

filled the sky-like dome, although my judgment could not but condemn the semi-pagan pageantry, I felt the spell of that mighty sorcery, which, through the ages, has beguiled the hearts of men. I missed, however, in the harmony the sweet tones of the female voice, for in the holy precincts of St. Peter's no woman's tongue may join in the worship of her Redeemer.

The bronze statue of St. Peter in the nave, originally, it is said, a pagan statue of Jove, was sumptuously robed in vestments of purple and gold—the imperial robes, it is averred, of the Emperor Charlemagne—a piece of frippery that utterly destroyed any native dignity the statue may have possessed.

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## Sunbeam.

TORONTO, SEPTEMBER 30, 1905.

### RALPH'S CONFESSION.

Ralph was a little boy of seven, and he had lately come to live with his uncle and aunt, for he was an orphan. It was not long since his mother had died, and many a time he cried himself to sleep when tired and lonely, for she had been his only companion and playmate during his short life.

Uncle Ross found his little boy a playmate who consoled Ralph very often, and that was Fido, Ralph's dog; and a very intelligent dog he was, too. But still Fido got into trouble, as even good dogs will do, and then it was very hard for his master Ralph, for when Fido did wrong Ralph's Aunt Amy would have him punished, and this made Ralph feel very bad.

But the story which I am going to tell you is how Ralph got into mischief one day.

Aunt Amy was out visiting some

friends, and when Ralph came from school he went into the library to look for his top, which he thought he had left there, but not finding it, started to play with an ornament he had often admired but which he knew he should not handle. This ornament belonged to Aunt Amy, and she prized it very much.

He was admiring it as it lay in his hand, when he was startled by a noise outside, and it fell from his hand and lay at his feet broken. He stood wondering what he would do, when the thought came into his mind. Why, of course, he could blame it on Fido.

Now, although Ralph was very fond of Fido, he was more willing that Fido should have the punishment than he, so running out of the room, he left the door open, so that it would be thought Fido had been there.

It was with a rather guilty conscience that Ralph went to his supper that night, and tremblingly waited to hear about the broken ornament, for Aunt Amy would surely know by now.

Ralph did not have to wait long. "I am extremely annoyed," she turned, as she spoke, to Ralph. "The ornament on the mantel is broken, and I am sure Fido has done it. We will have to send him away, for he is always getting into trouble. I wish you had not brought him here at all," and she turned to her husband. "Send him away!"

This was more than Ralph could bear. He had never thought Fido would get more than a beating. Poor Fido, Ralph had thought, was used to an occasional beating, and it would not hurt him to take one now for his (Ralph's) sake. But for Ralph to lose his dog! that was sore indeed.

Pretty soon Ralph left the table with a heavy heart. He could not decide to take the punishment himself, and so clear his doggie. Ralph well knew that when Aunt Amy said a thing, it was straight-way carried out.

But there was some one who had seen the little boy's flushed and guilty face, and suspected Fido was not the guilty one, and that was Uncle Ross.

Ralph was fonder of his uncle than his aunt, but then Uncle Ross was never so cross and severe as Aunt Amy.

After supper, when Ralph was lying in the hammock outside, Uncle Ross came out, and, sitting down beside his little boy, he said:

"Well, Ralph, would you like to keep Fido?" and he had his answer in the sparkle of the little boy's eyes, so going on, he said, "Ralph, I think you can keep him if you will."

The child looked up, startled, then burst into tears as he said:

"Oh, Uncle, Fido didn't do it. It was me. I was so frightened for fear Aunt

Amy would be angry with me, so I hid Fido where they would think he had done it," and the little boy, relieved of his burden, sobbed piteously.

Poor Ralph! he was by nature truthful, and to have the burden caused by disobedience lifted from his heart seemed such a relief.

When the little boy's sobs were still his uncle spoke again:

"Well, Ralph, I knew all the time the little boy was wicked, but I wanted to make it right himself."

At this Ralph looked up surprised, and cried impulsively, "Oh, uncle, I will never tell a falsehood again, and he meant as to want poor Fido to take my punishment, even if he is only a dog."

Uncle Ross saw his little boy had learned a lesson, and after talking to him quietly for a little while, he said:

"Well, Ralph, will we go and tell Aunt Amy not to send Fido away, and that you will take the punishment?"

Poor boy! He had forgotten the punishment in his earnestness, and now think of it made him shiver; but looking up into his uncle's face bravely, he said:

"Yes, uncle, I'll tell her to punish me instead."

His uncle smiled a little at his earnestness, but taking the little boy's hand, led him into the house, where Aunt Amy sat sewing.

"Why, Ralph, what is wrong?" auntie asked, seeing the tear stains on the little boy's face. So Ralph, gaining courage by his uncle's kindly glance, replied:

"Auntie, I've come to tell you it was not Fido who broke that. I did it."

"Why did you not say so before when I mentioned it, Ralph?" and Aunt Amy looked rather severe.

"I was afraid," and his face drooped under Aunt Amy's look, but, gaining courage, "I'll take the punishment now."

His aunt's face flushed a little, and a softer tone she said:

"Well, Ralph, I think you have had punishment enough, but be careful to tell the truth another time, no matter what the consequence may be. Come here now, and kiss me."

After the little boy had left the room with a lighter heart than before entered it, his aunt, turning to her husband, said:

"He is more of a little man than I thought, and perhaps I have been too severe with him, sometimes. I will try to be more loving now," which was a good deal for Aunt Amy to admit.

"Yes, my dear, he is a good child, and will be better, ruled more by love than fear."

After this Ralph was happier, and grew to love Aunt Amy as well as his uncle. He grew to manhood always aiming to tell the truth and be a man, and no one prouder of him than Aunt Amy.