

CANADA

# SUNDAY SCHOOL ADVOCATE

SUFFER · LITTLE

UNTO · ME ·

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### "THE HYMN MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME."

"GET away with ye, will ye, Ben Madden! I don't want you a sneaking about my stall to see what you can be laying your fingers on!" exclaimed Betty Wiggins, the cross old dame who sold biscuits and cakes at the corner of High-street.

The poor orphan boy thus rudely addressed slunk back a pace or two from the tempting stall. His young heart was burning with anger, and indignant tears rose into his eyes. "I never in my life took what did not belong to me," muttered Ben; "my poor mother taught me something better than that."

Betty Wiggins might have given a kind word to the lonely child if she had given no more. Ben Madden had lately lost his mother, a poor industrious widow, who had worked as long as her fingers could work to support herself and her orphan boy. Alice Madden had died in peace and faith, commending her child to the care of Him who hath said, "*I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.*"

Poor Ben seemed to have a hard life-struggle before him. He had no relative living but a sailor uncle, who might, for aught that he knew, be now on the other side of the world. There was none to care whether the orphans slept under a roof or an archway, whether he was fed or whether he starved. Betty, who had known his mother for years, might have spared him one of those biscuits and never have missed it among so many; so thought Ben, who, since rising at daybreak, had not tasted a morsel of food.



As Ben stood leaning against an area railing, looking wistfully at the piles of cake and gingerbread, a light cart, in which was seated a reckless young driver urging on an excited horse, was whisked round the corner of High-street with such careless

speed that it knocked over the stall and threw its contents on the pavement. What a scatter was there of tartlets and cakes, bits of taffy and rock, biscuits, bull's eyes, almonds, and buns, and sticks of bright barley sugar! Had the stall-woman been any other than cross Betty Wiggins Ben would have run forward to help her to pick up her goods, which were rolling about in every direction. But a feeling of resentment filled the soul of the boy; he was not sorry for Betty's disaster. "She bade me keep off," thought the child, "and I will; she would not trust me to pick up her biscuits."

Ben would not go to the cakes, but one of the cakes came to him. A beautiful pink one, studded with almonds and frosted with sugar, rolled close up to his feet. Betty did not mark this, for with clenched hand and flashing eyes she was pouring a torrent of abuse after the careless driver whose cart had done the mischief, which the youth would not stop to repair. Ben saw the cake—the delicious pink cake—what a temptation to a half-famished boy! Forgetful of his own words so lately uttered, in a moment the child caught it up, and hurried away down the street; leaving Betty to abuse the driver, set up the stall, and recover such of her dainties as had not been smashed on the pavement.

Before Ben had walked many steps he had eagerly swallowed the cake; having once tasted its sweetness he felt as if nothing could stop him from eating the whole. Ben had committed his first theft, he had forgotten the words of his mother, he had