

AN ASSISTED PROVIDENCE.



IT was the Christmas turkeys that should be held responsible. Every year the Lossings gave each head of a family in their employ, and each lad helping to support his mother, a turkey at Christmastide. Harry, one Christmas some five years ago, bought the turkeys at so good a bargain, that he felt the natural reaction in an impulse to extravagance. In the very flood-tide of the money spending yearnings, he chanced to pass Deacon Hurst's stables, and to see two Saint Bernard puppies of elephantine size but of the tenderest age, gamboling on the sidewalk before the office.

Deacon Hurst is fond of the dog as well as of that noble animal, the horse. He told Harry that the Saint Bernards were grandsons of Sir Beridere, the "finest dog of his time in the world, sir;" that they were perfectly marked, and very large for their age (which Harry found it easy to believe of the young giants), and that they were "ridiculous, sir, at the figure of two hundred and fifty!" (which Harry did not believe so readily); and after Harry had admired and studied the dogs for the space of half an hour, he dropped the price in a kind of spasm of generosity to two hundred dollars. Harry was tempted to close the bargain on the spot, hot-handed, but he decided to wait and prepare his mother for such a large addition to the stable.

A time comes to every healthy man when he wants a dog, and Harry's dog was dead. The departed dog (Bruce by name) was a Saint Bernard; and Deacon Hurst found one of the puppies to have so much the expression of the late Bruce, that he named him Bruce on the spot—a little before Harry joined the group—Harry did not at first recognize this resemblance, but he grew to see it; and, combined with the dog's affectionate disposition, it softened his heart. By the time he told his mother, he was quoting Hurst's adjectives as his own.

"Beauties, mother" said Harry with sparkling eyes, "the markings are perfect, could'nt be better! And, mother, one of them looks like Bruce!"

"I suppose they will want to be house-dogs," said Mrs. Lossing, a little dubiously, "And they are so large, it is like having a pet lion about."

"These dogs, mother, shall never put a paw in the house."

"Well, I hope just as I get fond of them they will not have the distemper and die!" which speech, Harry rightly took for the white flag of surrender. That evening he went to find Hurst and clinch the bargain. As it happened, Hurst was away driving.

The event that happened next morning was Harry's pulling out his check book, and beginning to write a check. Then he let the pen fall on the blotter, for he had remembered that it was Sunday. After an instant's hesitation he took a couple of hundred dollar bank notes out of a drawer (I think they were gifts for his two sisters on Christmas-day, for he was a generous brother), these he placed in the right-hand pocket of his waistcoat. In his left-hand waistcoat pocket were two five dollar notes.

Harry was now arrayed for church, he was in a most amiable mood, what with the Saint Bernards and the season. As his mother and he approached the cathedral, Harry, not for the first time, admired its pure Gothic lines. Beyond were the bare, square outlines of the old college, with a wooden cupola perched on the roof, like a little hat on a fat man, the dull red tints of the professors' houses, and the withered lawns and bare trees. Opposite the boys' school stood the modest square brick house that had served the first bishop of the diocese during laborious years. Now it was the dean's residence. Harry saw the tall figure of the dean come out of the gate, the long black skirts of his cossock fluttering under the wind of his big steps. Beside him, skipped and ran, to keep step with him, a little man in ill-fitting black, of whose appearance, thus viewed from the rear, one could