

## A TOUCH OF NATURE.

A boy, ten years old, pulling a heavy cart loaded with pieces of boards and laths taken from some demolished structure—an every day sight in our large cities. Tired and exhausted, he halted under a shade tree. His feet were sore and bruised, his clothes in rags, his face pinched and looking years older than it should. The boy laid down on the grass, and in five minutes was fast asleep. His bare feet just touched the curb-stone, and the old hat fell from his head and rolled on the walk. In the shadow of the tree his face told a story that every passer-by could read. It told of scanty food, of nights when the body shivered with cold, of a home without sunshine, of a young life confronted by mocking shadows.

Then something curious happened. A laboring man—a queer old man, with a wood saw on his arm—crossed the street to rest for a moment under the same shade. He glanced at the boy and turned away, but immediately returned again, and now he saw the picture and read the story. He, too, knew what it was to shiver and hunger. He tiptoed along until he could bend over the boy, and then took from his pocket a piece of bread and meat—the dinner he was to eat if he found work—and laid it down beside the lad. Then he walked carelessly away, looking back every moment, but keeping out of sight as if he wanted to escape thanks.

Men, women and children had seen it all, and what a leveller it was! The human soul is ever kind and generous, but sometimes there is need of a key to open it. A man walked down from his steps, and left a half-dollar beside the poor man's bread. A woman came along, and left a good hat in place of the old one. A child came with a pair of shoes, and a boy with a coat and vest. Pedestrians halted and whispered and dropped dimes and quarters beside the first silver piece. The pinched faced boy suddenly awoke, and sprang up as if it were a crime to sleep there. He saw the bread, the clothing, the money, the score of people waiting around to see what he would do. He

knew that he had slept, and he realized that all these things had come to him as he dreamed. Then what did he do? Why he sat down, and covered his face with his hands and sobbed.—*Live Oak.*

## THE STORY OF BHAGIRTHI.

Mrs. Edward S. Hume, of Bombay, India, in the Annual Report of the Marathi Mission, tells the following story of one of the girls now in their school: "About the first of December, the woman who acts as cook for the boys' boarding school brought three little heathen girls to our door to ask whether or no we would receive them into the primary department of the Christian school. Two of them were her own children, and the third was a child of a neighbor. She was only six years old, had no mother, and her father wished to have her come regularly, the woman said. Little Bhagirthi was received with the cook's children, but she alone remains steadfast. It was not a fortnight before she had become so fond of the primary school teacher as to say to her, "I want you to take care of me. I will stay with your people always." And so one Saturday morning the little girl came to our dining-room window, bringing her father and the teacher with her, to say that she wished to enter my girls' boarding school. They are high caste tailors in rank, and were the child the daughter of his own rightful wife we could not have had her, but the man said, "Bhagirthi's mother has died; she is my daughter. I am not allowed by my caste people to keep her. None of our caste will touch her; no one will bathe her, no one will comb her hair, and I must let her go. One man of a lower caste has this week offered me rupees 200 (\$70) for her, because she is a nice girl of high caste. Others wish to buy her, but they will only harm her; they will take her for their own profit and injure her. You people are kind; you may take her, Madame Sahib. I cannot sell her for I love her! What shall I sell her for? I have my trade and enough to eat. I do not wish for money, but I wish her to be taken and cared for. I will give