

A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS.

BEN MARTYN set down a basket on the slippery sidewalk and signalled the car, which was dragging slowly up a hill. The driver looked cross at the idea of stopping again.

"This is the third time I have had to stop the car since I started up the hill," he said, in a grumbling tone.

Ben looked sympathetic.

"It is too bad," he said; "if I had thought so far, I could have waited; but my thoughts always come afterward."

There was one vacant seat, and no room for basket or bundles. Ben took the seat; but at the top of the hill the car stopped again, and a feeble old lady in a calico dress came in. Ben jumped to his feet.

"Take my seat," he said, cheerily, as if it was a great pleasure to stand.

The woman took it, and she forgot to thank him; but I know she was grateful.

Everybody was out that morning, and everybody wanted to ride in that car; they kept crowding in. One man jostled against Ben and knocked the smaller basket out of his arms, and red and green apples went rolling over the dirty car.

"That's bad," the man said heartily, but he didn't offer to help pick them up.

"Never mind," said Ben, cheerily; "accidents will happen, especially when they don't give us more elbow room than this. It's lucky it wasn't the other basket; they are eggs. I'm afraid they wouldn't pick up quite so easily."

It wasn't three minutes after that that a finely dressed lady, complaining of the crowd and the tiresomeness of having one's dress sat on, moved away from her next neighbor with such a jerk that she came with her elbow against Ben's other basket, and out rolled a small package and an egg; and of all places for an egg to fall, it went plump into the finely dressed lady's lap. Of course it broke—eggs always do when they shouldn't—then what a time there was! Ben's face was red away up into his hair with sorrow and mortification; he made as many and as humble apologies as though he had ruined the lady for life.

"They ought not to allow such people to ride on the cars," she said angrily, in answer to an exceedingly humble sentence from Ben. "I think they ought to have a market wagon run to accommodate the people who are inclined to turn the street cars into walking stores."

Ben looked interested in the idea.

"It would be a good thing," he said. "I wonder why they don't run a special car for us working fellows in the morning; it really is a nuisance to have our baskets and bundles in everybody's way; but we don't know how to help it. Still, I'm not generally so careless as

this. I'm just as sorry as I can be."

The lady did not choose to say another word.

More people began to have accidents. A little girl lost two of her pennies, which were to pay for her ride, down in that wretched hole in the floor where pennies and car tickets are so fond of falling. She looked for them hopelessly for a minute, and then began to rub her eyes.

Ben didn't see the falling cents; he was busy trying to tie with one hand a paper of sugar into a more secure package; but he looked up in time to see the tears in her eyes, and enquire into it. Then he had a hard time shifting baskets and bundles from one arm to the other, and finding his way to his pocket book, from which he drew out two bright pennies.

"Here," he said, "pennies are nice things; I'd like to have a billion of them; but I never think they are worth crying for, especially after they have slipped down a hole. There are more to be found that will take their places."

And the little girl's tears didn't fall.

A gentleman with a file of bills sticking out of one pocket and a bank book out of the other, who had occupied a seat near Ben all the way, now leaned forward and touched his arm.

"Young man, what is your name and business?"

"My name is Benjamin S. Martyn, sir, and I am Mr. T. G. Lewis' errand boy at the country store."

"Do you like the work?"

"No, sir; not so well as some things I can think of, but a great deal better than I like doing nothing this cold winter."

"What do you want to do?"

"I want to be a clerk in a store, not a boy to do things when there is something to be done, but a boy who has regular work and regular hours."

"Then you are not regularly employed?"

"No, sir; only when they happen to have something for me to do, and don't happen to send anybody else who happens to be going that way."

"Have you any spare time in the city this morning?"

"Yes, sir; I have just one errand to do, and then I must wait for the next car up."

"Well, sir; you may call at that address and I will have a little further talk with you about some important business."

And the great merchant handed him the business card of the largest firm in the city. And as he left the car and walked down town with his nephew, he said:

"I've found the boy at last that I have been hunting after for two years. I have discovered after this morning's ride that he is quick-

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