

'Wrong!' as 'Humpty Dumpty' did on Alice,' for she had not mentioned the number of children at all.

'Ridiculous!' he exclaimed, 'I like my lodgekeeper to be either a widow without children, or someone with decent grown-up children. Five children, indeed! Where is your conscience, Madam?'

'There are three boys,' Ray went on calmly; 'they could be trained for gardeners, and could be very useful even while young; they must all go to school, of course, for a while, then I should like to take Mattie into the house and train her for something useful, and Mrs. Brown would be willing, I am sure, to do the same for Polline.'

'Upon my word, Mrs. Malton!' exclaimed Mr. Willis, 'you seem to have settled things very nicely! Well! Let the woman come to see me, and we'll see what can be done.'

Mattie's astonishment was great when Theodore Malton asked for her address the next day, and when she got home on the following day she found such a state of excitement as there had never been in the small home before, not even when she had gone to the seaside.

'A lady come,' explained her mother, 'a beautiful lady, what was dressed lovely; she axes me was I Mrs. Smith, and I says I were; she says "May I come in, Mrs. Smith?" I wants to talk somethink over with you,' so I axes 'er in, and she tells me as it was 'er husband that yer bought that there pink cup for, 'im as is yer reg'lar. She said as they wouldn't never forget it, and as they wanted to do summut to 'elp us. She axes me 'ow many we was, and if my 'usband was dead, and I told 'er 'e was, but I didn't make no trouble about that, for I'd a deal rather 'ave 'im lyin' comfortable in the cemetery than 'avin' to go after 'im into pubs, as I 'ad to afore, I told 'er I didn't bear 'im no grudge, that 'e was the best of 'usbands if 'e could only 'ave left the drink alone, which 'e couldn't.' (It was easily discovered where Mattie got her loquacity from.) 'Then she hup and told me of a gent as she knew what wanted a woman for to keep his lodge. She said I must go to see 'im to-morrow, and she'd go with me. She give me money to pay my fare; it's eight miles away, and there a nice cottage to live in with a big garden, and there'd be good wages and the cottage rent free. She said as I must go clean and tidy, and she told me she would pay for a print dress for me to go in, and I'm to get one to-night. I can get it at one of them places where they sells servant's dress. Mattie! It's all along of you. If we gets it I hall feel that yer've made our fortunes. She said as yer must all go to school; then you and Poll could be taught 'ow to be sarvents, and the boys 'ow to be gardeners, for there was plenty wanted.'

'My!' cried Mattie. 'Oh, mother! To live in the country! To go to school!' Mattie could hardly contain herself, and she lay on her hard comfortless bed that night wide-awake but happy, dreaming some of the loveliest dreams she had ever dreamt.

The next day Mrs. Smith was met at the station by Mrs. Malton, and taken by her to Mr. Willis's, and Mr. Willis was pleased with the appearance of the careworn woman, in her clean print dress; he wanted, moreover, to please Mrs. Malton, and he engaged the woman whom she had brought under his notice, conditionally. She was to enter his employment straight away, provided he could get satisfactory references. 'The lady what sees as yer washes yerself, and as the babies is fed proper,' who proved to be the visitor of a local 'Health Society,' could speak for Mrs. Smith; also the Evangelist at a neighboring Mission Hall; and before many days had passed Mrs. Smith and her children were installed in the comfortable lodge attached to Mr. Willis's grounds, and the days of their life in that poor slum, and all its attendant misery were things of the past.

Mattie 'took to' her books as a duck takes to water, and got on well at school, and blossomed out into a healthy, happy girl, under more favorable conditions. She had one great ambition—a very great one it seemed to her—and that was to learn enough to one day become housemaid to Mrs. Malton. Then she would live under the same roof as her hero. All the good things of Mattie's life had come through her hero, she thought gratefully, and she felt richly rewarded for any effort she had made in school when Theodore Malton said pleasantly to her 'We are delighted, my

Good Times Ahead.

Are your skates sharp, boys? and your skating boots large enough for another year?

Jack and Harry and Bill and Herb started out one day last fall and had the best time ever. They had coasted down the long hill to the lake taking their skates just in case

and struck off on an exploring expedition of his own while the other three were having a hockey scrimmage. The first thing they knew of his going was a wild shout as he dropped through into icy water up to his shoulders. When they had got him out they forced him



—The 'Child's Companion.'

the ice would hold, and were rewarded by finding that in the sheltered bay where the long point kept off the wind, there was a fine bit of strong ice. Outside the point the ice had shoved and there was a weak streak, and here and there open water. The weak streak along the crack was the undoing of Herb, for he thought he knew better than the big brother who warned him not to go out there. He thought it would be all right along shore

to run all the long way up the hill in his icy clothes to keep him from taking cold. There was no need of any word from mother as she tucked him into bed to spend the rest of the bright day. He had learned his lesson that it did not pay to ignore the big brother's advice. Bill had learned something, too, for he decided that it was easier and better to take the small brother into the game than just warn him what not to do.

child! He was still unconscious that he was her hero, but she was unconscious that Theodore Malton looked on her with peculiar gratitude, because she had first led him to the knowledge of the joy of giving 'out-and-out.'

Mattie was not the only child whose life was made happier and easier because of Theodore Malton. It was surprising how many opportunities came into his life, now that his eyes were opened, and how much fuller and richer that life became because of them.

Seven years passed away, and then Mattie had her heart's desire granted to her. She had been taken into Mrs. Malton's service when she left school, and trained in various humble ways, and now was promoted into

being her housemaid. Mattie felt it a position worth having.

It was when her duties took her into Theodore Malton's 'sanctum' that Mattie was brought face to face with the past. On a handsome carved bracket she saw the pink cup and saucer, which, on the day that she had then thought the happiest of her life, she had brought her hero. It brought everything back to her so vividly, the weary anxious child to whom 'rent day' was such a pressing care, the hunger, the weariness, the crowded streets, and the kind voice which was the one cheering element of that lonely life. Tears sprang into Mattie's eyes; at twenty she looked upon that daring pink cup