

# BOYS AND GIRLS

## Rasmus, or the Making of a Man.

(By Julia McNair Wright.)

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### CHAPTER XV.—Continued.

'I think the chief raw material of riots is to be found in intemperance,' said Mr. Llewellyn. 'From drinking comes destitution: from destitution, anger, envy, revenge. Drink destroys the money that should purchase breadstuffs or manufactured articles. Trade is slack, mills close, the operatives are out of work, or on reduced wages; they have thus little money to put into the stream of commerce; the retail dealers make less demands on the wholesale; the wholesale men send few orders to the mills; the factories press more heavily on the hands. Then come riots, strikes, revenges on property owners, by men who, but for drink, might very likely have been property owners themselves. Mobs are not made up of men who have anything to lose. The man who owns his house, and comfortable furniture therein, is not likely to imperil this possession by inciting a mob, with its ensuing fire and plunder. But, at the same time, the rich aggravate all the evil by making, using, selling, protecting strong drink. Intemperance has among us two strong protectors, the wealthy and the impoverished. These demand and protect the liquor-traffic, and between them the great middle class, which as a rule supports the temperance cause, is crushed and opposed, and pressed, as between upper and nether millstones.'

'Well, I hadn't looked at it just that way before,' said the cobbler, handing Rodney his mended shoe.

'You'd better look at it that way from this out, brother,' said Rasmus, 'and instid of complainin' of bad times, just turn your attention to quarrelin' with what makes the bad times.'

'I don't see what I can do about it,' said the cobbler, 'I am not a person of influence.' 'You've got a tongue in your head, and it seems you don't mind wagging it. Wag it right. It's as easy to be right as wrong, and more convenient. Got any kids?'

'A couple,' said the cobbler.

'Well, there's influence for you; bring 'em up right. What makes so many men crooked to-day is that so many boys was 'lowed to be crooked yesterday.'

'Don't you think,' said Mr. Llewellyn, 'that you could do much to arouse temperance opinion if you studied the matter honestly, and talked of it heartily to those who came into your shop? We all have influence, and the more we exert ourselves to make good use of it, the more it grows.'

'Still, one man alone is such a small affair.'

'So is a blade of grass. But it is the growth of individual blades that covers the field and feeds the cattle. Besides, my good friend, when you go up to judgment, God will not ask you for the work of eight or ten lives, but for your own single work, in your own special place. He will not ask you for the work laid out for the judge's bench, or for the banker's office, or the governor's chair, but for the work to be done in a cobbler's shop to the sound of driving pegs and pulling waxed ends; and believe me, He will be just as insistent on having a full, clean account of that work given, as He is about the most important work on earth.'

The cobbler handed Mr. Llewellyn his shoe, with a new heel. 'I don't know as I ought to charge anything for my work, when I've had such an amount of useful conversation,' he said.

'It would be a poor commentary on our principles and theories if we did not honestly pay our way,' said Mr. Llewellyn, handing him the money due.

'And, brother,' said Rasmus, picking himself up from the doorway, 'don't say you've no influence, nor nothing to do, so long as

there's a raft of boys lying round to be talked to. I was a boy, allowed to come up, hit or miss, myself, and I know how back luck it is.'

'What shall I teach my boys?' said the cobbler, earnestly.

'The Alphabet and the Ten Commandments,' said Mr. Llewellyn.

'And work,' said Rasmus. 'It's lying round loose, does it. Teach 'em work, savin' up, earnin' something of their own, and knowin' how to take care of it. Land! having nothin' to do, and doing of it industrious, has nigh been the ruination of me.'

'I never saw such a party in my life,' said the cobbler, looking after the three as they went up the street. 'Proper pretty boy, looks like a gentleman; little old man with spectacles, looks like a learned scollard of some kind, with his tin boxes and bug nets; but the big fellow, with the roaring voice and the merry eye, beats my time! Looks like a tramp made over into a boss of some kind, and I don't believe that's possible.'

Rasmus was certainly getting made over; but into what, was not yet apparent.

It was on a Saturday evening that they reached the goal of their hopes. Although weary with the warm day and the journey, they hurried at once to the post office. There was a letter for Rodney from the dead-letter office, enclosing the one written by him to his uncle. Across the envelope was written, 'No person of this name known in this neighborhood.'

'There, Rod!' cried Rasmus, dropping promptly to the depths of despair, as suited his versatile disposition. 'I knowed your uncle was dead! I told you so all along.'

'This does not prove it,' said Mr. Llewellyn. 'It merely shows that for some years he has not done business in that neighborhood. He may have retired from business, or gone to some other part of the city. That remains to be proved. Our search will be more difficult, that is all.'

'But where is my letter?' demanded Rasmus.

'There is no answer to the advertisement, so far.'

'Then there will never be any! It is weeks now!'

'But we will try another, and we will try in more than one paper. All hope is not lost yet.'

'Yes, it is; we're done for, Rod and me; but I'll stick to Rod, since I haven't anything else to do.'

'Here's a letter advertised for you on the bulletin,' said Rodney, who was solacing himself by looking about the office. And he pointed out, 'Mr. Rasmus, Allentown.'

Rasmus promptly secured his letter. 'Is it from Robin?' he demanded, scrutinizing the envelope.

'No, from Sally. I can tell by the post-mark,' said Rod.

But a letter even from the lovely Sally could not compensate Rasmus for the failing of his long-cherished hope, about the little lost lad. Mr. Llewellyn took his companions to a small inn on the edge of the town, where he meant to pass the Sabbath, and then Rasmus and Rodney, perching themselves on an adjacent fence, opened the letter of Miss Sally:

'Dear Mr. Rasmus,

'I never had so short a letter as the one from you. It seems that it is not short for want of something to say, but you save up your news for another time. I had a beautiful letter from Rodney. He told me you were making more splendid speeches on temperance. I am proud to know a great orator; you will beat Mr. Gough. I send my love to Mr. Llewellyn, and my best wishes to Rodney, and my regards to any other of my friends that cares for them.'

'SALLY CREW.

'P.S.—Mother and all are well. George wrote a most beautiful composition on Spring. I wish you had a slice of my last cake, it is elegant.'

'Isn't that an awful nice letter?' said Rasmus.

On the Tuesday morning after this they entered New Jersey, and directed their steps across that little State toward Jersey City. Mr. Llewellyn had received word of a con-

vention of botanists, whom he wished to meet, and proposed that Rasmus and Rodney should complete the journey to New York without him, and he would follow in a few days. He gave Rasmus the address of a safe little lodging-house, where they could stay until he came, or until the uncle was found.

'You must get this year's Directory,' he said, 'and look for the name of Mr. Peter Waldon. If you do not find such a person, go to the police-station nearest his former address, and ask if they can give you any information about him. And get the old Directories from the date of the letter down, and trace him by them. If all fails we will try something else when I come.'

A week later Rasmus and Rodney were poring over a Directory in a drug-store. Rodney had never seen such a book before, and while he understood the list of proper names, he did not understand the abbreviations that followed them. 'Andrew Waldon—no; Albert Walton, Arthur Waldon—what a lot of names. Waldon, J. Benjamin, undertaker—no.'

'Follow the initials down to the letter you want,' suggested the druggist, 'they stand in order.'

### CHAPTER XVI.

Robin! Robin!

'There's some ill planet reigns,  
I must be patient till the heavens look  
With an aspect more favorable.'

'Now I've got it!' cried Rodney. 'Peter Waldon. What does "W. 15th St." mean?'

'That means West Fifteenth Street. Go to that number on 15th Street, and you'll find your man. Keep up this street to 15th, then turn that way, d'ye see? and go on till you find that number. It will be on the left hand.'

Away went Rasmus and Rodney, feeling that all was right. To talk in the confusion was impossible; they just hurried on.

'I say, Rod!' cried Rasmus, as they reached the desired number, 'this ain't no sort of a place for your uncle to be!'

Indeed, the name Peter Waldon graced the door of what Rasmus denominated 'a crack saloon.' But Rodney was dazed and almost overwhelmed by the excitement of his ended quest, and the uproar of the first great city he had ever traversed. He blundered up the steps, and into the resplendent den, and Rasmus stoutly followed at his shoulder, until the two stood in the centre of the place, looking about in an amazed manner.

'Come now, my lads, what shall I serve you? What do you want?' cried the stout, red-faced owner of the establishment, when he saw the new-comers standing as if petrified.

'We don't want nothing,' said the stout Rasmus.

'What did you come in for then?' asked the saloon-keeper.

'We wanted to see Peter Waldon.'

'Well, here I am; what's wanted with me?'

'Nothin'. You ain't the kind of man we looked for.'

'You'd better explain yourself, or get out.'

'We'll do both,' said Rasmus the ready. 'This boy was a-lookin' for his uncle, Peter Waldon, to dopt him, and do the fair thing by him, that's all.'

'Oh, get out. I haven't any nephew; I'm no uncle.'

'You're no uncle for us, that's a sure pop,' said Rasmus. 'I ain't brought down to giving him over to a saloon-keeper. He's a boy as can make his way. He's a handsomer boy than any in New York; and he's book-learned, and he's smart, and he's got a voice that every concert hall in the city'd be fighting for if they heard him sing; and he's a boy can make his fortune, and we don't need uncles.'

Rasmus' inveterate habit of boasting of Rodney having thus got the better of him, had turned all attention to the beautiful and embarrassed boy, and a change passed over the spirit of the saloon-keeper's dreams. He spoke up:

'You needn't be in such a hurry before a man can get his ideas together. So I have a nephew, and if this is the boy, why, I make him welcome, and do an uncle's part by him. Shake hands, my lad.'

But Rodney, silent, red and pale by turns,