

## A MOTHER AND HER BOY.

**T**HE mother and her boy were waiting for the train in the Albany station, when the dulness was broken by a funny figure of an old woman in rusty gown, a catskin muff and tip-top, and a black bonnet made of as many odds and ends as a magpie's nest, and her false front askew. She kept chewing on nothing, working her umbrella, and opening and shutting the other hand in its black glove in the aimless way of old people.

The high-school girls began to titter and make jokes to each other, watching the old lady far too openly for good manners, or any manners at all.

The young lady in the smart tailor suit who gives readings at Sunday school concerts smiled back at them and studied the old creature with a satiric eye.

The boy began to laugh quietly with the rest. "Do look, mother. Isn't she funny? Did you ever see such a sight?"

The mother glanced delicately and turned her eyes.

"Poor lady," she said.

He was silent, considering.

"If I hadn't you," she went on, "and had lost all my money, and grieved over all I had lost, in money and friends, till my mind was touched, and I lived alone among queer people, I might look just like that woman. She must have been very good looking when she was young."

The boy's mouth twitched, as he turned his gaze from the "poverty piece," as some of the girls called her, to his pleasant mother, and as the old lady went prowling about, looking for something, a light step was at her side, a cap raised, and a kindly boyish voice asked: "Can I do anything for you, madam?"

"I was looking for some place to buy some checkermints," said the old soul, nodding carelessly and blinking with weak eyes. "I like checkermints if they're Boston bought, but I don't seem to see any, and there used to be a boy with a basket come round in the Fitchburgh depot, and I thought maybe I could find him here."

"Shall I get you some at the fruit stall?" said the boy politely to her, but with a flashing glance at the giggling girls, which somehow did not make them feel proud of themselves.

Then the mother watched her boy lead the old woman to a candy stall and stand by her courteously, pointing out this and suggesting the other, till she made her fumbling purchases, and escort her across the hurrying passage to her seat in the train, out of his own compassionate young heart.

"My dear boy!" was all she said as he came back to her, but it was breathed in a voice of music, and she looked most happy.

The boy stood close to his mother, thoughtfully, one hand just striving to caress her. Their train called, he picked up her parcels and marched protectingly by her.

"You have a boy, mother, who will take care of you," he said, lifting his eyes to hers at the gate.

## BRUCE'S BOARDERS.

**M**RS. Foster was busy dusting her dining-room. She had a white cap over her hair, and wore a long blue apron. Knock, knock, knock, went somebody's fingers on the door, and before she could whisk off her cap or say "Come in!" the door opened slowly and cautiously.

"Who can be coming to see me so early?" thought Mrs. Foster. "O!" as a fair curly head presented itself, "it's Bruce Pettigrew! Well, Bruce, what can I do for you to-day!"

"Mrs. Foster," said the child, bringing in a small tin-plate, "won't you please, ma'am, save me your crumbs and apple-cores for my boarders?"

"Your boarders?" cried Mrs. Foster.

"Yes, ma'am—the birds, you know. So many of 'em come now, since the snow, that I thought I'd bring over my plate and get you to help me. I'll come back for it after dinner;" and the little boy was gone without waiting for any promise.

So day after day the little boy and the little tin-plate travelled backward and forward, and the birds flocked more and more to the snow-covered ledge of that third-story window.

But Bruce's plan did more than feed the birds—more than he knew of, as in the case with most plans for good.

"That baby has the right idea of helping," thought busy Mrs. Foster; "he gives all he can himself, and then he takes the trouble to get other people to help. Now, there's Mrs. Irwin, she has enough cast off's to set the poor O'Connors up in comfort. I'll just step over and ask for them."

"An old dress?" said Mrs. Irwin in a friendly tone, "why, to be sure, if you think that red dress that Mary has just laid aside would do any good;" and before the visit was over Mrs. Foster had more than she could carry home—enough to make the whole O'Connor family happy.

It gave the Irwins a new interest in the O'Connors, too, and in all those poor people in that alley.

Little Bruce kept on feeding his birds and collecting his crumbs, knowing no more than the birds of all this: but the Heavenly Father, whose care is over all his creatures, smiled down upon the little boy. —Sunbeam.