

'Please tell Tom a 'tory, papa—a big one 'bout a bear.'

Papa's eyes twinkled, but he drew down the corners of his mouth and said:

'I don't want to.'

Tom slid down to the floor, and sat there in silence for a whole long minute; then he said:

'An' when my lines was all snangled up, she saided see di'n't want to, an' I fink fings is funny.'

Papa and mamma looked at each other and smiled.

After a little, just when Tom and the gray kitten were having such a good time on the rug, mamma remembered, as Tom was afraid she would, and remarked:

'I know a little boy who is very sleepy, and I know a lovely "hite bed to put him in, Come, Tom.'

'Oh, no!' said Tom briskly; I don't—

Then something occurred to him, and he got up without another word, took the gray kitten in his arms, and he and mamma went up stairs. But the gray kitten objected, and dragged her sharp claws crossly down Tom's little round arm. Usually he cried when he was worsted in a contest with the gray kitten. This time he looked up at mamma and said slowly:

'D'you see her a-sayin' she di'n't want to? Tom don't say it vat way.'

'I'm not so sure, little boy,' replied mamma, as she took him in her arms; 'because, you know, when you pout and frown, and say you don't want to, when mamma asks you to do something for her, then it hurts mamma just as if you made long, dreadful scratches right on her heart.'

'Oh, de' me!' Tom said in dismay. 'Tom won't do vat any more to yo' poor heart—he don't want to!'—*Sunday School Times.*

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"THAT'S THREE, JEM!"

I was some years ago sojourning at a very beautiful and much frequented English watering place. I met with an earnest Christian tradesman of the town, whose labors in the cause of religion are many and great. Although his occupation was not in selling books, yet he had, in a prominent place in his shop-window, an assortment of Bibles, with an illuminated card containing this announcement:—"Luther's Sword Sold Here." With one of these "swords" that Christian soldier, whom I shall here call by the name of Mr. Carr, fought and won the following battle:

A band or "troupe" of young men, with hands and faces blackened, and dressed in very grotesque costumes, arranged themselves before this gentleman's door one day for exhibition of their peculiar performances. These people used to be called "Ethiopian Serenaders." After they had sung some comic and some plaintive melodies, with their own peculiar accompaniments of gestures and grimaces, one of the party, a tall and interesting young man, who had the "look" of one who was beneath his proper

station, stepped up to the door, tambourine in hand, to ask for a few "dropping pennies" of the people. Mr. Carr, taking one of the Bibles out of his window, addressed the youth:

"See here, young man," he said, "I will give you a shilling and this book besides, if you will read a portion of it among your comrades there, and in the hearing of the by-standers."

"Here's a shilling for an easy job!" he chuckled out to his mates: "I'm going to give you a public reading!"

Mr. Carr opened at the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, and pointing to the eleventh verse, requested the young man to commence reading at that verse.

"Now, Jem, speak up!" said one of the party, "and earn your shilling like a man!"

And Jem took the book and read: "And He said, A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living."

There was something in the voice of the reader, as well as the strangeness of the circumstances, that lulled all to silence; while an air of seriousness took possession of the youth, and still further commanded the rapt attention of the crowd.

He read on: 'And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.'

'That's thee, Jem!' ejaculated one of his comrades—'It's just like what you told me of yourself and your father.'

The reader continued: 'And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.'

'Why, that's three again!' said the voice—'Go on!'

'And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him.'

'That's like us all!' said the voice, once more interrupting; 'we're all beggars; and might be better than we are! Go on; let's hear what came of it!'

And the young man read on, and as he read his voice trembled: 'And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father!'

At this point he fairly broken down, and could read no more. All were impressed and moved. The whole reality of the past rose up to view; and, in the clear story of the Gospel, a ray of hope dawned upon him for his future. His father—his father's house—and his mother's too; and the plenty and the love ever bestowed upon him there; and the hired servants, all having enough; and then himself, his father's son; and his present

state, his companionships, his habits, his sins, his poverty, his outcast condition, his absurdly questionable mode of living—all these came climbing, like an invading force of thoughts and reflections, into the citadel of his mind, and fairly overcame him.

That day—that scene—proved the turning point of that young prodigal's life. He sought the advice of the Christian friend, who had thus providentially interposed for his deliverance. Communications were made to his parents, which resulted in a long-lost and dearly loved child returning to the familiar earthly home; and, still better, in his return to his heavenly Father. He found how true are the promises of the Parable of the 'Prodigal Son,' both for time and for eternity.

"Yes, there is One who will not chide or scoff,

But beckons us to homes of heavenly bliss;

Beholds the prodigal a great way off,

And flies to meet him with a Father's kiss!"

—Parish Visitor.

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Evils in the journey of life are like the hills which alarm travelers upon the road; they appear great at a distance, but when we approach them we find that they are far less formidable than we had imagined. —*Lewis.*

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