

BOYS AND GIRLS

We Thank Thee Lord.

Lord, for the erring thought
Not into evil wrought;
Lord, for the wicked will
Betrayed and baffled still;
For the heart from itself kept,
Our thanksgiving accept.

For ignorant hopes that were
Broken to our blind prayer;
For pain, death, sorrow, sent
Unto our chastisement,
For all loss of seeming good,
Quicken our gratitude.

—W. D. Howells.

Rasmus, or the Making of a Man.

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CHAPTER II—Continued.

'They're another breed. There's men and men. My dad was the kind as get misarculous drunk. I don't know how many there was in all of us children. Seems to me a good many got carried off in a black cart; but I lived, and so did Robin. Robin was eight years younger than I was, and, poor little chap, he had a crooked back. Dad was always over-lovin' to the kids when he was drunk, an' he was carryin' of Robin, over he went into the gutter, atop the poor little lad, lyin' across the curb-stone. But Robin had a mighty pretty face, and lots of yellow hair. My father got killed falling off a staging where he was working at a church tower. When a man has to go up into the air a hundred feet or so, he needs pretty steady brains and sure foot, you bet. I don't know as we were any worse off for want of him, poor man. There's dads that don't count for much, worse luck! Robin was three then, and next year mother died, and left him to me. She warned me to take good care of Robin, and she told me most partic'lar never to prig anything lest I'd get into jail and be parted from him. Robin was no end 'fraid of drunken men. He'd scream blue murder if he see one, so that put me against all drink—that and my past troubles with it. Robin was a soft-hearted little man. He'd cry at rough or swearin' words, so I never could swear any. I made our livin' by sellin' little things round the streets—matches, whistles, whirligigs, balloons, all sorts of small truck, and I kept Robin warm and clean, and I think people bought for the sake of his nice little face.

'Two years me and him lived together, and so we'd have gone on, only one rainy day, when I'd left him home, tearing along round a corner, come a team drove by a man whooping drunk, and over me it went, and broke me up pretty well all over. I've heard since if I had been a rich boy, or had friends to do for me, I could have got a fortune in damages out of that; but a poor boy of fourteen isn't up to them dodges. I was knocked senseless, and carried to a hospital, and it was days 'fore I come to. Then all my cry was for Robin, and fearing I'd pine to die, my doctor, a kind young man he was, went off to find him, and he came back and said the people in the house had carried the little chap to a Children's Home. They told me he would get all heart could wish, good things to eat, good bed, playthings, and a suit of clothes, with a yard to play in, and when I got well I could go and see him.

'If I'd had friends, you see, they'd gone to look after Robin and brought me word; but I hadn't, and six long months it was before I got out of hospital, for my doctor took pride in mending me up as good as new. Then they give me a tidy suit, some of 'em, and three dollars, and I made off on directions given to get Robin. Well, I'm blessed, when I got there, says they, they thought I was dead, and Robin had no folks at all, and being he was delicate for fresh air, they'd went and

give him away to a man out West who had 'dopted him! They said he was proper well off, and give me his directions; but losing him like that took all the grit out of me, and when I went into the street I was so 'mazed and miserable, that I staggered round a bit, and fell down, and the bobbies came along, and took me to the station-house for drunk. The next day I was up in court, first and last time that ever happened to me. I said my say 'bout the hospital, and me and Robin, and the judge was a kind sort of man, and he said I ought not to be 'rested. But when it came out as I had no home, nor relations, nor money, and not mended quite strong yet, he said that would never do. I must be took care of, or I'd be a wagabone. A big farmer man was there in court, and he said he'd take me if I was bound to him till I was eighteen, and so I was on the spot, and off he takes me. I'd died then, sure, only he took me to the country. I never see flowers and garden sass growing before, nor animals running round loose, and it chirked me up. The folks was very good to me, and wanted me to learn reading, but I didn't take to that, only to working out of doors. My heart was set on Robin, and in two years I saved up ten dollars, and then I ran away to find my little chap. I walked five months, and got clear out into Indianny, and when I got there the folks what had 'dopted him had moved away West for a year, and nobody knew where, and they said he had the little chap, and set store by him, and he was pretty as a picter, only his back. It broke me all up. I hadn't no more spirit to work. I just went wandering 'long, looking for Robin, now here, now there, chasing after all the little chaps I could hear tell of with yellow hair and faces like angels. I've never found him. I've gone everywhere. I've walked over Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Indianny, Illinois, and New Jersey. I've picked hops, and dug canals, when I wanted a suit of clothes or a little money for the winter; but so long as I can't find Robin I don't care for money. I've planned, lying out nights, and looking up at the stars, how, if I found him, I'd earn a house and keep him like a gentleman, and have him learn a lot of wisdom; but so long as I don't know if he is alive or dead, what do I care? Only I have been partic'lar not to do a thing that Robin didn't like, so I'd be proper company for him, if ever I found him, poor little chap!'

Rasmus fell into silence, and gloomily eyed the pattern of the carpet. Rod was deeply moved.

'Why not advertise for him? He'd see it in the paper, and answer. That's the way they find people.'

Rasmus started up. 'When can I do it?'

'Little papers round here wouldn't do. It is a big New York paper you want. I say, I'll get my uncle to do it when I get to him.'

'Lood-y,' said Rasmus, 'you're hunting as uncle, and I'm hunting a brother; let's stick together to New York.'

But the answer Rasmus had at that moment was a shriek from all parts of the steamer, 'Fire! Fire!'

CHAPTER III.

POPULAR APPLAUSE.

'When I remember something which I had,
But which is gone, and I must do without,
I wonder sometimes how I can be glad,
Even in cowslip time, when hedges sprout.'

That cry of fire was a tocsin dear to the soul of Rasmus. The love of destruction that seems born in every human heart, had not in him been tempered by the toil of acquisition. As do children, he regarded property rather as a spontaneous growth, than a result of painful processes. A fire gave scope for his herculean strength and rampant energies. Confronting against the river, he had thought of his luggage, but challenged by the cry of fire, he flung himself out of the state-room, oblivious alike of bags or 'pardner.'

'Forward—forward all! We are quite safe!' shouted the captain to the crowd of passengers, who were already running wildly about, calling for their friends, snatching after their scattered possessions, or lamenting their fates;

women and children screaming, and men giving useless and contradictory directions.

'If the passengers were told to go forward,' thought Rasmus, 'then the fire must be aft'; and thither he rushed. The steamer was already heading for shore, and a cloud of smoke was rising from the lower deck, near the stern, where the luggage of some of the poorer deck passengers had taken fire. Not far from the blazing beds and bundles stood a score of blue barrels containing kerosene. One of these was already flaming outside, when Rasmus appeared above the scene, hanging by one hand and one foot to the railing of the boiler deck. He had thrown off his coat as he came through the saloon, and balancing above the fire he saw that the burning luggage might be thrown overboard, and so possibly render effective the use of the water which the boat hands in line were dipping up in buckets.

'Over with the truck!' he shouted; and letting himself drop into the midst of the fracas, he seized a burning bed, and threw it overboard. His shirt-sleeves caught fire, but he snatched at the next blazing article; and now, two vigorous workers dropped down beside him, the captain and chief steward.

(To be continued.)

Hector's Breaking In.

They were two rough-looking, large men. They began their cruel work by roughly seizing us young dogs, without one kindly word, and forcing the collars of our new harness over our heads. Then they fastened, as tightly as possible, the strong, moose-skin bands around our bodies. They then jerked us around in a line, and fastened us together in tandem-style. The traces of the last dog in the line they attached to a heavy wood sled. Old Black, a steady old leader-dog, was harnessed and fastened in the front of our train.

Then the drivers shouted: 'Marche! Marche!' to us, and were really foolish enough to think that after such treatment we would move off like old dogs. But we did nothing of the kind. Poor old Black tried to do his duty, but what could one dog do against four stubborn dogs that felt as insulted and indignant as we did?

'Marche! Marche!' they shouted, and while Black tried vainly to advance we four stubborn dogs just planted out our four legs as stiff as pokers, and there we stayed.

The cruel whips of our drivers, who were now furious at us, hissed out, and as they were made of buckskin loaded with shot, they cut into our tender ears, and raised great welts along our sides.

With every report of those heavy whips, which in hands altogether too accustomed to their use rang out like pistol shots, there were shouted:

'Marche! Marche! Majestimuk!' (their word for bad dogs).

In our veins was the blood of the English mastiff as well as that of the Esquimaux, and so under their cruel blows we just lay down in the snow and said by our actions:

'As you have started out in this rough way to conquer us, we will put up a stubborn fight ere we yield.'

The two drivers, who had completely lost their tempers, and were furious that their whippings had so failed to get us to move, then began to cruelly kick us.

Our master, who was really not cruel, as I have said, but only ignorant of dog-nature, now interfered, and none too soon; for one of the brutal drivers in kicking the dog next to Black, so enraged him that he suddenly sprang at him and gave him such a bite in the leg that he did but little dog-driving for many days after.

Thus utterly failed, for that day at least, the efforts of those men to break us in.

Finding that he could not succeed in breaking us in, when thus harnessed all together, the driver, who had secured another half-breed to help him, now tried to see what they could do with us separately. So harnessing us up, one by one, they placed three powerful dogs ahead of us in the train, and one behind to keep us in line.

By this plan, the three strong dogs ahead of us could take us simply off our feet, and pull