

## FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

BY AND BY.

BY MARGARET J. PRESTON.

What will it matter by and by,  
Whether my path below was bright,  
Whether it wound through dark or light,  
Under a gray or a golden sky,  
When I look back on it, by and by?

What will it matter by and by,  
Whether, unhelped, I toil alone.  
Dashing my foot against a stone,  
Missing the charge of angel nigh,  
Bidding me think of the by and by?

What will it matter by and by,  
Whether with laughing joy I went  
Down through the years with a glad content,  
Never believing—nay, not I—  
Tears would be sweeter by and by?

What will it matter by and by,  
Whether with cheek to cheek I've lain  
Close by the pallid angel, Pain,  
Soothing myself through sob and sigh;  
"All will be otherwise by and by?"

What will it matter? Naught, if I  
Only am sure the way I've trod,  
Gloomy or gladdened, leads to God;  
Questioning not of the how, the why,  
If I but reach him, by and by.

What will I care for the unshared sigh,  
If, in my fear of slip or fall,  
Closely I've clung to Christ through all,  
Mindless how rough the path might lie,  
Since he will smooth it by and by.

Ah! it will matter by and by,  
Nothing but this. That Joy or Pain  
Lifted me skyward, helped to gain,  
Whether through rack, or smile, or sigh  
Heaven—home—all in all, by and by!

## THE MISSING PAGES.

"Have a paper, sir? Something to read in the train, ma'am? *Times*, *Herald*, *Sun*. All the magazines!"

But the people hurried past John's little stand into the station, as they had done all the morning. Only two papers sold, and here was noon! Profit two cents. On sunny days his sales were pretty brisk; but it was drizzling. The thick air was full of falling soot, and nobody cared to stop to buy.

"No wonder they want to hurry out of this horrible place!" muttered John, looking about at the wet, dingy houses, the pools of black mud through which the horses tramped, and clouds of smoke rolling through the streets. He thought of the sunny farm on which he was born, and felt that he never could grow used to this place. Two cents profit! Not enough to buy a loaf of bread.

John thought of his mother, and of the scanty breakfast which they had eaten together in their bare garret, with its windows opening on the sooty roofs. If he could but have had a good trade, he might have carried a nice little treat home to her. But the crowd hurried past, and nobody stopped.

"Magazine, ma'am? Something to read on"—The lady stopped. "Ah, your books are dirty!" she said, dropping the sooty magazine with a shrug.

As if he could help that! But he began blowing away the soot for the twentieth time that day. It was four years since his father died, and he and his mother had come down to town; and in that time he had done nothing but fight weekly against soot and starvation.

He opened one of the papers for boys. There was a sea story in it: a boy goes off in the first chapter as a stowaway; in the third, "the gallant lad leaped upon the deck, and the com-

modore clasped him in his arms!" On the next page was an account of a boy going home from work, who arrived in time to scale the walls of a burning house and rescued a child, for which daring act he was taken into partnership by the old's father, a millionaire.

"Some fellows have such splendid chances!" said John, laying down the book with a sigh. "Now I've been here for years and nothing grand or noble ever turns up for me to do. Buy twenty-five papers daily; sell them—if I can. On Saturdays, buy the weeklies; once a month, the magazines. That's the best of it, year in, year out. How's a fellow to make a living at that sort of work?"

An old gentleman who had missed the train sauntered up, and began idly looking over the boy's stock.

John watched him anxiously. If he should buy one of the six books! Profit on each was a quarter of a dollar! If he should buy one of those, he could take home a little treat to his mother, after all.

The boy's eyes fairly glistened. For, besides being fond of his mother, he was hungry; and the smell of fried oysters and coffee from the stall near was almost more than he could bear.

The old gentleman took up one of the books. John thought he was certainly going to buy one. What should be the treat? A bit of fresh meat? A mince pie? He decided that steak would be the best.

"Ah, here is a book which I have wanted for a long time," said the gentleman. "What's the price of this, my boy?"

"Those are one dollar each, sir."

"I'll take this. No, you needn't wrap it up. I'll read it in the train."

He laid down a bright new dollar.

John could almost smell the delicious steak, and he thought of his mother's thin, starved face. They had not tasted meat for days. But a glance at the book, as the gentleman dropped it into his satchel, caused him to say faintly:

"Stop, sir! I did not see which one you had taken. That is an imperfect copy. There are four pages missing in the middle."

"Too bad!" throwing it down. "The money, please."

"Will none of the others suit?" said John.

"No. I have wanted this book for some time."

"You can have it for half price," said John, eagerly.

"I don't want a mutilated copy at all."

John handed him back the money; and, closing his satchel, the man walked on a few steps, and sat down on an open doorway to wait for his train. Having nothing to do, he thought the occurrence over leisurely.

"That's a honest lad," he said to the proprietor of the store in which he stood. "He might have cheated me just now, but he did not."

"Who? John M'Tavish? As honest as steel. He's been under my eye now for four years, and I know him to be as truthful a lad as ever was born of Scotch blood."

"Um, um!" said the old gentleman. But he put on his spectacles, and eyed John from head to foot.

The next day he stopped at the shop, and walked up to the proprietor.

"How's he for intelligence, now?" he began, as if the conversation had stopped the moment before. "Stupid, probably?"

"I don't think he's very sharp in trade," was the reply; "but he's a very handy boy. He has made a good many convenient knick-knacks for the neighbors, that bookshelf, for instance."

"Why that's the very thing I want in a boy! Well there's my train. Good day, sir."

"He'll be back again. Odd old fellow!" said the storekeeper, laughing.

The next day he was back, and he came at the same hour.

"I like that boy's looks, sir. I've been

watching him. But of course he has a dozen relations—drunken father, rag-tag brothers—who would follow him?"

"No. He has only a mother; and she is a decent, God-fearing Scotch woman,—a good seamstress, John tells me, but can get no work. Times are dull here just now. Pity the country folks will pour into the cities. Mrs. M'Tavish has nothing but what the boy earns at his stand yonder."

The old gentleman made no reply. But the next day he went up to the boy's stand. John was looking pale and anxious. Some of his regular customers had refused to take their magazines, times being so hard. There would be a dead loss on his hands.

"Paper? Magazines, sir?" he asked.

"No. A word with you, my lad. My name is Bohnn. I am the owner of the Bordale Nurseries, about thirty miles from here. I want a young man to act as clerk and salesman on the grounds, at a salary of thirty dollars a month, and a woman who will be strict and orderly, to oversee the girls who pack flower seeds, at twenty dollars a month. I offer the position to you and your mother, and I give you until to-morrow to think it over."

"But you—you don't know me, sir!" gasped John.

"I know you very well. I generally know what I am about. To-morrow, be ready to give your answer. I will take you four weeks on trial. If I am satisfied, the engagement will be renewed for a year."

All the rest of the day, John felt like one in a dream. Everybody had heard of the Bordale Nurseries and of good old Isaac Bohnn, their owner. But what had he done, that this earthly paradise should be opened to him?

"You'll come, eh?" said Mr. Bohnn, the next day. "Thought you would. When can you begin work?"

"At once, sir."

Good! By the way, there's a vacant house on the grounds which your mother can have rent free, if she remains with me. A mere box, but big enough. There's my cart. Suppose you come out, M'Tavish, and look about you. You can come back at night."

John locked up the stand, sent a message to his mother, and went with Mr. Bohnn. He had not yet told his mother of this change in their affairs.

He was very silent when he came home that evening, but oddly tender with his mother; and she noticed that he remained a long time on his knees at prayer that night.

They had only a little bread and milk for breakfast the next morning, and John scarcely tasted it.

"You look as if you could not bear this much longer, mother," he said, coming up to her, and putting his hands on her shoulder. "You need good wholesome meals and the fresh air and the hills and the trees instead of this!"—looking out at the piled stacks of chimneys belching forth the black smoke of an iron foundry.

"Don't talk of them, John, lad!"

"Well, I won't." And he put on his hat, and went out.

An hour later he came back.

"What is wrong? Why have you left the stand?" asked his mother, in alarm.

"We are going to an outing, mother. Don't say a word. I can afford it."

She never had seen the boy so full of excitement. He hurried her to the station; and soon they were gliding among beautiful rolling hills and across lovely meadows that were sweet with the odor of new mown hay. At noon, they came to stretches of rising ground, covered with nurseries of young trees of delicate green, and with vineyards, and field after field of roses, mignonette, and all kinds of sweet smelling flowers.

"Why, John this is fairyland! What is this place?"