

An Unmanageable Boy.

'I could get on very well with the rest of the class, if it were not for Bert Rawson,' said Miss Laura Jenness, a teacher in a large Sunday-school in an eastern city, to Mr. Anson, superintendent of the school. Miss Jenness looked perplexed, and even distressed. She felt a humiliating and discouraging sense of defeat. The superintendent also looked troubled and perplexed. He knew all about the unmanageable Bert Rawson.

'Have you tried everything with the boy, Miss Jenness?' he asked.

'Yes, it seems to me that I have,' said Miss Jenness. 'Methods that have been successful with other boys fail when applied to Bert. There does not seem to be anything to appeal to in the boy.'

'And yet there must be something to appeal to in a boy of but thirteen or fourteen years. There is something to appeal to in every boy of that age. If we could only find out Bert's vulnerable point.'

'If we could!' said Miss Jenness. 'He is, with all his faults, a bright boy; and he is popular enough with the other boys in the class to be able to influence them, and when he is present I find it almost impossible to do anything with the lesson.'

'And yet there is something wonderfully likeable about the boy,' said Mr. Anson.

'So there is.'

This boy, this 'likeable' but openly and defiantly mischievous boy, had been for about a year a member of the Sunday-school, and had been in Miss Jenness's class most of the time. He was a bright-eyed, restless, harum-scarum kind of a boy, with apparently no conception of his duty as a member of a Sunday-school class. He was flippantly irreverent in his manner; he neither knew nor cared to know anything about the lesson, and he admitted frankly that his chief object in coming to Sunday-school was to 'have some fun.'

'I'll try him a Sunday or two longer, and if I can't do anything with him, then I'll have to ask you to put him into another class or make some other arrangement regarding him,' said Miss Jenness, at the close of her conversation with Mr. Anson.

The next Sunday Bert came to school in his usual mood. He was flippant to the last degree. He had attended a very exciting game of baseball the day before, and his whole conversation was of this game. He gained the attention of the other boys in the class and took their minds from the lesson until Miss Jenness was in despair.

Bert talked of the game all through the opening exercises of the school, and was about to begin on it again at the close of the opening prayer, when Miss Jenness laid her hand lightly upon his shoulder, and said, quietly, but firmly:

'Bert.'

'Yes, ma'am.'

'I'd really like to know just how that game came out, but this is not the time nor the place for me to hear about it. Won't you come around to my house to-morrow evening with the other boys of the class, and tell us all about this great game? We'd like to hear about it; wouldn't we, boys?'

'Yes, ma'am,' said two or three of the boys.

'Then Bert shall come and tell us all about it, and we'll have a pleasant time together before I commence work with my new class next Sunday.'

'Your new class?' said Charlie Ray, while all the other boys looked at Miss Jenness in surprise.

'Yes,' she said, 'this will probably be my last Sunday with you. I have asked Mr. Anson to give me a new class next Sunday.'

'Why, Miss Jenness, what for?' asked Bob Hooper, in a tone of surprise.

Interest in the ball game ceased, and even Bert sobered down; while Theo. Rayford said decidedly:

'We don't want any other teacher.'

'Perhaps you don't, Theo, but there are others in the class who have given me clearly and distinctly to understand by their conduct that I am a failure as a teacher of this class; so it is evidently my duty to give place to someone who will be a success.'

'Who says you're a failure?' asked Howard Burton, angrily.

'I must be a failure if I am unable to command the respect and attention of the boys in my class. I must be a failure when my boys turn a deaf ear to my attempts to teach them God's Word, and give eager ear to an account of a ball game. I must be a failure when I am unable to make any impression whatever on a scholar who comes every Sunday, and who is far from lacking in understanding. I must be a failure when that boy's influence in the class is greater than my own, and he refuses to use his influence for good. Yes, boys, I must give up this class, because I am a failure as its teacher.'

'I don't see how you can be a failure when we like you better than any teacher we ever had,' said Joel Reed.

'I don't see how I can regard myself as a success while there is a single scholar in my class upon whom I fail to make an impression.'

Miss Jenness looked at Bert as she spoke. He cast down his eyes. The other boys looked at him with disfavor in their faces.

'I have made up my mind to give up the class if I cannot be given the attention a teacher should command. Other classes will be courteous to me, and perhaps Mr. Anson can find a teacher for you whom you will respect more than you have respected me. I bear you no ill-will, and I want every boy in the class to come to my house for a merry social time together before we separate. Then we'll hear the rest of your ball game story, Bert.'

'We don't want to hear any more about it,' said Joel Reed.

'No, we don't,' said Harry Payne. 'It's Bert's fault that you're going to leave the class, isn't it?'

Before Miss Jenness could reply Bert said: 'Yes, it is, and if you'll stay with the class, Miss Jenness, I'll leave.'

'I would rather leave the class myself than have you leave the Sunday-school,' said Miss Jenness.

'Couldn't it be arranged so that neither of us would have to leave the class?' asked Bert.

'Easily,' replied Miss Jenness.

'Then let's fix it that way,' said Bert; and that is the way it was 'fixed.'

Miss Jenness took Bert home with her after Sunday-school, and they agreed upon what they laughingly called 'a treaty of peace.' When Bert and the other boys came to Miss Jenness's house on Monday evening, she announced that she and Bert would both remain in the class, and that they had come to an 'understanding' with each other.

'And you are all to come here every Monday evening,' added Miss Jenness, 'and we'll have a regular class organization, and elect Bert secretary. On Monday evenings we'll discuss baseball and anything else in which you are interested, and devote our hour together on Sunday entirely to the lesson. Are you agreed upon that? If you are say 'aye.'

Every boy said 'aye,' heartily, and when Miss Jenness met Mr. Anson on the street a day or two later she said:

'I have decided to keep my class, Mr. Anson, and I think that you can leave Bert Rawson to me. I have had some "new

light" regarding him, and I shall be surprised if we do not get along very well together.

They did get along very well together after that. It took some time for Bert to give himself up fully to a study of the lesson, but whenever he showed a disposition to bring other topics into the class hour, Miss Jenness would say:

'To-morrow evening is our time for all that, Bert. Let us give this one hour wholly to God.'—J. L. Harbour, in 'Baptist Teacher.'

Praying in a Cold Garret.

'What's the matter, Philip?' Can't you sleep, either?'

'No. What keeps you awake?'

'I hardly know; yes, I do, too. That sermon to-night started me thinking, and I cannot stop.'

'That's what's troubling me. I might as well own up; I believe I'm the worst sinner in the world.'

'No worse than I am. Unless I change soon, I must be lost. What shall we do?'

'The preacher said we must pray.'

'But we pray every night; we did before coming to bed to-night.'

'Yet, that's not enough. We must pray as sinners needing a Saviour. Ever since he said that I have wanted to talk to some one, but did not dare on the way home, or to the folks, or yet you. I want some one to pray with and for me. Shall we get up now and pray?'

'What, here, now, in this cold garret? We would freeze. Better wait till morning. Let us wait until then. We can go out to the barn, and nobody will hear, or think anything about it if they see us together. If they hear they will suppose we are talking.'

The two, Philip and Theodore, in their teens, were brothers, and fairly good boys, though not Christians. They had attended what was called at that time — more than fifty years ago — 'a protracted meeting,' in the little Presbyterian church on the bank of the Hudson river, and had been aroused to see themselves sinners, and now were troubled because of sinfulness.

After deciding to wait until morning the boys fell asleep. The next morning they said nothing of praying, and hurried into their clothing, and out of the cold garret, where their bed was, to the warm room below. Nor did they go to the barn, nor even speak of praying there before school time. Other thoughts filled their minds until they took their tallow candle and went again to bed in the cold garret. The chilly air set their teeth chattering, and they hurried out of their clothing into bed, and covered themselves with blankets. For a few minutes they lay in silence; then Theodore said:

'Philip, are you asleep?'

'No.'

'We forgot to pray together to-day.'

'That's so; but we meant to.'

'Yes; and put it off, as the preacher said last night, we would be likely to do. He warned us not to put it off. Shall we start to-night?'

'It's so cold. We'll freeze. Yet I want to. Can't we wait until morning and not put off?'

'If sure that we would not forget or neglect; but I don't want to risk it. The sermon to-night did not stir me so; yet I want to start to-night. I say, let's get up and pray right here and now.'

'How shall we keep from freezing?'

'We can wrap blankets around us. I mean to get up, for I can't take the risk of another night. A single night may settle the fate of my soul.'

'If you mean to, I will.'

Wrapping themselves with blankets, the lads kneeled down by the bed and began to