

## A PRACTICAL JOKE.

"LET'S have some fun to-night, boys."  
 "All right; what shall it be?" was the eager query, and the group of boys drew closer together, that their consultation might not be overheard by any of their schoolmates.

Dan Ellis was a good-natured, overgrown boy who was made the butt of all practical jokes, and who took, as a matter of course all the merriment that the boys at school were apt to enjoy at the expense of his red hair, his irregular features, wide mouth, and shabby clothes. The boys were so used to teasing Dan, and having him receive everything good-naturedly, that I doubt whether any of them ever took into consideration the fact that he had feelings which could be hurt by unkindness.

That evening Dan was on his way home from a neighbor's, where he had been doing some chores, when he suddenly tripped and fell full length, with one foot doubled up under him. A hearty shout of laughter greeted his fall, but when Dan, with a faint smile on a face that was pale with pain, made an effort to rise and fell back again with a low moan, the boys were frightened at the results of their joke and ran to his aid. One of them cut the strong string which had been stretched across the street about a foot from the ground, while the others tried to help Dan to his feet.

"I'm afraid I've broken my leg, boys; I can't stand," and a moan escaped Dan's lips in spite of his effort to hide his pain.

"I'm awfully sorry, Dan, old fellow," said Harvey Beach, earnestly, as they laid the injured boy down again. "It's all my fault, for I put the boys up to it; but I only meant a bit of fun. I never meant to hurt you, don't you know I didn't."

"That's all right," began Dan feebly, but before the words were fairly out of his lips he fainted with the pain he was trying to endure so bravely.

The boys carried him home as carefully as they could, and while one went for the doctor the others helped his mother put him into bed. The time seemed very long to the boys, who were waiting in an anxious group by the gate, before the doctor came out.

"Well, boys?" he said, kindly, as one of the boys stepped forward to detain him.

"How is Dan?" queried Harvey, eagerly.

"I am sorry to say his leg is broken and it will be some time before he can get about again," the doctor answered. "He

would not tell me how he came to have such a fall, but if it came from a practical joke I think the only return the jokers can make to their victim is to relieve his mind of the anxiety he feels about the work he will have to give up."

The boys stole into the house again to consult Dan's mother, and to ask whether there was not some of his daily work they could do for him until he was well again. They knew he kept the schoolroom in order, but the mother told them that besides this he did the chores every morning and evening at a neighbor's, and the little money he earned in this way was a great help to them.

"Tell Dan we will do his work for him," said Harvey, glad that there was some return they could make to the boy they had injured so severely in their practical joking; and though this promise meant perseverance in hard work for many a long day, they never neglected their self-imposed duties. A new respect for the boy who could keep his standing in the class and yet work so bravely grew in their hearts, and during the days of his suffering and imprisonment they showed him many marks of love and sympathy. There was general rejoicing when Dan reappeared in school one day and took his old place.

"I've done with practical jokes," said Harvey. "I think this one cost more than it was worth, and for my part I never mean to play another. You're a brick, Dan, not to bear malice, when it has cost you so much pain."

A smile lighted up Dan's plain face. "I don't mind," he said, "for I feel as if you were all my friends now; but I agree with you that it is an expensive kind of fun, and it's well to count the cost first, and see if the joke is worth it."

The lesson on the folly of practical joking had cost poor Dan many a day of pain, and the boys many hours of hard work, but they had learned something that they would not soon forget, and while they were as fond of fun as any other boys, they never again devised a piece of mischief which might lead to serious results.

—M. E. Kenney, in *Christian Intelligencer*.

## SHE KNOWS GOD.

DOCTOR P. was riding in the suburbs of Buffalo with his small boy, and stopped at a haven to water his horse. The child watched the operation intently, and, evidently thinking it clumsily managed, piped out:

"Papa, why doesn't the horse take the pail up with his feet and drink?"

"Why, he isn't made that way."

"Why not?"

"Well, God didn't see fit to make him so."

"Why didn't God make him so?"

"Ah! that beats me. How should I know?"

The infant's respect for his father clearly suffered.

"I'm!" he said, after a moment's hesitation; "I'll ask grandma. She knows God."—*Selected*.

A LITTLE girl going along a crowded street, carrying a child not much smaller than herself, was accosted by a lady.

"Isn't he a burden?" she questioned, kindly.

"Oh, no'm," answered the child; "he's my brother."

That is, indeed, the secret of helping others. When one becomes your brother you no longer find it hard to bear with his sins and follies.—*The Outlook*.

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