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Happy Days.

TORONTO, JULY 29, 1905.

THE DANGER OF LAL DOW.

George Nelson was usually a contented boy, but sometimes he threw down his playthings, rushed out on the veranda and looked over the wide river as if in search of something he never found. His mother would hear him exclaim, "Now I'll shut my eyes and count thirty, and the first boy I see I'm going to invite him in to spend the day." For you see George lived in Siam, and there were no little white boys anywhere near.

He was far too shy to carry out any such intention, but a boat-load of lotus flowers, or a swimmer holding some treasure high above his head, would divert his mind and suggest some other play, so that loneliness would be forgotten.

One day, on going into the compound to watch the carpenter, who held a board with his toes while sawing it, George found a boy there all uninvited, to spend the day: the carpenter's son, older to be sure, but still a boy.

When Mr. Nelson saw the eager sparkle in George's eyes, he carried his writing table to the yard and worked there morning after morning, so that, for once, his boy might have a playmate.

"My translation may suffer, but the boys certainly enjoy themselves," the missionary told his wife. "George is learning to play foot-shuttlecock, and Lal Dow can spin the Philadelphia top. If this

goes on much longer the brown boy will know as much as our boy. George tells him about Joseph and Daniel, and insists on his repeating a verse every day. I'm watching of course. Once Lal hurt himself, a curse slipped out; another time he gave a stray dog a savage kick. These Buddhists, who never kill an animal, are perfectly willing to torture it. Each time George said gravely, 'That isn't right.' I wondered how much the pagan mind would grasp of the rebuke which means so much to a Christian."

"Does Lal talk, too?" asked the mother. "Yes, though not as readily. George now demands a story of the brown boy before telling one himself. Buddha—always Buddha.

"Do you happen to know that he was once a sparrow and shut up all day in a lotus flower? At the age of baby there, he was taken to the harvest festival, left under a tree and forgotten. The tree shaded him all day miraculously, and that is why the boh-tree casts no shadow.

"When Buddha was as old as George he could throw an elephant a long distance. I'm thinking you and I will be beset with questions when the addition to our house is done. Even a Siamese must finish his work sometime."

When the day alluded to came, George was not desolate. He had made a friend, and was always planning what he would say to him and give to him when they met again.

The grown people were too busy to pay much attention, but at last Uncle Doctor took compassion and offered to take him to see Lal Dow.

They must first be rowed to the palace and attend to the sick people there, but a trip with the doctor was pleasant, for when he was not actually setting bones and feeling pulses, he knew more about just the things you wanted to hear of than any other foreigner in Bangkok. When they hunted up the carpenter's home the boys stared at each other. The short separation had tied their tongues, but George soon became absorbed in watching Lal's grandfather, who was doing a very strange thing. He was making a little cart of sticks and strings and moulding some rude images to place in it.

The doctor explained to George in English that this was a charm against cholera. Each image represented a member of the family. The cart was to be filled with rice and flowers, and taken out into the fields as an offering to the evil spirits. Then no one in that house would get sick. "Is it right?" asked Lal Dow, suddenly.

"No," said George, boldly. "It won't do a bit of good. You must pray to God to keep you well."

The brown boy strode over to the cart and threw out the image supposed to look like himself. The old man protested, but

having always been indulged, Lal had his way.

A fortnight afterward Dr. Kuhn called on Mr. Nelson by appointment, and found he had been detained. When George came joyfully, his friend said gently, "Lal Dow is very sick."

"Is it cholera?"

"Yes."

"Come quick, Uncle Doctor!" cried George, leading him to his father's study. The doctor was not sure what the impulsive boy wanted till he fell on his knees, then he followed his example. "You first," he said, putting a hand on George's head, and the eager voice began, "Our Father, please make Lal well. Because if you don't they will think the evil spirits did it and they won't believe what we say. Please tell Uncle Doctor what to do to make him well. For Jesus' sake. Amen."

The doctor's prayer was earnest, too, and nearly as short. It held four more words, which were long remembered by George Nelson—"If it is best."

Time passed, and the well people saw nothing of the doctor, who was wrestling hard with the scourge of the East.

One afternoon George and his mother were sitting out of doors. A slender figure glided in holding a spray of the rare flowers of the century plant. Once Lal would have laid it in the outstretched hand of a bronze Buddha; now he placed his offering of gratitude at the feet of his boy teacher.

George jumped up and down, clapped his hands, then ran toward the house. He threw a radiant glance back at his mother, who understood. She bade the brown boy be seated, and handed him a banana, telling him that George would come back soon. He rushed on; the cook held out a cake which he did not see; baby crowed from her crib in vain. He did not pause till he reached the study. Kneeling there, George took a moment to think. His tone was reverent, though his words were boyish enough. "Dear Lord, I'm ever so much obliged to you. I'll thank you some more to-night, but I didn't want to be like the nine lepers, so I came right away. I'm sorry I was cross at Hue to-day. Please bless Lal and make him a good boy, and make me a good boy. For Jesus' sake. Amen."

Faithfulness in little matters is a great virtue. A girl was sent out with her little sister to watch her and take care of her while the mother was busy. Instead of doing so she took along a story book, and became so interested in it that her little sister was likely to fall into the creek for want of watching. Unless this girl changes her habits very much, she will grow into a careless, selfish woman, who will make everybody about her unpleasant by her neglect of her little duties.