

HOW THE WHEELBARROW WORKED.

CHARLIE Acre had the misfortune to be an only child. During the eight years of his life he had never known what it was to share his possessions with any one. The almost inevitable result, selfishness, was being developed in him to an alarming extent. So thought his mother, at least, as she tried to make plain to him the meaning of the golden text for the following Sabbath, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

"Don't believe it," said Charlie flatly, eyeing the new red wheelbarrow his father had just given him.

"Suppose you try it" suggested mother softly.

"What! Give away something that really is my own?" he queried, taken aback at the mere thought.

Mother nodded "Yes."

Five minutes of silence followed, broken at last by a voice saying dubiously:

"Well, ma, there's my old wheelbarrow; course, it isn't like my new one, 'cause the paint is off some, and one side smashed. Still, Dave Machree would like it, I know. He could carry the clams in it, for his father, from the pier to the house. I'll try it just this once, but, if I'm sorry this time, I never shall again."

"You won't be, I'm sure," said mother, with an inward prayer to the Blessor of little children that he would lay his hands on her boy, and so expel the demon of selfishness.

A half hour later, and a pair of red stockings were coming slowly back home from Dave Machree's. Very sober was the face of their owner as he sat down to his bread and milk. Silently mother watched the cloud settle deeper and deeper on the face of the practical experimenter with the golden text. Bedtime, and he turned to his mother, the tears very near the surface of the brown eyes, and said positively, but with a doleful ring in the voice:

"Mamma, it isn't true, and I knew it wasn't. That was a very good wheelbarrow, after all. I could have used it rainy days. I don't feel near so good as I did before."

"You will pretty soon," said mother cheerfully. "Don't you remember, when you were vaccinated, you had to wait three days before it began to work? This may be something of the same nature but it is sure to work sooner or later."

Upstairs went the red stockings, and down they came again in the morning, with the elasticity apparently permanently gone from the feet they encased.

At four o'clock that afternoon, Charley looked longingly after the troop of children leaving the school yard, then stared antagonistically at the spelling book on whose account he was compelled to spend this extra half hour of imprisonment. Supposing he had spelled "wheel" for "seal," and "barrow" for "sorrow," was that any reason why he should be cooped up a long half hour?

Half past four, and he started on his homeward way, only to see Dave Machree loom up in the distance, trundling the wheelbarrow filled with clams, from the pier to the house. How red the paint looked in the sun, and how little the broken side showed! Back started Dave from the house, this time with little Pete Machree on board as load. Charley drew nearer. The little crippled sunshiney Pete always smuggled his way into the warmest corner of every one's heart. How delightedly he was holding on to both sides with his chubby fists! What was that he was shouting between the "jounces" of the wheelbarrow?

"I—love 'oo, love, Dad—love ev'ry one, 'cause—I'm in—dis here barrer."

Charley stopped short in the road. What was this strange new sensation that thrilled and glowed within him? Could it be he was glad he had given them the wheelbarrow? One good long look at the little figures, from whose throats a shout of delight issued in unison as Dave started full run down the pier, and Charley made up his mind then and there that the golden text for next Sunday was true. Home, then, to proclaim that at last it had worked!

One hour later a small boy, well flushed as to face, very tumbled as to hair, and very excited as to speech, burst into the room crying gaspingly:

"I was just—starting, ma, to tell you—it was all—true when Dave w—went too fast and stubbed his wheel—I mean his t—e—and Pete fell off the edge of—the—the pier into the wheelbar—I mean the water, and his father—said if Dave didn't have the pier that had got caught on the edge of the wheelbarrow, to hold—on to, he couldn't have kept Peter's head out of his fath—I mean water till he came."

Mother seemed to understand all about it, even if it was mixed—mothers most generally do, you know. That night, as she tucked a very sleepy little boy into bed, he murmured drowsily:

"You see—I shall—try it—again, because I—felt"—And he was off to the land of Nod.—
Sunday-School Times