

'Freda, I tink it vas; yes, Freda; but all vill half it, and dey vill die!'

'Oh, no, fadder; lots of people half fevers!' cried Karl. He seemed all at once to be grown in size and voice. Instinctively the shoemaker knew it. He peered into the darkness, trying to comprehend the miracle that had transformed his boy into a man. The brave voice went on:

'I will go and sleep in the hay-loft of the barn, and to-morrow I will bring food from the store and put it inside the little gate. When I whistle, you can open the window and tell me how Freda is.'

'Ya, ya. Dot vas good plan. But don't tell dot storekeeper, or he not let you vork no more mit him. Ach, dot plessed four dollars!'

Clearly the father was too excited over matters within the house to consider the boy's situation or his strange feelings as he turned back, cold and hungry, and groped his way to the barn. Taking the straw-stuffed buggy-seat out of the delivery waggon and the ragged quilt he had been using for a lap-robe, he climbed into the loft, dug a deep hole into the hay, buttoned his overcoat, and rolled himself up to sleep, his last thoughts being not of supper nor even breakfast, but of his little pet Freda and the 'quaranteed' home.

But after a sound sleep breakfast was the main issue. Thought Karl, 'We are allowed to eat at the store, though of course we are not expected to live off it. But what can I do? No money, must not let Mr. Biggs know 'bout Freda, and I "got" to eat!'

So, stifling his honest conscience as best he could, he made his appearance at the grocery back door on time, and set about making up his orders for the morning. Into the baskets went some loose crackers, some raisins and prunes, two apples and a banana. 'I'll work a bit harder to-day to pay for them,' he said confidentially to the horse as they started on their rounds.

At noon he said to his proprietor, 'Mr. Biggs, my folks would like to trade at your store altogether; so, if you'll let me, I'll just check out my four dollars a week in groceries.'

It sounded a bit patronizing. Mr. Biggs suppressed a smile, and answered: 'Well, very well. See Matson about it, and keep your book carefully.'

So there was a goodly pile of bundles laid at the wooden gate, although he knew that it would take shrewd buying to make four dollars spread over seven days.

At first, things seemed to go pretty well. It was so manly a thing to feel that he and he alone was supporting the family so dear to him.

But, alas, the day came when the coal-pile ran low; when a cold, windy snow-cloud came out of the north; when the doctor said that little Freda would surely die that night. So much raw cold food was having its effect upon the boy, and for two nights he had been too cold and weak to sleep; yet, when this news came, he could think only of the misery in the little shoe-shop home.

When the horse had been put up and fed, he hurried down to Belville Avenue, and seated himself upon the curbing on the opposite side of the street from the red and black shoe. Through the curtainless, small-paned window of the shop flickered a dim light; but it showed his father sitting upon the cobbler's stool, his

head bent down in his hands, the pipe lying unheeded upon the bench. While the boy looked on in helpless misery, he saw his mother pass through the room, with her head wrapped in her apron.

Suddenly his father rose, went to the old cupboard in the corner, and drew from it his dust-covered violin.

Karl knew that one string was gone, that the bow was bent, that he was to blame for both; but he also knew how his father could play. Ah, how he 'could' play! How long had it been? months? years? why, yes, not since the twins came six years ago!

The cobbler's fingers had had too much else to do and they were too stiff to hold the violin's strings. 'Freda must be better,' thought the boy. But the moment the bow was drawn across the strings he knew that she was dead. It was a wail, a dirge, that quivered out on the night air. It struck a dumb terror to the brother's heart. He bent his head against the cold iron hitching-post, and wished himself in Freda's place.

The door of the large house behind him opened, and a flood of bright light poured out upon the curbing as the owner stepped outside with his eyes fixed upon the little house opposite.

Karl tried to edge out of sight. The movement attracted the man's gaze, and he called sternly:

'Hello, there, what are you loafing about my premises for?' A few strides brought him beside the boy, who, when a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder, staggered to his feet and turned a pinched, tear-stained face upward.

'I'm not loafing. That is—I'm—I'm Karl Heimburger. They're quaranteed in, and I'm quaranteed out,' pointing across the way. 'Freda's dead, or fadder would not play that way. And—and I can't even see her buried!'

The man's hand dropped. There was a bit of silence; then he asked, 'Where are you living?'

'Nowhere. I sleeps at the barn—only don't tell Mr. Biggs!'

The exquisitely tender strains of the violin seemed to steal into the heart of Belville Avenue's most aristocratic resident.

'Come into the house and tell me about —about it,' he said, half pushing the boy up the steps and into the warm hall.

'There's not—nothing to tell,' stammered Karl in confusion, spreading his mitted hands upon the radiator. 'Just they are quaranteed in, and I'm quaranteed out, and Freda's dead, and the other twin is taken it.'

'Well, they've been comfortable there, haven't they? We've seen you taking provisions to the gate.'

'Oh, I earn four dollars a week!' was the proud reply.

'But where did you say you'd been living?'

Karl squirmed perceptibly. 'I—oh, mostly at the barn—and at the store in day-time, you know.' There was a prolonged pause; then he blurted out:

'Please! You won't tell Mr. Biggs, will you? I mean to pay him back for every cracker I've eat just as soon as fadder can get to work again. I couldn't help eat-in! I got so hungry workin' with the stuff!'

'Do you mean that you haven't had any-

thing except what you could pick up about the store?'

Karl nodded. Again they heard the plaintive cry of the violin from across the street, and the boy with a half-smothered sob bent his head upon the radiator in reply to it.

The man left the room abruptly. A few minutes later Karl found himself sitting at a dining-room table, drinking a cup of hot coffee, while his host paced the floor and asked questions which were answered somewhat reluctantly until the subject turned upon his father's music; then he waxed eloquent.

When the coffee-cup was empty and the slice of cold meat had disappeared, the host called a hired girl, and said: 'There's a little back room where this boy can go to sleep—it's warmer than a barn, anyway. Show him up to it, Jane, and see that he gets something warm to eat three times a day. We can't let a neighbor go hungry when he's supporting a family of nine.'

A month later the Heimburger family moved away. It was to a far less aristocratic street, where many more patched shoes were worn; but it was into a much better house. The old violin never went back upon the top shelf, for the shoemaker is now first violinist in the orchestra of the Mannerchor, of which his opposite neighbor upon Belville Avenue is the highly esteemed president. And the concerts are so many and the pay so good that there is little need to swing out the red and black shoe over the new front gate.

'But it wouldn't seem like dot vas home mitoudt it,' exclaimed Mr. Heimburger as he nailed it fast.

Karl still delivers goods for Biggs and Company at a salary of four and a half dollars a week! He has paid for every cracker and every prune he took, too.

And up and down the length of Belville Avenue there are long sighs of satisfaction as the walls of a stately apartment house go up upon the very spot where once the eyesore stood.

The Money That Slips Away.

'I get fifteen dollars a week, and I never have a single cent of it when Saturday comes,' said a boy of nineteen to me one day not long ago.

'Perhaps you have someone beside yourself to support,' I said.

'No, I do not,' was the reply. 'I pay four dollars a week for my room and board at home, and all the rest goes.'

'How does it go?'

'Well, it just seems to slip away from me somehow or other. I just cannot save a cent of it. There's so much to tempt a fellow to spend money nowadays. I never expect to save a cent.'

I looked at the young man as he stood before me. He wore a handsome suit of clothes. His tie must have cost a dollar and a half, and he had a pin on the tie for which he had said rather boastfully that he had 'put up eight dollars.' His link cuff buttons were showy and expensive. A full-blown rose for which he paid twenty-five cents was in his buttonhole, and one of his pockets was bulging out with expensive confectionery. I heard him say that he and 'some of the other fellows' were going to have a box at the opera the next night, and that it would cost them