

BOYS AND GIRLS

The Sandal Wood Box.

A week before Annie Parker died she called her nieces and nephews together and distributed her possessions among them.

'I have no real estate,' she said, 'and no investments worth speaking of, and I don't want to make a will. So I'm going to give my few treasures away myself, and I'll have the pleasure of seeing where they will carry the most happiness. No, children, don't cry. I am not sorry to leave this world and go to my Father's house, not sorry at all; I have had a beautiful life here, and I'm sure of having a beautiful life there, and everything is right, as God's will must be. Bless his holy name!'

She rested a moment or two, then said, in a clear voice:

'I give and bequeath my silver loving cup and my teaspoons to Cynthia, because she is a good little housekeeper and will keep them shining and use them with discretion.'

Cynthia Parker's eyes beamed, then dimmed.

'Dear Aunty,' she exclaimed, 'I hope and pray you'll soon be well and keep the loving cup yourself.'

'It came over from Holland, Cynthia, when this old town was new, and only good Christians have ever sipped from its brim. So I am showing that I trust you when I give you this heirloom. Martha Vell is to have all my laces. Eloise Snyder my great feather fan with the ivory sticks and handle. Willie Dean and James Cortland are equally to inherit my books, and may divide them to suit themselves. Horace Parker shall have my grandfather's mahogany desk, and Annette Parker, because she does not believe in Foreign Missions, is to receive my sandal wood box,'—and, after a pause, she added—'with all that it contains.'

Each of the young people accepted the bequest with gratitude, and Miss Parker being weary, postponed the rest of her gifts until another day. Her niece Annette lingered when the others were gone, saying, wistfully:

'Aunt Annie, you know I'd believe in Foreign Missions if I could. You know I've tried. I want to see as you do.'

'Yes, dearie, but you've been color-blind. That's why I'm leaving you my sandal wood box and its contents. Now, darling, don't bother me. I'm learning that we cannot all see eye to eye in this world. Many of us grope like the mole when we might fly like the bird, but we haven't vision. The chief thing is to love and serve the Lord, and that you do, my dear. He'll take care of the rest.'

A few days later, as softly as a child falls asleep, Miss Annie Parker dropped out of the place that had known her cheery presence, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, she was at home with God. In due time the work she had done was taken up by others, and the people who missed her grew accustomed to doing without her advice, her efficiency, and the sunny sweetness of her smile. She was gathered to her fathers, and others reigned in her stead.

The sandal wood box was in itself most curious and beautiful. Intricately carved by the patient fingers of Eastern artisans,

who never dreamed of haste, the principal figure on its cover was an image of Buddha, calm, mysterious, inscrutable, unfathomable. Annette put the box on her dressing table, and the faint, subtle perfume of its wood exhaled and penetrated the atmosphere. If she went near the table, the carved god arrested her attention. It seemed as if he challenged her, and made her look into his bland, smooth, secretive, impersonal countenance whether she would or not. She had glanced into the box, but its satin-smooth surface revealed nothing, and she concluded that Miss Annie had been mistaken in offering her something additional, but when one day she resolved on locking the box up in a safe, where the irritating tranquillity of Buddha could no longer offend her, she gazed at it carefully and discovered that it had a false bottom. This accounted for a weight which had puzzled her. The space between the false and the true bottom was lined with gold pieces.

Annette counted them, and found herself the richer by a goodly sum. She was a girl with a conscience. Her legacy had been bestowed on her 'because she did not believe in foreign missions' by a woman who had toiled and prayed and given of her abundance or her poverty as it happened that Christ's blessed Gospel might be preached to all mankind. She knew that Annie Parker had supported a medical missionary in India, that whatever wealth she had—not much, but her all—except her gifts of personal property, had been left to the Woman's Board. 'This gold,' said Annette, 'must be used as Aunty would have used it. But I can't give it with a free heart and hand and feel as I do.'

'Why do I feel so?' she next asked herself, candidly. The answer followed very swiftly, for she was in a mood of deep sincerity.

'Because I have taken no pains to fight against my prejudice. I have not tried to know the truth. I have read no missionary books and magazines. I have attended no meetings. On the whole subject I am densely and wilfully ignorant. Therefore I am hostile.'

Annette took the gold pieces and deposited them in the bank. She set the sandal wood box on her writing desk. The carved god, complacent as ever, was not now annoying. She thought that she would read and study about the people who preferred him to our mighty Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Annette investigated, and almost immediately she was impressed by the great and terrible need, the immensity of superstition and the depth of the darkness, the profound degradation of womanhood, the sadness of heathen life. Then came the wonder and delight of the reality of Christ's love. The self-sacrifice of the missionaries appealed to her, and the remarkable work that was being done in the schools for girls.

'I will take that money and visit India,' she exclaimed one morning. Six months after she had begun her studies. 'Of course'—she saw it in a flash—'that is what Aunty intended me to do.'

So to the land whence came her sandal wood box proceeded Annette, a seeker af-

ter truth. Whosoever honestly searches for truth finds it; and she returned a year later no longer an unbeliever in but an enthusiast for Foreign Missions.

I do not doubt myself that there was joy in heaven over this Christian's conversion.—Margaret E. Sangster in 'The Christian Intelligencer.'

Armour's Career as a Brake-man.

George A. Sheldon, depot master of the Lake Shore station, who died recently, after forty-six years of continuous service with the Lake Shore Company, was a veritable encyclopedia of railway incident, and his well-told tales, if repeated in his own select phrase, would rank as classic literature. His narrations were confined to actualities, thus giving them a real value. He was many years a conductor, and among the best of the incidents he related is the following:—

'One day there stepped aboard my train a well-dressed, business-appearing man, who as he tendered his fare remarked:

"I see you are still on the road, Mr. Sheldon."

"Yes, I am still at it," I replied, "but I am not certain that I remember you, though I think I have seen you before."

"Yes, you have seen me before," emphasized the passenger; "and while you doubtless have forgotten it, I still remember that you once did me the greatest favor of my life. Come to my seat when you get time and I'll tell you about it."

'When I had finished collecting fares, I dropped into the stranger's seat and he continued: "Years ago I was four days brakeman abroad your train. At the end of the four days you took me aside and remarked in a tone of sympathy: 'I'm sorry to have to tell you so, but the fact is, young man, you are too much of a fool to ever make a good railroader. Take my advice and quit.' I took your advice and went into other business, and the result is, I made a fair fortune. I thank you, Mr. Sheldon, for your wise counsel."

"What is your name?" I asked,

"Phil D. Armour of Chicago," replied my ex-brakeman, "and I shall always remember your kindness. I was a stupid railroader, and you advised me for my good."

'Until this interview,' added Mr. Sheldon, 'I never suspected that Philip D. Armour, the packer, was the brakeman I discharged years before.'—'Detroit News.'

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