

I am going to tell you one now about a little boy—one of the dearest, kindest, gentlest, and withal, one of the most manly little fellows we have ever known.

It all happened about six years ago in the San Carlos Hotel here at Havana. I was living there at the time, and we had our Church in one end of the building, which we rented for that purpose.

A woman came to the hotel one day and engaged board. She brought a little boy with her—a handsome, rosy-cheeked boy, with very winning ways, but he wore a sad and thoughtful look at times, which caused many of us to think he was unhappy—a mere thought which passed away in the thinking.

It was late in the Spring—a time of the year when the air of Havana is full of malaria—which is the principal cause of that fatal disease called yellow fever, which carries so many of our people to their graves. I was sleeping out of town at the time, in order to avoid the foul air of Havana, and came into the city very early every morning to visit the sick in our hospital. This painful duty generally kept me busy three or four hours, so that usually, I did not reach my study in the hotel until 11, sometimes 12 o'clock.

One morning Mrs. — said to me, "Mr. Kenney, I have taken a great interest in that little boy, and I believe that he is badly treated, and does not have enough to eat; will you please find out who he is, and about his mother."

I made the inquiries and everything was, apparently, satisfactory.

The suspicion, however, that the boy was being badly treated continued to increase, but for what cause no one could tell.

I was busy with my work, and paid little attention at the time to what I considered unnecessary meddling and gossip.

One morning, an old and faithful servant came to me and said, "I hear that little boy crying bitterly every day; the woman he calls his *Mamma* has taken a room on the upper story, and she is constantly whipping the child."

This was an entirely new complaint, but yet I said, what right has any one to interfere with a mother correcting her child? I suppose he is bad and deserves it.

These complaints were renewed from time to time until there seemed to be necessity for interference; and Jane's face—that was the servant's name—gave every indication that she was pleased when I advised her that, the next time the shrieks and cries of the boy were heard, to go into the room and find out what was the matter; and if it seemed necessary, to take the child away, and I would stand responsible for what she did.

I heard nothing more of the trouble for some days. One morning I came in town by the five o'clock train, but instead of going to the hospital, according to custom, I went immediately to my study. It was about half-past six. And after I had ordered my coffee, good old Jane—I call her good because she has been very kind to our sick people—came running to me, all out of breath, and in a great fright, and speaking rapidly, she said, "Oh, your reverence, that boy went on awfully this morning, yelled and screamed, and we thought he was being killed, and I knocked at the woman's door and she would not let me in. But I did, and oh! sir, what do you think I saw?"

"Why, what Jane?" said I.
"Oh! your reverence, that boy was all naked, and tied to the bedpost, so that he could not move, and that woman—oh! that bad woman was beating him with her trunk strap. Yes, sir, and worse, and worse, sir, with the buckle end of it, and I made her stop, though she threatened to beat me, and I untied him, and brought him down stairs in my arms; and I think he will

die. He is all black and blue; and his head is cut; and his little side is all bleeding; and he does not speak or open his eyes; he is in one of the rooms down here, (pointing to the room). Come, won't you, quick, and see him.

Of course, I went with her immediately, and yet could not help thinking that the case was exaggerated, and that no mother would inflict such chastisement on her child. But I soon found out that she was not his mother.

The sight which I witnessed when I reached the room cannot fairly be described with the pen. If I could make pictures I would draw one for you, but, even then, you would not see all sides of that sad scene. The boy was lying on a velvet rug in the centre of a large room, a few of the guests of the hotel, and some people from outside had gathered around the little sufferer. I made my way to the child and found that he was naked and speechless; his body was frightfully lacerated, and, as the servant woman had said, black and blue from head to foot. His head was cut and blood was oozing from his side. As he lay in this ghastly condition, no one for a moment thought he could live.

We sent for a physician immediately; two came. Restoratives were applied, and after awhile the child began to show some signs of life. A careful examination of the wounds was made, and a record kept for the Judge of the District, to whom the case was reported immediately.

The woman was placed under bonds, and a number of men of the country made themselves responsible for her appearance.

At the examination which followed, we found out, for the first time, that she belonged to a circus company, and that little Bobby, for that is what they called him, was in the habit of performing as an athlete, playing all sorts of antics upon the trapeze. He was being disciplined to do these things, and part of the daily discipline was a good beating.

The woman said Bobby was four years of age; that she was not his mother; that he belonged to the United States of America, in short, that he was a little American. More than this she would not tell, and her friends were defiant in their attitude.

She said herself, afterwards, that if she ever succeeded in getting the boy again, she would kill him.

I saw plainly there was a hard fight before us, and was at a loss, at first, how to act. The few words which the woman had said about his being an American, enabled me to decide, and I determined at once to claim American protection for Bobby, so I went to the Consul General of the United States, and laid the case before him, who, after a brief delay, took the matter in charge; and then the fight began.

I am afraid it would make my story very tedious were I to give you the details of that fight, so I will only tell you that it was carried on quietly for months. In the meantime Bobby was placed under my protection and received every kindness and attention at the hotel. He was naturally a very strong child and his recovery was more rapid than we dared hope for on the morning when we first looked upon his body; and it was not very long before he was playing about the halls of the hotel. He had learned a good deal of wickedness during his short career, one could see could see very plainly that he had been in bad company. The company we keep, children, always tells upon us sooner or later, either for good or for bad. But Bobby soon began to lose his little wicked acts, and to act like a gentleman—a gentleman of four years old—much to the credit of his father and mother, whoever they are, and wherever they may be at this hour, grieving for their lost boy. We knew him only as an orphan now, but I believe he has a father and mother living; and who knows but what he may find them some day?

He is a very affectionate and in those days he used to come and put his little arms around my neck, and tell me as much as he could remember about his "good Mamma," as he calls his own mother, in contradistinction to the circus woman, whom he always called "Mamma Louisa."

During the time of which I am writing, I went to the interior of Cuba to make some visitations, and to hold some Church services, I left Bobby in the hotel. When I came back the boy was gone, and you may imagine how sorry, yes, very sorry, I was, when they told me that the Judge had sent an officer twice to carry him away, but the child cried and screamed so that it was impossible to take him, and that, finally, the officer came with order from the Judge to take him, no matter how much he screamed, and that if the child died even, on the way, no matter, it could not be helped. And so Bobby was carried off by main force, screaming, and kicking, and crying as if his heart would break, and taken to Matanzas, a city about 60 miles from Havana. He was there deposited, according to Spanish law, with a man belonging to the same circus, and was really back with the woman again. Her friends had been at work during my absence.

When the Judge was appealed to, he simply said that he would do as he pleased, and he would like to know what the Consul General of the United States, or the "Padre Cura Protetante," meaning me, had to do with the boy.

This was unexpected trouble. Our Consul General knew nothing about it, and so I went again and laid the case before him, and finally the little boy's history was placed before the Captain General of the Island. The Captain General is an officer appointed by the King of Spain to govern the Island of Cuba.

After waiting a few days, the General decided that the Judge should have Bobby brought back from Matanzas, and delivered to the Consul General of the United States. And our Consul General brought the child, with the papers, setting forth these facts, to me, and thus a long fight was ended, and Bobby was saved.

The poor boy was afraid to move about much after that, his troubles had been so many, that he would start back and tremble at every strange face. He was with me for a long time at the hotel; and when I went to the United States in September, of that same year, 1874, I took him with me.

On the way, he told me much that I had not learned from him before; told me that his "good Mamma" always called him Charlie; that a man took him away in a waggon, and that they called him Bobby in the circus, in fact, that the circus woman gave his name as Robert Edwards. He said he had "lots of brothers in the circus," but that he had two brothers at home who were different from the circus brothers.

He could not remember any other name but Charlie. And when I asked him about his home and the name of the place, he tried to describe it to me, but could not remember the name.

Each day marked some improvement in his manners and conversation and when we reached New York, he sat at the hotel table with me and behaved like a little gentleman, as I said before, a little gentleman four years old. He made many friends who were then, and have been since, in many ways, very kind to him.

I had him baptized—hypothetically—Charlie, and gave him my name. So he is now known as Charlie Kenney, and is a brave, honest and truthful boy, such as all boys should be. We all love him for his own worth, and not out of mere pity.

I could say many good things about him, but it would make my story too long. And now, I think I hear you ask, but where is he? He is at Cooperstown, New York; in that little school which Miss Susan Fennimore Cooper founded,

some years ago; and under Miss Cooper's care and direction he has grown in wisdom and knowledge, and in the fear and love of his Heavenly Father, who has made his once little sorrowful life a life of peace and happiness. And I know you will all remember him in your prayers that this good may continue; whilst I remain until I have something more to tell you.

Your sincere friend,
EDWARD KENNEY.

June 1st, 1880.

—The Young Churchman.

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J. BRAUN,
Secretary,
Department of Railways and Canals,
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