

Childrens' Department.

THE LEAK IN THE CHURCH OIL.

A TRUE STORY.

Johnnie Carr was a bright, pleasant boy and a general favourite in the town where he lived. His parents loved him very much, but, like other boys, he had his faults.

One was, reluctant obedience. He always intended to obey his father and mother, but wanted to do it in his own time and his own way.

One Saturday afternoon he was sent to the store for oil. His mother said:

"Go straight there, Johnnie, and don't stop anywhere."

Johnnie promised, but on his way he met Nicholas Barnes, called, for short, "Nick." He was a new boy in town, and had several times made a great deal of trouble for his folks. Johnnie had promised not to have anything to do with Nick.

But Nick had met Johnnie a few days before, and offered him some candy. Johnnie took it, saying to himself: "Nick is not so bad as some people think."

This time Nick met him as if he had been an old friend, asking, "Where you going?"

"Store for oil," replied Johnnie.

"How much money you got?"

Johnnie showed a bright piece of silver.

"All that for oil?" asked Nick.

"Yes."

"No change back? Not a red, Johnnie!"

"Not a red," answered Johnnie.

Nick thought a moment, then began to talk of something very different.

"When we going to have some chocolate creams?"

Johnnie's mouth watered, for he was very fond of that kind of confectionery. He sighed as he said: "Dun no, money is scarce down our way."

They were now nearing the church. "Let's sit down here on the 'Old South' steps and talk it over," said Nick. "Let's see, I treated on chocolates last time; now it's your turn."

Johnnie had no thought of that when he accepted half the contents of the candy bag! For the first time it dawned upon him that Nick would expect him to return the compliment. He said: "I dun no when it'll be, Nick. Pa's sold one of his horses 'cause he was short for money; he's going to make one do all the work, so I don't think I'll get much spending money this summer."

Suddenly a queer look came over Nick's face. He spoke quickly but in a low tone.

"You just keep still a minute, Johnnie, I'll tell you something."

He dashed away without giving any information. Johnnie kept "still," until he was tired of it; and was about starting for the store when Nick appeared, very much excited.

"Johnnie," he said, "we can have some chocolates to-day."

"How so?"

"It came into my head just now when I see the old sexton going down into the grave yard," said Nick. "He's left the church open, the cellar door's unlocked, and there's a whole barrel of kerosene in there!"

As the plan flashed upon Johnnie's mind his face grew very red. Nick

did not seem to notice this, and went on:

"Let's fill the can; who'll know the difference? I guess two quarts of oil won't kill nobody."

Johnnie was greatly shocked, but before he could speak Nick disappeared with the can. When he returned it was full. He passed it to Johnnie, who shrank back.

"I can't take the oil, Nick; it don't belong to me. It's stealing."

"Stealing? Oh, no," said Nick, slowly. "Now you look here; this oil belongs to the parish, and your pa is one of them. So you see a part of this oil is his'n."

He stopped suddenly with a look of fright the old sexton was returning. Evidently Nick thought his argument would not convince him, for he said, hurriedly:

"It won't do for us to hang around here any longer; he'll know the whole thing. Let's hide the can and have some fun up town."

As they went, Nick, seeing that Johnnie did not feel right about it, said:

"The 'South church' folks are rich as mud. An old fellow died here once, and left them piles of money to run things with. So this oil don't come out o' them. It won't hurt them to give us a little once in a while, as long as they got a whole barrel. If the sexton don't look up the oil cellar I'm going to fill mother's can."

By this time the boys had arrived at the store. Soon their pockets were full of chocolates. Johnnie did not enjoy them as much as usual; he began to feel sick. This was soon explained away by the bad boy. He said some of the oil on their hands got on the candy, and he was feeling very much the same; which was some comfort.

That night Johnnie was very ill, and tossed sleepless in his little bed. Somehow he did not want to call his mother, neither did he feel like saying his prayers. He was not alarmed at his sickness, for what Nick had said about the oil seemed reasonable. Often he turned his pillow and closed his eyes, saying:

"Of course, everybody knows kerosene oil and chocolate creams won't mix!"

But this did not appease his stomach or his conscience, and give sleep. He longed to return the oil; but this he could not do without being found out. He thought it would be just as well to put its value into the contribution box as soon as he could earn it. He half resolved to tell his mother all, but something held him back. He decided to confess to her when he had paid for the oil.

After such a miserable night and the pleadings of conscience, one might suppose that Johnnie would never have been tempted again. His intentions were good; but Nick's influence was bad; having taken the first step in wrong-doing, the second and third were easier.

The boys filled their cans again and again, but one day they filled them for the last time, for, as they knelt before the great barrel, a heavy hand was laid upon them, and they were both in disgrace.

That night Nick disappeared and was never seen again; but Johnnie had to come before the Parish Committee. The church people heard the

story, and it was on the lips of all the school children. Johnnie felt the disgrace keenly, and to be called "oily" at school seemed more than he could bear.

Not long after, Johnnie's parents removed to another place; but Johnnie learned a lesson he never forgot. If he had obeyed his mother's command on that Saturday afternoon, he would not have been tempted to sin, and the South Church would never have had leak in its oil.—N. Y. Observer.

AN OBSTINATE CASE.—"In the spring of '83 I was nearly dead, as everybody around my neighborhood knows. My trouble was caused by obstinate constipation. One bottle of Burdock Blood Bitters cured me entirely." This statement is made by Walter Stinson, of Gorrie, Ont.

THE LITTLE PEOPLE.

A dreary place would be this earth,

Were there no little people in it;

The song of life would lose its mirth,

Were there no children to begin it;

No little forms, like buds to grow,

And make the admiring heart surrender;

No little hands on breast and brow,

To keep the thrilling love-chords tender.

The sterner souls would grow more stern,

Unfeeling nature more inhuman,

And man a stoic coldness turn,

And woman would be less than woman.

Life's song, indeed, would lose its charm,

Were there no babies to begin it,

A joyful place this world would be,

Were there no little people in it.

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—A kind little thought, an unselfish little act, a cheery little word, are so sweet and comfortable that no one can fail to feel their beauty and love the giver, no matter how small they are. Mothers do a deal of this sort of thing, unseen, unthanked, but felt and remembered long afterward, and never lost, for this is the simple magic that binds hearts together, and makes home happy.

—One good mother is worth a hundred schoolmasters. In the home she is the load-stone of all hearts and loadstar to all eyes. Christianity should be taught at the mother's knee; it is seldom really taught elsewhere save in the school of suffering.

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