

FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

THE DAYS BEFORE EASTER.

Across the rush and heat of life,
With sudden chill,
On thy vain hope and selfish aim,
Rebellious will,
The shadow of Gethsemane
Falls sharp and still.

And stays awhile the haste for gain
And foolish greed;
With sharpened vision thou dost see
Earth's fragile reed,
And all the empty things on which
The soul doth feed.

Calvary's cross stands bare upon
The darkened sky,
Against that cruel crown of thorn
Thy heart doth cry.
It meaneth, O my well-beloved,
That self must die.

For even as the sower's hand
The seed doth sow,
Believing winter's wind and soil
Kind purpose know;
With truer faith thou too must let
Thy fond hopes go.

For though the hidden seed be lost
To human eyes,
The sower waits the distant warmth
Of harvest skies,
So even shall earth's buried Hope
Immortal rise.

Beyond this Cross of Calvary
And Crown of thorn,
As eager eyes expectant watch
The rising dawn,
Thy Church in solemn triumph waits
Her Easter morn.

—The American Church S. S. Magazine.

JESUS, LEAD ME!

BY J. P. B.

Thou, the pure and flowing Fountain,
Jesu, wash my stains away;
Thou, the high and holy Mountain,
Jesu, be my rock and stay.

Into pastures fresh and vernal,
Lead Thy weery, fainting one;
Give me drink from spring eternal,
Jesu, be my light and sun.

Gentle Shepherd, ever lead me
By thy strong protecting hand,
With the heavenly manna feed me
Till I reach the promised land.

—The Family Churchman.

SWINGING TOO HIGH.

FOR THE YOUNG CHURCHMAN.

'Where are you going, David?'

'Out to the park.'

'I didn't hear you ask me if you might go.'

'I ain't a baby, mother.'

'You're not a man yet, David. When you are, I hope you'll be the kind your father is. Did you ever see him go off pleasuring without stopping to ask me could he help me first.'

'Do you want me to go to the store?' David asked. His face flushed and his eyes did not meet his mother's. Did she know he was mean enough to hurry off, for fear he might be delayed to do something for her?

'No; I have no errands for you.'

David stood pulling down his jacket, hat in hand. He watched her with a frowning face, as she pulled her sewing machine to the window. Why didn't she tell him to go, and let him slip off? By-the-bye, boys, if you are on the point of 'slipping off' anywhere, you had

better stay until you can go in another fashion; there's something unmanly about 'slipping off,' as a rule. Evidently David must ask:

'May I go?'

'What do you do out there?'

'Nothing.'

'That's a poor thing to do, and a thing you never liked, David. I'm afraid you meet an idle set of boys.'

David ventured to meet his mother's eye, as he answered:

'They don't have to do anything—they're gentlemen.'

Surely she would be glad enough to have him with gentlemen's sons!

'There's gentlemen and gentlemen,' she answered, not at all affected by the news.

'They may tire of you, besides.'

'I may be just as good as they are, some day,' blustered David.

His mother looked at him a minute before she answered, quietly:

'That's neither here nor there. You'll never be good for much though, doing nothing.'

Then she sighed. David brushed his hat with his sleeve and frowned harder than before.

'When are you going to finish your model, David? It's standin' there a month, now, and you said it wanted only a touch to finish it. Your father's that proud of it, he'd be mighty pleased to see it done.'

'It's no good,' David answered, impatiently, though he cast a half affectionate glance at the ingenious little contrivance of tiny pulleys, weights and wheels, which it had taken him more than a year to perfect, and which his mother dusted daily with a single feather, lest she should injure her son's handiwork. 'There's easier ways to make money than bothering with machinery. Can't I go, mother? Jim's waiting outside. You'd rather I'd play out in the park than 'round the streets, wouldn't you?'

'You may go this afternoon; but there's something wrong.'

There was something wrong; but just what it was, was not plain to be seen. David had an uncomfortable consciousness of it, though in all honesty he could say to Jim, as they hurried along, that 'he couldn't make out why his mother made a fuss—he was sure they didn't do any harm, afternoons at the park.' Nor was his mother at all sure where the trouble lay. They needed something to show them that the trouble was in David himself—not in what he did so much as in his ideas and feelings.

For several weeks David and Jim had been in the habit of meeting the same boys, and roaming the park with them. There was a difference between them and himself which David felt and which began to make him uneasy. He began to feel himself ill-used that he must hurry home to run errands, as he did at first, not that his mother had asked, but simply because he knew she might need him. Then it did not seem fair that he and Jim should walk always, while these boys, if tired, could jump on board a car for a few blocks, even. He hoped they would not ask him where he lived, or his father's business. Arthur Pierce, he knew, must be the son of the wealthy man for whom his father worked as skilled machinist. He began to be ashamed of knowing anything about work.

'Let's try the swing, boys,' suggested Frank Staples this afternoon. 'They've got the rope aw—tremendously short. Bet you we can't stand it so high. I'll try first.'

He climbed in, but a few turns made him cry 'Whoa!' One after the other tried it and were as quickly defeated. David purposely held back till the last. He was sure he could stand it, and he wanted them to appreciate him better by their own failure.

'Good!' cried Arthur, as Jim sent David higher and higher. 'You're a trump!'

David's head began to swim; but he mustn't give in.

'Any higher?' asked Jim.

'Yes,' answered David, breathlessly, and—I was going to say manfully. What do you think, boys? Is it manful to 'show off' for no particular object?

'Keep him going! keep him going!' shouted the boys, admiring his pluck, and at the same time amused at his anxious face.

'Run under!' cried Arthur.

'Shall I?' asked Jim.

A nod from David. Jim ran and let go of the swing with a jerk. The jerk was too much for David's dizzy head, and he came to the ground, and lay, for a minute or two, unable to stir or to speak. His white lips and little stream of blood from a cut in his forehead thoroughly frightened the boys. George Main, whose father was a doctor, unbuttoned his vest and put his ear over his heart.

'He's alive,' he said to their great relief.

A few minutes later he was sitting up, with Arthur's handkerchief bound around his head. When he tried to stand, he sank down again. George made another examination.

'No bones broken,' he declared; 'must be a sprained ankle.'

'How'll I ever get him home?' asked Jim, wofully.

'I'll go with you,' said Arthur. 'It's all my fault, for I told Jim to run under. Where's your street? We'll take turns carrying him to a car.'

'I haven't any car fare,' Jim said.

'That's all right—I have,' said Arthur.

David groaned, not so much from pain as from shame at the idea of the son of the rich Mr. Pierce seeing his plain, rather shabby home, on a 'floor.' But there was nothing else to be done.

'Oh, David, David, what did I let you go for?' his mother cried, as she heard stumbling footsteps on the stairs and ran out, to see the really alarming sight of David's white face and bandaged head and dangling foot.

When he was propped up on the lounge, Arthur told the story, blaming himself for the accident.

'I'm sure David'll not have you blame yourself,' his mother said: 'I'm sure I thank you from my heart for your kindness. Can you thank the young gentleman, David?'

David tried to speak, but his head sank back on his pillow, and his mother hastened to heat him some milk to revive him.

'I am going just round the corner to the drug store, Mrs. Carnduff,' Arthur said; 'is there any errand I can do for you while I'm out?'

'Thank you, no,' Mrs. Carnduff said, looking up with a gratified look.

David's pale face flashed.

Arthur was back in ten minutes, with a bottle of arnica and a paper of white grapes.

'I don't know whether he'd care for 'em,' he said, a little bashfully, 'but I always like 'em when I'm laid up.'

The door opened just then, and David's father came in, his eyes lighting first on Arthur.

'Why, Master Arthur, what brought you here? I'm pleased to see you,' and he held out his hand with a cordial smile.

'Why!' exclaimed Arthur, 'I didn't know David's father was our Mr. Carnduff! My! isn't that nice, David?'

David was savagely biting the pillow: he would not cry; they might think it was just because he couldn't bear pain; he knew better. It helped him to keep his tears back when he saw the drops in his father's eyes as he knelt beside the couch.

'Good night, David,' Arthur said; 'I'll look in to-morrow. May I, Mrs. Carnduff?'

'That you, may indeed; and thank you,' said Mrs. Carnduff, gratefully.