

The Boys We Need.

Here's to the boy who's not afraid
To do his share of work,
Who never is by toil dismayed,
And never tries to shirk.

The boy whose heart is brave to meet
All lions in the way;
Who's not discouraged by defeat,
But tries another day.

The boy who always means to do
The very best he can;
Who always keeps the right in view,
And aims to be a man.

Such boys as these will grow to be
The men whose hands will guide
The future of our land, and we
Shall speak their names with pride

All honour to the boy who is
A man at heart, I say;
Whose legend on his shield is this:
"Right always wins the day."

A Methodist Soldier

BY
ALLAN-A-DALE.

CHAPTER V.

I MAKE UP MY MIND.

For the next few days I was in a strangely unsettled state of mind. The



first evening my mother pleaded with me to tell her the truth. Harter had spread his malicious tale all over the village, and some of the younger children had been taunted with the story of their brother's misdeeds. But I still remained stubborn, and after that first evening no further word was said about it in the cottage.

I spent whole days on the lonely downs thinking the matter over, and wondering what the end would be. Life at home was no longer what it had been. I seemed to see in my father's growing sternness an increasing doubt, and when, on the second day, my portion at supper was plainer than the rest, I knew without being told that he had devised a method of saving a trifle more towards the debt I owed.

Then, one day, as I lay on the grass with my face upturned, a solution of the whole difficulty seemed to present itself. "Why not enlist for a soldier?" Winchester was not far off. Though I had not seen it, I had heard great stories of the barracks and the soldiers, and the long grey prison in which the Frenchmen were kept in captivity.

And then, magnificent thought, his Majesty was sorely in need of men; the bounties were high. Men who had enlisted from my own village had received as high as £20. Why not enlist, pay my debt, and escape all the unpleasantness that now surrounded my life? Better to face the lash of the drummers and the cannon balls of the enemy, as Joe Harter had done, than live under the stern eye of my father, and see the white face of my mother as she dealt out to me the rye-bread and water which was now my daily food. She, poor woman, would gladly have given me the slightest better fare the other children enjoyed, but her word was also given, and she respected it.

When my mind was made up I felt greatly relieved, and for the first time in a week I regained my usual spirits. I whistled for very joy, cut a caper or two in my clumsy fashion—for truth to say I was a loutish lad—and the rest of that day passed as no day on the hill or in the field had ever done. I even ate my hunk of bread and drank the clear spring water with relish, and when the sun dropped over the hill-top I went home with a light heart. It seemed as if a big gate had opened and I was going through to something good beyond. I dreamed of the gate that night, and

the archway of it was red and hideous with grinning faces like the strange waterspouts on the church, also there were many bayonets like Joe Harter's, which seemed to close in and leave but a narrow space to tread, and through the gleaming steel and under the reddened arch I could see a cloud of smoke and dim forms struggling, but back of that again was a golden sun rising, and when the sun rose full, I knew the mist and the blood-shadows would roll away.

No thought had I of dreams or portents as I saw my sheep safely in their pen that night. So cheerfully did I doff my hat to the Squire that he gave me "Good-night" less gruffly than usual, and I went quite merrily down the hill!

Yet I was not without misgivings as I neared the cottage, when the thatched roof and grey walls came in sight, and the little flower garden with the wooden railing I knew so well. I felt to wondering how my plan would be heard.

My father's consent I believed I would receive, and my mother's blessing—though with tears; but of a sudden I remembered there was perhaps a third to be consulted.

I sat on a tussock of grass at the roadside and thought for a moment.

It was then that there passed through my mind the memory of one or two occasions, less important perhaps than this, when discussion had been set aside with the words: "We will wait until the minister comes. Ask him."

It was not said without reason. To all our simple village folk "the minister" was not only a spiritual guide, but a personal friend and an arbiter in out-of-the-way matters of daily life.

For myself I loved and revered him as I did my own parents. His word in this matter I felt would be final.

Determined nevertheless to say my own word that night, I walked down to the cottage and lifted the latch on the wooden gate—but more quietly and thoughtfully than ever before.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MINISTER CONSENTS.

Having made up my mind, I was not slow to act. As soon as the evening hour came, the younger children having said their prayers at their mother's knee and being then packed into bed upstairs, I broached the whole matter, the words tumbling out in such a hasty manner that I can scarce remember what I said. However I put it, they caught my meaning easily enough, and my mother's apron went speedily to her eyes, while my father looked even more stern and sad than he had done at any time during that unfortunate week.

For a time after I had so eagerly unfolded my plan we sat in perfect silence, my mother crying quietly and afraid to speak, waiting to hear my father's verdict; and he, plainly conning the matter over slowly in his mind, and saying nothing until he had arrived at some judgment.

Then he shook his head. "The army," he said, "I know few who have passed through it without hurt."

"But all are not wounded," I replied. "Thinking of Robb Forwood, who, clad in a splendid uniform, had several times during the past year visited our village, his native home, and carried off some of the likeliest lads to join his regiment then lying at Winchester. It was his boast that he had been all through two big campaigns and had won his sergeant's stripes without so much as a scratch."

"It was not the wounds of the body I was thinking of, Jim," said my father, his face softening a little. "There are worse wounds than the Frenchmen give. A man who loses a limb in battle has lost a part of himself which he can ill spare, but a man may come through the fight without hurt and yet carry a worse sign in his face than a sabre cut."

"We will say no more about it to-night," he continued. "To-morrow Mr. Ullathorne comes; he is a good counsellor. The whole matter shall be laid before him, and if he thinks that your path lies in that direction, then your mother and I will not stand in your way."

So to bed I also went, to dream of sabres and bayonets; and to wake, not doubting that my dream would come true.

The minister came the next day, riding his stout little cob into the village about noon, and making straight, as his custom was, to my father's cottage. I met him at the turn of the road, a hundred yards from the house, where I had been looking and waiting for an hour or more.

He was a man well under forty, broad-shouldered and broad-faced, with a touch of the north countryman about him and a great favourite in the villages of his big southern circuit. His coming,

which happened once every two weeks, was a great occasion for the handful of Methodists in the village. He rarely stayed more than four hours, and in that time got through an amazing amount of work, holding a service in the cottage, or on the green if the weather was favourable, and visiting every sick man or woman, whether Methodist or not, in the place. Then over the meal which he took with us, he would talk of the affairs of the outside world and of the doings of Methodists in big places. Once a month he produced a copy of *The Methodist Magazine*, to which my father and others jointly subscribed, and of which he carried a number of copies, with Bibles and other good books in his capacious saddle-bags. He was a well-informed man and always put us in possession of more accurate news than came through other channels, but he was especially delighted if he could relate a story of revivals and the rapid growth of Methodism. His cheery talk and the echo of his great faith, sustained the courage of many a small and struggling village Methodist throughout the district in which he performed so many prodigies of work.

There was in Mr. Ullathorne a natural spring of youthful enthusiasm which, in spite of his thirty odd years, made him a special friend of the boys and girls in his widely-scattered flock. While I looked upon him with a certain amount of awe as "the minister," I shared the general admiration and fondness for him as a man. He was at this time coming near the end of his three years' stay in our neighbourhood, and had grown a very familiar object to us, and we to him.

Here, then, he was at last riding smartly down the road, and little thinking what a momentous issue—for me—hung upon this visit.

"Hallo, Jim, lad," he cried cheerily when he caught sight of me. "Hast come to meet me? All well in the village. I trust?"

I assured him that all were well since he had last visited us; and then, the horse slackening pace, walked beside him, while he busied himself in disposing of a book which he held in his hand, and which had been the companion of his morning ride.

At the garden gate he dismounted, and removing his saddle-bags himself, walked up the little path between my mother's rows of sweet country flowers—old-fashioned now, but to this day fragrant in my memory—while I led the cob to a neighbour's barn where the faithful little horse had a well-earned rest and feed.

(To be continued.)

THE CASE OF THE BOY.

The average boy is a compound of curiosity and animal life. He wants to follow up and investigate every sign of anything new; he wants to see anything there is to see and experience anything there is to experience. When there is nothing new to absorb him, he exercises his arms, legs and lungs in the most vigorous manner that presents itself, and with about as much purpose as a young colt has when it careers madly round a field. These two characteristics explain a great part of the boy's life, its mischief and even its so-called badness, as well as its surprising energy and quickness. His proneness to smoke, swear and fight have a definite connection with these characteristics, as well as his fondness for reading and his inventive tendencies, which make his parents so proud.

In short, the parent of the average boy has charge of a very highly developed and very delicate kind of steam engine, in which if the steam is allowed to vent, or too little, there is apt to be a catastrophe; and he is responsible for seeing that it be not broken or its efficiency spoiled by mistaken treatment.

Where a boy is not like this, where he prefers the sedateness of his elders to racing and playing with other boys, and where he is ready to accept every precept and statement without testing it for himself, perhaps one of the best services you can do him is to encourage in him the bounding life that is at once the best prerogative of the boy and the greatest care to his parents. Parents should not congratulate themselves that they have such a "good boy," until they are quite sure that it is goodness that makes him different from other boys, nor encourage this doubtful "goodness" of lifelessness or priggishness because it saves them trouble.

The first safeguard to provide for the boy is occupation. If his guardians do not find something to occupy his eternally busy mind and his restless body, he will be sure to do it himself, and where he is left entirely to his own judgment and the guidance of other boys the trouble is pretty sure to begin. Innocently enough, too, often, for his ex-

perience and knowledge of evil and its consequences are small. But if a boy is encouraged in outdoor sports; if he is given books, and tools, and shown how to use them, and if he has some one to interest him in photography, music, or elementary science, like insect or flower collecting, the chances are infinitely diminished of his learning or caring to learn what would injure him.

The second safeguard for the boy is his father's friendship and the mutual confidence between them, and his mother's love. The influence is incalculable of a father who is the leader in all his boy's occupations and amusements; or, where this is impossible, who takes a real interest in them and aids them as much as he can. And the father who keeps his boy's confidence, it may be at great inconvenience and only with constant care and sympathy, is likely to have a better son than a better father who loses it.

The most powerful lover in life is love. Parents should not keep their tenderness for their girls, and their Spartan modes of training for their boys. The boys have even more need of the little "shows of love" because of their rougher life, greater temptations, and on the whole more volcanic and dangerous natures. Punishment may be necessary, but there is a way of banishing love when the time for punishment comes, and there is a way of letting the child feel love even in punishment. Children were not given to parents as a vent for bad temper, a convenience or an amusement. No boy, however big he may be, is too big for his mother's kisses and petting. It is her duty to see that he does not get too big for them, and that the little "shows of love" do not become unfamiliar. It is the little things that count in life. If the little things cost trouble and self-sacrifice, the mother will find herself amply repaid in after years, when the frail net of her love proves a stronger cable to keep her boy in his moorings than the greatest of benefits without love.

A little girl of seven years was cutting out some paper dolls the other day to show to a friend. The lady objected that the dolls' heads were too wide. "Take the scissors, dear, and trim them off," she said. "No," replied the little maid. "I can't do that, they have to be wide,—they're swelled with instruction."

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