and the four walls of his room had become hateful to him, Hal Conwell, the young man who had the counter next to his at the store, looked in on him. 'What in the world is the use of your moping away your time here?' Hal exclaimed, looking at him disapprovingly. 'Get your hat and come along with me. The boys are going to have a little spread to-night and there'll be no end of fun. What is the use of your being so scared of a pack of cards and a little beer; they won't hurt you any. Come along like a sensible fellow.'

Fred jumped up impulsively. It seemed to him that he simply could not stay in that room another hour. Then, again, he must have friends somewhere; if the young people at the church would have nothing to do with him, why what was the use of

refusing to be friendly with those who were willing to be friendly? He took his hat and went with Hal.

He threw himself into the enjoyment of the evening with his whole heart. The ready wit and genial manner that had always made him a social favorite at home quickly won his way here, and the boys readily adopted him as one of themselves.

But the next morning he felt troubled. He had refused to touch the beer the evening before, but he had taken his first lesson in card playing and his conscience took him severely to task. 'I don't want to get into the habit of doing that sort of thing, but I'm afraid I will go again, it's so wretchedly lonesome staying here in my room from one week's end to another,' he thought dejectedly.

So when Hal Conwell met him on his way to his boarding place the next Saturday afternoon and called out gaily, 'We're depending on you for Monday evening don't fail us,' Fred answered in a non-committal way, 'Well, I'll see.' But in his heart he knew that he would probably be 'there with the boys.'

Sunday morning he made up his mind not to go to church. 'It doesn't do me a bit of good. I only feel worse than if I stayed at home,' he told himself fretfully as he picked up the Sunday newspaper and sat down to read.

But habit is strong, and he could not keep his father's parting words from ringing in his ears. They would not let him rest, so presently he threw down his paper and got ready for church. When he reached the sidewalk he hesitated a moment, then turned in the opposite direction from that which he usually took, and went down toward the Vine Street Church.

He was a few minutes late this morning, as he had been that first morning that he had gone to First Church. Remembering his experience that morning he was tempted to turn back, but thinking better of it opened the door and stepped in. A smiling usher took charge of him and seated him beside a young man of about his own age, who at once supplied him with a song book and afterward shared his Bible with him during the responsive reading, for Fred had gotten out of the habit of carrying his Bible to church with him.

Fred settled down to listen to the sermon with an entirely different feeling than he had had any Sunday before since he left home. There seemed to be something different in the atmosphere—a homelike feeling that went straight to the heart of the homesick boy.

At the close of the service the young man beside him turned with outstretched hand, inquired his name, and introduced himself as Robert Strong. 'We are glad to see you here,' he said heartily, 'and now I want you to meet some of our people.'

Fred quickly found himself the centre of a cordial group, who welcomed him heartily, and gave him many invitations to stay to Sunday school. 'Of course, he's going in with me now to join our class,' Robert Strong said. 'At least, I think he is,' he added with a laugh, turning to Fred.

'I'll be very glad to,' Fred answered sincerely.

So he found himself once more a member of a bright, wide-awake Sunday school class. Mr. Dale, the teacher of the class, welcomed him heartily, and at once made a note of his address, while Robert introduced him to the other members of the class. It seemed like the old home days to Fred, and the weeks between when he had been fast drifting away from church seemed like an ugly dream.

'I'll call for you this evening, if you will come to our Young People's Meeting with me,' Robert said at the close of Sunday school. 'We have interesting meetings, and I am sure you will enjoy them.'

Fred gladly consented; just then Mr. Dale claimed his attention. 'I should be pleased to see you at my home to-morrow evening, Mr. Kent,' he said; 'our class meets with me to spend a social evening once a month, and to-morrow evening is their time for coming. May I expect you?'

'I shall be most pleased to come,' Fred replied heartily. Then there came to his

mind a swift memory of that other invitation for the same evening—that he had almost accepted, and he wondered how he could have thought of spending another evening in that way. 'But the boys were friendly to me anyway, and I won't forget it,' he thought quickly. 'I'll try to get them to come here to church with me, and if I'm not mistaken these people will find some better way for them to spend their time.'

The Stream.

(By Clinton Scollard.)

Far in a forest's ferny fastnesses
It bursts from under-earth, brims a dim pool,
Leaps down a ledge, then, glinting clear and cool,
Darts from the shrouding shadows of the trees.

It cleaves both marsh and mead, by slow degrees
Widening and deepening; owns the sway and rule
Of curbing circumstances, though not its tool,
Joining the calm of the unplumbed seas.

Thus with the current of our lives, so small
In its unknown beginnings, waxing great
As it goes winding through the stress of years,
Guided by some divine, o'er-brooding Fate,
Until it joins the ocean that we call
Eternity, beyond God's swinging spheres.

There is always a kind of man who makes easy jests at the small beginnings of great enterprises. Sidney Smith laughed at 'consecrated cobblers' going out to convert the world with a few pounds laid on a green-covered table in a little village in Northamptonshire. But most great things begin small.—Alexander Maclaren.



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