

BOYS AND GIRLS

Only a Trifle.

(M. L. Ziegler, in the 'Sunday School Messenger'.)

(Concluded.)

'I rather like that tie myself. Yes, Tom, step in to-morrow after dinner and you can have one. I will get it at noon,' replied Sidney. After discussing a few more topics, the visitor left, shouting, 'Now, don't forget my neck-tie!' One of the unfortunate man's chief peculiarities was the way in which he asked for whatever he wished, whether it was five cents or the overcoat a man wore, and he was as delighted as a child when his desire was gratified.

As it was nearly closing time, the clerks began to clear off the counters for the night, and the two young men, as was their custom, worked together at the rear of the store. As it was right by the office, Mr. Griffin heard their conversation.

'Now, look here, Sid, what did old Tom mean? What are you going to give him now?' asked Robert in a displeased, but by no means, cross voice. 'He wears a Sunday shirt now just like you wear.'

'I know it, Bob, but how can I refuse the poor fellow? Think of it, I could give him all I owned, and yet I could never give him what he really needs, unimpaired intellect! I try to make his life as happy as I can,' replied Sidney.

'Well, that is a matter of opinion, but it does not help him, and what will Irene say? She will not be so pleased with your attentions when she sees your associate,' said Robert.

'If Irene finds fault with my trying to brighten Tom's life, I will be disappointed in Irene. She always had a pleasant word for Tom.'

'Yes, but what will she think when she sees him wearing a duplicate of your white shirt, and that new tie, which is splendid?'

'She will understand, and if she does not, I tell you she is not the girl I take her to be. She would do that much for an unfortunate demented girl. It does not hurt me, Bob, I can buy another tie in a week or so and he will be contented as long as his is bright-looking. Why don't you talk to him once in a while? You are a good fellow, old boy, but you will never chat with him.'

'I do not like to, that is all. I imagine that people will think me the same.'

'They will not. If people cannot tell the difference between us by our actions, then it is my own fault. Come on, let us straighten up these boxes over there, or they will fall. It is just 5.25, and we have but a few minutes before John locks up.'

The boys walked to the front part of the store, and Mr. Griffin heard no more. 'That settles it,' he said mentally, 'I was hoping that something would decide me in Sidney's favor, and I guess I have found it.' After the store was locked up and the employees had gone, he briskly stepped out of the front door, relocked it, and hurried home.

It was always a pleasure for him to go home. It had always been a place of refuge after the busy day. Not always quiet, for many years ago a little boy and girl had been cheerfully running about when he came in. But now they were married and in homes of their own, the son in business for himself, and the daughter living happily as a lawyer's wife. To-night he was in an unusual hurry, and when his wife came to the door to meet him, he said after his usual greeting, 'Lucille, Sidney gets the place, I am sure. But I will tell you about it.' Then he proceeded to relate as well as he could the conversation between the two boys.

'I was disappointed when I thought that Robert would have to have it, but now I am as pleased as I was sorry. Now that the matter is settled, should I tell the boys what decided me? Naturally they will wonder about it—they know how long I have studied the proposition.'

'For my part, Charles, I think you should tell them kindly. Sidney to encourage him in his course, and Robert that he may follow the same plan of kindness to all.'

'That would be right, I am sure. I will tell them in the morning. Now let us prepare for our guests.'

The next morning Mr. Griffin called the two young men into his office. 'Boys,' he began, 'you have known what I have been thinking about for some time. I have at last made the choice. You will wonder what has decided me in my selection. I would gladly have given you both the opportunity, but that is impossible. You have both been so well fitted for the situation that a trifle was needed to settle the question. Sidney's gift of a neck-tie to poor old Tom was the deed that settled it. I tell you both that you may see how so small a thing counts in a large world. Remember "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me" and profit by those words.'

'Sidney, I will be at the branch with you Monday to show you your new duties. Robert, I will give you an increase in salary of 25 percent, as your work will now be more arduous.'

'I want neither of you to thank me, you have both been trustworthy clerks, fulfilling all my expectations. Keep on as you have begun, always in the service of God, and you will prosper as you deserve to prosper.'

One Boy and His Puzzles.

(The Rev. Louis Albert Banks, in the 'Christian Herald'.)

Adoniram Judson, who was destined to be one of the greatest missionaries the world has ever known, was born in Malden, Mass., August 9, 1788. His father was a Baptist preacher, and the little boy was surrounded by the strongest Christian influences from his earliest remembrance. He was undoubtedly very precocious. His mother taught him to read when he was only three years old. His father had gone from home on a short journey, and she, wishing to surprise her husband, took the opportunity to teach the child during his absence. He learned so rapidly that he was able to read his father a chapter of the Bible on his return.

Being a preacher's son, little Adoniram naturally heard a good deal of preaching, and when he was only four years of age, he used to collect the children of the neighborhood about him, and, standing in a chair, would go through the form of a sermon with great earnestness, winning much admiration from the other children. In later years, his parents often recounted this story, and never forgot the hymn put forth by the baby preacher, 'Go preach my Gospel, saith the Lord.'

When Adoniram was about seven years old, he became very much interested in being told that the earth is round, and that it revolves around the sun. It became a serious question in his mind, whether or not the sun really moved. Instead of asking either his father or mother about it, he set about discovering for himself the truth. His little sister, who was the only one he talked with about it, said the sun did move, for she could see it; but he had learned that he could not always trust his senses, and so he told her that he was going to make sure. Soon after this, he was one day missed about noon; and as no one had seen him for several hours, his father became uneasy, and went in search of him. He was found in a field at some distance from the house, stretched on his back; his hat, with a circular hole cut in the crown, laid over his face, and his swollen eyes almost blinded with the intense light and heat. He told his father that he was looking at the sun; but he assured his sister that he had solved the problem with regard to the sun's moving, though she was never able to comprehend the process by which he arrived at the result.

Adoniram was famous among all the boys and girls in town for being uncommonly shrewd in guessing charades and solving enigmas, and a boy's pocket never carried a bigger variety of toys and trading property than Adoniram's head had of assorted oddities for the other young folks to guess at. He was always on hand with something to puzzle the rest, and never so happy as when he had given them a nut they could not crack. On one occasion, he found in a newspaper an enigma rather boastfully set forth, and the editor

challenged any reader to make a solution. He felt very sure that he had guessed riddles as hard as that, and gave himself no rest until he had found a satisfactory answer. He copied his answer to the puzzle out in as fair a hand as possible, addressed it to the editor, and with no confidant but his sister, carried it to the post-office. But the post-master supposed it to be some mischievous prank of the minister's son, and exercising that arbitrary power, and more than ordinary wisdom so often assumed by the village post-master, he placed the letter in the hands of the father. The poor boy's surprise and embarrassment may be imagined when he saw it lying on the table after tea.

'Is that yours, Adoniram?'

'Yes, sir.'

'How came you to write it?' Silence.

'What is it about?'

'Please read it, father.'

'I do not read other people's letters. Break the seal, and read it yourself.'

Adoniram broke the seal, and mumbled over the contents, then placed the letter in his father's hand. The father read it, called for the newspaper which had suggested it, and after reading and re-reading both, laid them on the table, crossed his hands on his knees, and looked intently into the fire. All this time Adoniram was on the anxious seat. He stood silently watching his father, balancing in his mind the chances of his being treated as a culprit, or praised for his good guess at the enigma. But he was not to know yet. When the father awoke from his reverie, he changed the subject of conversation, and the letter was never heard of afterwards. The next morning, Adoniram's father gravely informed him that he had purchased for his use a book of riddles, a very common one; but as soon as he had solved all that it contained, he should have more difficult books. 'You are a very acute boy, Adoniram,' he added, patting him on the head with unusual affection? 'and I expect you to become a great man.'

Adoniram was wild with joy at the idea of having a whole bookful of riddles, and carried it away, determined to master every one. But he was soon much surprised, and not a little disappointed to find that it was a copy of the arithmetic which the larger boys in his school were studying. But the memory of his father's praise, and the reflection that if there was anything puzzling in the arithmetic, he was sure he should like it, caused him to devote himself to it with energy. He stuck to his purpose so faithfully that before he had reached his tenth year, he became quite noted for his good scholarship, and especially for his ability to solve arithmetical problems.

So noted did he become, even at this early age, that a gentleman residing in the neighboring town of Beverly sent him a problem, with the offer of a dollar for the solution. Adoniram immediately shut himself in his chamber. The reward was tempting; but, what was still more important to the proud, ambitious boy, he felt that his reputation was at stake. On the morning of the second day he was called from his seclusion to amuse his little brother, who was ill. He went very reluctantly, but said nothing, for family government was of a kind in the Judson family that permitted no talking back on the part of the children. In order to amuse his brother he undertook to build a cob house. He laid an unusually strong foundation with a great deal of hesitation and slowness, and was very deliberate in building up the walls, when suddenly he shouted, 'That's it. I've got it!' and sending the materials for the half-built house rolling about the room he hurried off, baby or no baby, to write down the result. The problem was solved, he had won his dollar, and saved his reputation.

At the age of ten, Adoniram was sent to Captain Morton to take lessons in navigation, where he acquitted himself well. In the grammar school he was noted for his proficiency in Greek. His schoolmates nicknamed him 'Virgil,' not only on account of his studious habits, but because of the odd style of his hat, which they said was one 'Old Virgil dug up.' There were almost no books for children in those days, and so as his mind was thirsty for reading, he read the books of theology in his father's library and the novels of Richardson and Fielding, or the plays of