

## Sunday Reading

## Be Like Him

A gentleman of this city who for years has been more or less under the influence of liquor, and whose red nose and bloated figure stamped him as an inebriate, had gone home to his wife and children in his usual condition. He was not unkind in act or word. It was his delight to play at games with his little ones, as he was able, and to entertain them with wonderful stories.

On this occasion the family were all together in the sitting-room, and the usual games having been played, little Freddy, a lad about six years of age, had climbed upon his father's knee, and was asking him all sorts of boyish questions. He talked as a child—of what he would be when he was a big man; asked if he would be like papa, and, finally, after a long and serious look into his father's face, with every shade of childish curiosity in voice and glance, put to him this bewildering query:—

"Papa, when I grow up to be a man, will my nose be red like yours, and my face all swelled?" Ah! why should his arms so quickly draw that boy to his breast? And why should tears flow and voice tremble as he replied in words and tone that made the mother's heart glad.

"No, Freddy, please God you won't be like me when you get to be a man; and neither will your father, my boy, be so any longer, for from this hour he will lead a sober life."

"Be like him!" He had not thought of that before, and the bare possibility staggered him. All the love in his father's heart cried out against such a fate. That boy, his pride, going about with a bloated face and poisoned breath! No, no; he was not prepared for that. Never before had he seen his looks so clearly reflected in the boy's—the boy growing to manhood and honor, affection and reason came to the rescue. The child had preached a sermon no orator could deliver, and innocence and ignorance had accomplished what learning and logic had aimed at in vain. These words went home.

## Sharp Words

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Wheaton shortly. Mrs. Wheaton's face flushed scarlet; she looked up at him, and, if I mistake not, a sharp reply got up as far as her throat, but she choked it down; it did not part her lips. She looked furtively at me, but I looked steadily at the fire. Mr. Wheaton all the time was quite unconscious of the stir his word had made in one tender and sensitive heart. Then Mrs. Wheaton murmured something about her scissors and slipped out of the room.

Mrs. Wheaton had ventured to make some remark on some business question. I think it concerned the morality of some Wall Street operations. The subject was one with which she had no great acquaintance, and perhaps her woman wit was at fault. Indeed, I remember thinking at the time that it was, at least in part; but what she said was not nonsense. After Mrs. Wheaton had gone out there was a moment or two of silence; then I broke it. Mr. Wheaton and I are old friends, and I presumed a little on that fact.

"Tom," said, "how long have you been married?"

"Twenty-four years next May," said he. "A year from next May, if we both live so long, will be our silver wedding. And yet it seems but yesterday that Lucy

and I were sleighing it in the moonlight that Christmas I ran away from home for my holidays, much to the chagrin and vexation of my sisters, because I found greater attractions at Lucy Vine's."

"I wonder," said I, speaking slowly and musingly, "and as it were to myself—" "I wonder if that Christmas holiday you would have spoken to Lucy Vine as you spoke to your wife just now?"

"How?" said Mr. Wheaton; and he turned sharply upon me.

"Nonsense!" I repeated; and I threw into my own voice all the vigor and the sharpness there had been in his. It was a hazardous experiment, but Tom and I were old friends; and, at all events, there is no drawing back now.

He looked at me sharply for a moment, and I looked at him; then his eyes went back to the fire. "Shoh!" said he, speaking to himself, "I wonder—" and then quickly turning back to me, "Do you suppose she minded it?"

"What did she get up and go out for without a word in reply?" I asked.

"To get her scissors, I believe," said he.

I laughed at him. "It is taking her a long time to find them," I replied. "Yes, she did mind it. If you had seen the quick flush in her face, and the quick look, first at you and then at me, and the choking of the throat, and the nervous movement of the hands, you would not have doubted that she minded it. Suppose she said to you 'Nonsense!' and I fired at him again as explosively as I could: 'how would you have liked it?'"

He shook his head slowly; he was still studying the fire.

"Suppose I had said to her, 'Nonsense!'" (explosively as before): "how would you have liked it?"

"I would have said you were no gentleman," said Mr. Wheaton; "but—but—" "But what?" said I.

"John, a fellow can't be studying all the time how he'll talk to his own wife, you know. If he can't be free at home, he can't be free anywhere. She ought not to be so sensitive. She knows I didn't mean anything."

"Tom," said I, "if any one else accused you of saying something when you didn't mean anything, you'd get redder in the face over it than she was just now. You did mean something. You meant exactly what you said. You thought what your wife said was nonsense, and you blurted it right out."

"Well, it was nonsense," said Mr. Wheaton.

"I am not so sure of that," said I; "but if it were, that was no reason why you should tell her so."

"Do you always weigh your words when talking with your wife, as if you were in a witness box, before a Philadelphia lawyer?"

"No matter what I do," said I. "Perhaps I have learned a lesson here tonight that will make me more careful hereafter. Of one thing I am very sure, Tom; if we were as careful of our wives after twenty-five years of married life as we are of our girls in courtship—"

But I did not finish my sentence; for just at that moment the door opened and Mrs. Wheaton came in. I had barely time to notice that she had forgotten what she went for; for she had no scissors in her hand, when Mr. Wheaton, in his warm, impulsive way, reached out his hand, caught hers, drew her to him and said, "Lucy, my dear, Mr. Laicus has been giving me a regular going over for speaking to you as I did just now. It was nonsense, you know; but I had no business to tell

## "A LOSS SO LARGE."

By Agnes S. Frambach.

The world is such a different place  
When mothers die!  
We miss the dear, familiar face,  
The love-lit eye,  
The heart that never showed a trace  
Of enmity.

Our little helpless baby ways  
Were mother's pride;  
In all our childhood's griefs and plays  
She was our guide;  
Her sympathy in "grown-up" days  
Was deep and wide.

Though there are others in our lives  
Still with us here—  
Brothers or sisters, husbands, wives,  
Or children dear—  
Yet when in heaven she arrives,  
On earth it's drear.

There's nothing ever can efface  
Her memory.  
She's resting now in God's embrace  
Beyond the sky.  
The world is such a lonesome place  
When mothers die!

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COUGHED UNTIL  
SHE FAIRLY CHOKED.

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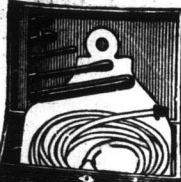
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