

No Place for Boys.

There's a place for the boys. They will find it somewhere; And if our homes are too daintily fair, For the touch of their fingers, the tread of their feet, They'll find it, and find it, alas! in the street, Mid the giddings of sin and the glitter of vice; And with heartaches and longings we pay a dear price For the getting of gain that our life-time enjoys, If we fall in providing a place for the boys. A place for the boys—dear mother, I pray, As cares settle down round our short earthly way, Don't let us forget, by our kind, loving deeds, To show we remember their pleasures and needs; Though our souls may be vexed with problems of life, And worn with besetments and tolling and strife, Our hearts will keep younger—your tired heart and mine, If we give them a place in their innermost shrine; And to life's latest hour it will be one of our joys, That we kept a small corner—a place for the boys.

—Boston Transcript.

TIM'S FRIEND.

By Annie M. Barton.

CHAPTER II.

"A SAILOR'S LIFE FOR ME."

Well, young Jackanapes, what do you want here? Come, clear out, there's no room for cargo such as you aboard." Such was the greeting Tim received from a rough sailor who was crossing the deck with a coil of rope on his arm at the very moment the boy appeared. Tim had found the Argus without much trouble, and had scrambled up the narrow plank (beneath which was the deep water of the dock) with the agility of a cat, and stepped on board with all the dignity of an ambassador. Not at all put out by the sailor's unceremonious greeting, Tim replied loftily, "I've come on business. I want to speak to Mr. Dodds, the chief officer." "None of your cheek. Clear out, and be sharp about it, or I'll lay a rope's end about you." The threatening gesture spoke even more eloquently than the words, and Tim shrank back well out of reach. "You'd best call Mr. Dodds, or you'll get wrong," he remonstrated, keeping a wary eye upon the rope. "I've brought a message from the missus, and there'll be a fine row if he doesn't get it." "What's the matter?" asked a deep and rather gruff voice at this juncture, and, to Tim's great relief, a stout, middle-aged man with a tanned, weather-beaten face and gray hair and whiskers, came up the cabin steps and confronted them. "This little lad says he's brought a message for you, sir. I thought he was up to some tricks, and was ordering him on shore, but he declares he's been sent." "He looks uncommonly like a drowned rat," was the cool rejoinder, and Mr. Dodds puffed away at his pipe, while he stared, not unkindly, at the child. "Please, sir, your missus said as how I was to tell you that your little boy's safe at home, and it was me as found him." "My little boy is safe at home, and you found him. Well, this is certainly news to me, considering that I never knew he was lost." "She—the lady—said she'd sent you word that the little chap had strayed away this morning. She was in a fine taking, I can tell you. When I brought him back she kissed and cried over him like anything," said Tim, proud to be able to give so much information. Mr. Dodds looked at him thoughtfully. "I suppose you expect a reward for your trouble; or did the lady give you one?" he added, struck by an afterthought. "No, sir; but she told me to be quick back, and she'd give me a right down good breakfast." Inspired by the recollection of the promise, Tim without more ado turned away, and was speeding towards the plank, when Mr. Dodds shouted, "Here! stop a moment; are you hungry?" "I'm pretty sharp set," Tim answered, with a comical smile. "Not a bit or a sup has passed my lips since yesterday afternoon, and then 'twarn't anything good, just a few dry crusts." "Come with me, and I'll find something

to fill you up," said Mr. Dodds, who, in spite of his gruff exterior, had a very kind heart, and was moved with compassion by Tim's forlorn and wretched appearance. "Come along, you shall have breakfast aboard ship for once in your life." Awe-struck by the unexpected honour, yet proud and jubilant, was Tim as he followed his guide down the cabin steps, and then to the steward's pantry, where a thin, elderly man was busily engaged in piling together some newly washed plates and dishes. "Steward," said Mr. Dodds, "this young shaver has brought a message for me, and while I write an answer I want you to give him some breakfast. A drop of hot coffee and a plate of ham and eggs wouldn't be amiss; I see you have plenty left." "All right, sir," answered the steward, who, fortunately for Tim, was a very good-natured man. "I'll see to him; he do look a miserable little object, and no mistake. It's not often he gets a plateful of good victuals, I'll be bound." In a few minutes Tim was seated before a large mug full of hot coffee well sweetened with brown sugar, a generous slice of ham, two fried eggs, and a great hunk of bread. The ham and eggs, being half cold and embedded in a stiff mass of grease, would not have pleased an epicure, but to Tim it was simply delicious. Never in his life could he remember having tasted anything half so good, and he ate so ravenously that the steward paused in his occupation of washing up dishes to stare in amazement. "I should judge it's a pretty good spell since you took such a cargo aboard," he remarked presently, at the same time putting before the boy a large, three-cornered piece of jam tart. Tim nodded, his mouth being too full for speech, and the man, seeing this, considerably asked no more questions. At length the glorious feast was ended, the mug of coffee drained even of the dregs, the plate that had contained the ham and eggs was scraped almost as clean as if it had been washed, every crumb of the tart had disappeared, and Tim sat licking his sticky fingers in the most blissful content. He was still ragged and dirty and very wet, but he was no longer hungry; for once in his life he had had as much food as he could possibly eat, which was an experience as delightful as it was strange. "Do you always have grub like this?" he asked; "because if you do, I'd like to be in your shoes. I once heard a chap at the the-a-tur-sing, 'A Sailor's Life for Me.' He was a knowing old chap. I guess he'd been aboard ship to breakfast," added Tim, with a twinkle of fun in his eyes. "Why, bless your 'art," said the steward contemptuously, "this ain't no specimen of sea life. If you were in this little bit of a box (that you think so snug-like this morning) on a dirty, stormy day, with the ship a-rolling and a-pitching, and all the plates and dishes tumbling down, and the hot soup upsetting over your legs, and the captain a-swearin' at you because you're as sick as a dog and can 'ardly 'old up your 'ead, you'd p'raps change your mind about the jolliness of a sailor's life." "Look here," said Tim earnestly, "you get me a berth on this ship and I'll risk it. I'm not afraid of the captain a-swearin' at me. He can go it as hard as he likes, hard words break no bones; it's sticks and leather belts I'm feared of, like Granny Brown uses when she's mad with me. Couldn't you take me as boy to help you? I'd pick up all the basins and things when they come a-tumblin' down. I'd work like a black nigger, and I wouldn't want no wages, just my grub, that's all." "You're a plucky sort of a little chap," said the steward admiringly, "but you're far too young for a trade like this; get a few more years over your 'ead and then talk about being a sailor." "I'm eleven gone," cried Tim earnestly, "and though I'm little I can work. You might try me, sir, I'm awful hard up just now. I don't know what's to become of me, for I won't live much longer with Granny Brown, I've made up my mind to that. I would rather go to prison or the work-hus." "Have you no father and mother?" "I had once, but they died when I were a very little kid, I dun't remember anything about them. Granny Brown says that when my mother was dying, she told her to take me for her lad, but I b'leeve that's a lie. She's a bad 'un is granny, I hate her like poison." "Is she your f-ther's mother?" asked the steward, who felt very much interested in this queer little bit of humanity, so friendless and forlorn. "No! Why, bless you, she ain't really no relation to me. I calls her granny, 'cause everybody does. She

gathers rags and bones; buys 'em sometimes, and steals 'em when she gets the chance. Often I've to go with her and carry the bag, and, my goodness, it ain't easy work. If she happens to have a few coppers in her pocket she will call at every pub, and by the time she's had half a dozen nips of gin she's clean mad. You see, she ain't exactly drunk, or you could dodge her; she knows what she's doin', and the harder she can hit you the better she's pleased." "What other work do you do besides carrying the bag for that old wretch?" "Why, any sort of odd jobs, I ain't perticular; running of errands, holding horses, beggin', and stealin' too, sometimes, when it pays me better. Only I'm awful feared of the 'pulls' catching me, 'cause I'd likely be sent to the training ship in the river." "It would be the best thing as could happen to you," said the steward; "you would be taken care of there, and taught an honest trade." Before Tim could reply, Mr. Dodds came in with a letter in his hand. "Now, my lad, take this letter to the lady at No. 5 Dale Street, and she will give you 'pence for your trouble. Have you had 'od breakfast?" "Yes, sir, thank you, I never tasted such grub in my life," said Tim frankly, then, as Mr. Dodds was turning away, the boy added timidly: "Oh, if you please, sir, do you want a boy on this 'ere ship? I'm little, but I'm strong and willing, and I'd do any mortal thing as I were told." The mate paused and looked at him with a kindly twinkle in his eyes. "No, no, my lad. You are too small for a sailor at present, and just let me give you a piece of advice; if you can get honest work on shore, never go to sea, ever when you are old enough and big enough to choose for yourself." He went away, and Tim stood still for a moment with downcast, disappointed look, twirling the letter in his dirty little hands. "It's a bad lookout for me," he said, at last. "There doesn't seem to be any work as I can do." "Cheer up, my lad," said the steward kindly. "You'll grow bigger ever day. I may happen to see you again some time, for the Argus often comes here. We sail in less than a week's time for Constantinople, and from there to other ports. It will be about three months before we get back, and then you can look out for the ship and for me." "Please, sir, what's your name, in case I had to ask for you?" said Tim, who still looked very mournful and downcast. "John Wilson. My home is at Sunderland. I live there with my old mother—bless her!—when I'm ashore. Now, lad, you'd better be off. Mrs. Dodds will be wondering what's become of you. Here are a few scraps as will help you along for a day or two when you're hard up." The kind-hearted man thrust a good-sized package of broken bits of food into the boy's hands, and very reluctantly Tim said "good-bye." The next moment he was speeling along through the rain and storm, alternately whistling and singing the refrain he had heard at the music hall, "A Sailor's Life for Me."

(To be continued.)

MELINDA'S DAY OFF.

BY E. P. ALLEN.

The old-fashioned knocker on the Moore's farm-house door rapped sharply, once, twice, and again, before the maid, Melinda, brisk as she was, could answer the knock. Half a dozen boys and girls filled up the door as soon as it was opened and clamoured for Belle and Roswell. "They're here, and as they ain't running away p'rhaps you'll dust your feet before you come in on my clean floor." The young folks went laughing back to the shuck mat; they were used to Melinda's sharp ways, and did not mind though she did look a trifle crosser than usual. They did not stay long on Melinda's clean floor, however, for Roswell and Belle were burning brush in the back lot, and the party trooped out after them. "We've just the finest scheme going for to-morrow's holiday," shouted one of the boys as soon as he came within hailing distance; "Mrs. Best has given us her donkey cart for the day, and we are going out to 'the pass' on a picnic; we've come to get you all to go along." Instead of a gleeful acceptance of this invitation, Roswell looked at Belle and Belle looked at Roswell, and neither said a word. "Oh, it's all right, Belle," spoke up one of the girls, who thought she saw what was the matter, "of course we couldn't

go by ourselves. Uncle Tom is going along on horseback to take care of us." But the vision of Uncle Tom on horseback (dear, jolly Uncle Tom, who always made young folks have a good time), did not seem to relieve the situation. "Well!" exclaimed Paul Brown, impatiently, "don't you say it will be jolly?" "Oh, tremendous," answered Roswell, but rather weakly; "we can't go, though." "Can't go! Why not? What's the good of a holiday if you can't go on a picnic?" But now Roswell looked resolutely at Belle, as much as to say that this was her put. "We promised Melinda a week ago," said Belle, with some mournfulness, "that we would do her work to-morrow and let her go and see her mother; her mother's awfully old, and she is bed-ridden; she lives with Melinda's brother out on Kerr's Creek." "Oh, won't some other day do?" cried Frances; "this is the only day we can go." "It is the only day Melinda can go," answered Belle, shaking her head and trying not to sound as if she were going to cry. "she has made arrangements to have Mr. Clark call for her in the mail-waggon before daylight." "But one of you could go," suggested Paul, "it don't take two to do the work." "It would take twenty of us," said Belle, getting back her bright smile, "to do all Melinda does, in the way she does it! I am obliged to stay because mother is sick in bed, you know; not very sick but not able to be up, and I must mind the children. But Roswell might go." "No, he mightn't, either," answered that young gentleman, gruffly, because he wanted so badly to go. "Is there any fairy godmother around to make kitchen fires and bring water from the spring?" There was nothing to do but to give up having Belle and Roswell on the picnic. "How about Sally Elder?" suggested Belle; "I think she would just love to go, and so would Bessie; they hardly ever go to things, you know, they're so shy." "Well, if you ain't one of a kind, Miss Belle McClung Moore!" cried Paul. "you're not satisfied with being a home missionary yourself and dragging Roswell into it. O I know you got him into this thing but you must be sending us off on a foreign mission!" Belle coloured up, but she knew that Paul's mockery was only skin deep; she felt sure the Elders would get the frolic. "There is one thing, please," added this little woman, to whom God had given the gentle instinct of her sex, "don't let Melinda hear anything about this picnic; she might refuse to go, and anyway it would spoil her day."

The sun was going down behind House Mountain on the day of Melinda's holiday, the day of the picnic, when the well-worn old knocker at the Moore's sounded again. "That's the doctor," said the invalid mother, "I know his way of letting the bar fall." It was the doctor, a surly old chap on the outside, something like Melinda, a heart of gold inside, also like Melinda. "Well, he said, coming in with heavy tread, "not much fun going on here, eh? I reckon everybody can't take holiday at once." "Have you seen anybody taking holiday to-day, doctor?" asked Belle. "I've been as far as Kerr's Creek to-day," he answered, bending his shaggy brows on her. "I saw a happy old woman out there to-day, she doesn't have many happy days, lying up in bed, waited on by a complaining daughter-in-law, but she has had a good time to-day. You don't happen to know anything about her, eh, Isabel?" The little maid looked up, smiling at Roswell, but boylike he looked out of the window. "I passed another happy lot," continued the doctor, "in a cart trimmed with flowers, I think it is the first time I ever saw those Elder children having a sure enough good time. Know anything about them, puss?" "Wise old doctor!" The sun was gone now, the doctor must be going too, but before he got on his horse he felt an arm steal around his neck and heard a soft whisper. "You just came here to say that, you dear old humbug! Maybe you didn't find so much pleasure when you came in, but you're leaving all anybody could ask. And Melinda can have another day off whenever she likes."

He stared at her with bulging eyes. She had a boxing glove on her left hand and a hammer in her right. "My dear," he stammered, "wha what are you going to do?" "Sir," she snapped, "I'm going to drive tack."