

BOYS AND GIRLS

Theodora's Ten Tickets.

(By Mary Whiting Adams, in 'Wellspring.')

'You'll take ten, Miss Gray? Oh, that's delightful! I wish every one else was as willing to help as you are. I'm sure you'll have no trouble in selling them all, for it is really going to be a fine concert.'

Mrs. Armitage smiled beamingly upon Theodora, and turned away to speak to somebody else, leaving the ten slips of blue cardboard in the girl's hand. Theodora had always admired Mrs. Armitage. She was a girl who loved beautiful things, and whose daily surroundings were entirely unbeautiful; and just to look at this charming, high-bred young matron, with her atmosphere of grace and luxury and loveliness, as she sat in the Armitage pew wrapped in her furs or her laces, with her two golden-haired children beside her, brought a satisfaction to Theodora.

As for Theodora, she sat all alone in the gallery of the church. Her mother was too busy—so she said—to come to church, and her father too tired after his week's work. The real reason—others said—was that the Grays had been better off once, and now were poor, and were too proud to come in shabby clothes. But Theodora had been trained to come to church as a child, and—perhaps because of a faithful Sunday-school teacher, who kept her up to it—had never lost the habit of attendance. She was tired, too, often enough, after her week's work of typewriting and stenography in a dingy down-town office, where there was never enough light and air, but more than enough to do; but Sunday always saw her in her place. Mrs. Newland, the head of the Ladies' Auxiliary, had noticed her lately, and found her a useful helper; and Theodora had felt glad to have some part in the church doings. So, when it was announced in the Auxiliary meeting that a concert was to be given next month for the Home for Cripples, under Mrs. Armitage's direction, and that the ladies of the church were asked to help in selling the tickets, she was quite ready to do what she could.

'It isn't for the church, in any way, you know, ladies,' explained Mrs. Armitage; 'but there are members on our board from nearly every church in the city, and so we hope to interest each church to help us. I am sure that fifty tickets could be easily sold among our church members, if some of the young ladies here would take charge of the matter.'

She looked round appealingly, and her eyes rested on Theodora's face. Theodora could not help it; she responded at once, and others followed suit. It seemed such a little thing to do for the crippled children, especially when one could not give in any other way. Theodora went home with her tickets in quite a joyous frame of mind.

Her mother sighed, and shook her head. 'You must want work, Theodora, to put yourself out that way for those fashionable folks. It's more than they'd do for you, if you were starving.' Theodora never argued with her mother; she went and put the tickets in her drawer, and said no more about them at home. Inwardly she was the more resolved to sell every one of them.

It proved easier than she had thought. As Mrs. Armitage had said, it was going to be a good concert. Mrs. Armitage knew about music, and any concert she planned was worth hearing, people thought. Theodora sold her ten tickets, and could have sold more if she had had them. The money was safe in an envelope in her drawer long be-

fore the day set by Mrs. Armitage for each ticket seller to bring in her account. It would be better, it occurred to Theodora, to change the worn and dirty bills and the loose change into crisp new ones, before handing them in; and accordingly, one day, she carried the money down-town to get it changed at the office.

Then—how it happened was never known—a great misfortune came on her. The envelope containing the fifteen dollars was lost. There was a new janitor that week, and an office boy who was discharged a fortnight after as too useless for even an office boy. It might have been either of these

herself up, and had a good cry. What should she do, with fifteen dollars to pay, and nothing with which to pay it? Her monthly salary was not due until three days after her ticket account must be rendered; and she had counted upon getting new shoes and a new jacket, which she sorely needed, out of it. 'I wish I'd never heard of the Home for Cripples!' she sobbed. She did not dare tell her mother, for she well knew that reproaches and allusions would be endless. There was no one of whom she could borrow, and no possibility of getting the money in time. Theodora did the only thing she could; she waited three or four days,



MR. ARMITAGE LOOKED AT HER SO KEENLY.

latter two who were the thieves, or even one of the clerks, who were a cheap and unsatisfactory lot, always shirking their work and complaining of their wages. Theodora had never liked the office, and only worked there because, though skilful and industrious, she had so far found no other opening. She searched her desk and the floor about it, frantically; she questioned everybody; she offered a small reward. In vain; the money had vanished as if swallowed up completely. 'I don't believe she ever had it to lose,' whispered one clerk, audibly, to another; 'she's always putting on airs!' and the office boy grinned mockingly at the whisper.

Poor Theodora! She went home, locked

till all hope of recovering the bills was gone; and then she went bravely to see Mrs. Armitage.

'What a pity!' said Mrs. Armitage, when the story of the loss was told. 'But, my dear Miss Gray, you must not feel obliged to replace the money. If you had not sold any tickets, you could have turned in no money, and we can call this just the same thing.'

'No, for then I should have had the tickets to turn in. This is different,' said Theodora.

Mrs. Armitage looked perplexed. She was warm-hearted, and she had not always been rich. She knew what this loss of fifteen dollars meant to a girl like Theodora. 'But