

The Power of Song.

'Midst the dust and smoke of a city's din,
'Neath the street-lamps flickering light,
A shrill and piping voice sang out,
"O where is my boy to-night?"

'Twas only a childish, untrained voice,
But it touched a tender chord
In the heart of one whose willing feet
Were treading the downward road.

He is dining to-night with the boasted "club,"
And betting and cards and wine run high;
He paused, with the glass just raised to his lips
And a reckless light in his eye.

His hand dropped down with a heavy crash,
The red wine flowed over table and chair;
He bowed his head on his folded arms,
And all was silent as if Death were there.

He raised his head; his face was pale,
But his voice when he spake was strong and sweet:
"I will go to my mother this very night,
And pray for forgiveness at her feet.

For all the pain of the weary years
She has prayed for her wandering boy;
And the years to come, God helping me,
Shall be years of peace and joy."

"O where is my wandering boy to-night?"
The song thrilled out on the evening air;
It reached the ear and the aching heart
Of a pale-faced mother with snowy hair.

"Once he was pure as the morning dew."
How the song brought back again
The happy days of the long ago,
When her heart was free from pain.

"As he knelt at his mother's knee." Again
She saw her beautiful boy,
As he knelt in his innocence and truth,
Her darling, her pride, and her joy.

As the sweet voice filled the quiet room,
Her eyes with tears would fill.
"Bring him to me with all his blight,
And tell him I love him still."

"Yes, bring him to me," the low voice prayed,
"Though fallen and base and low;
O bring him to me! he is still my boy,
And he loves me, he loves me I know."

Her head bowed low as the scalding tears
Fell over her cheeks like rain;
A stop, a voice, and lo! she clasped
Her long lost boy again.

Bob's First Prayer.

ONE summer they carried May Vinton to a quiet place by the sea. From the windows of her room she could watch the unceasing roll of the waves; she could mark the incoming and outgoing tide. She grew to love the sea, and did not seem to greatly miss the coming and going of friends which she enjoyed so much in her own home. But she missed opportunities for helping others—at least she did at first; but she was not long in finding some one who needed her. It was the boy from the fisherman's little cottage whose acquaintance she first made. He came every morning with fish for her breakfast; and May, calling to him as he passed her window with his basket, soon found out that he lived in the little low-roofed building which she could see quite a long way down the shore; and she found out that there were several children in the family, and that the father went out every day in a boat after fish. She gathered that, while they were not suffering for food and clothes, they were still quite poor, and that the children had never been to school, and were very ignorant of the knowledge gained from books.

The boy could tell all about the fishing business; about the ways of the old ocean; he knew where to look for the prettiest shells and the finest seaweed. He could tell what the winds and the shifting

clouds portended as to the weather, but not a letter of the alphabet did he know.

"Would you like to learn to read?" asked May.

The little fellow was not sure; but he did want to hear a story, and so she began that way—interesting the boy in a story. He soon became a regular visitor. Leaning upon the window-sill, he would listen to his new friend as she talked—telling him of things outside the little world which he knew. At length she said: "To-morrow will be Sunday. Suppose you bring your sister and brother a little while in the afternoon, and we will have a little Sunday-school?"

"Sunday-school! What's that?"

"Come and see."

"Can I bring Tommy Britt?"

"You may bring four, besides yourself."

And so Miss Vinton began a little Sunday-school down there by the sea, with five scholars.

You who have so often heard the sweet old story of a Saviour's love, cannot imagine what it was to these ignorant children to hear it for the first time. You, to whom the words of the prayer which Christ taught us have been familiar from your babyhood, cannot know how strange were the thoughts and words of that prayer, nor what a hold upon their imagination the idea of asking anything of an unseen Being took.

The summer months passed away. Miss Vinton took leave of her little class and went back to her own home. She said sadly: "They are so ignorant! It was so little I could do for them, and I am afraid they will forget it all."

Did they forget? One November morning the fisherman went out in his boat as usual. Later in the day the clouds gathered as for a storm, and the wife and children began to be anxious. As the afternoon hours waned, the sky grew darker, and the wind howled about the little cottage. It was already past the hour when the father might have been expected, and poor Mrs. Byrnes soothed the fretful baby, and turned her eyes anxiously toward the window which looked seaward. The children peered out into the gathering darkness, but no sail was in sight; indeed, it soon became so dark that they could not see far from the house. Little Nell placed a lamp in the window, and Bob replenished the fire. Then he slipped away. A bit of the conversation which the younger ones had carried on as they stood gazing out over the waters had given him an idea.

"Don't you know," said Nell, "how Miss Vinton said, 'The sea is his, and he made it?'"

"Yes; and you know she told us the pretty story of how the people were afraid, and Jesus said to the waves, 'Be still.' I liked that story," said the little brother.

"I wish he would say so to the waves now," returned Nell.

"May be he would if he were here," was the reply. "Maybe he would. I wish he was here."

Bob, hearing this, remembered more of the teachings of the young lady of whom they had all been so fond, and as soon as he could he slipped away, and went up into the loft where the children slept. There, in the darkness and chill, he knelt down and asked Jesus to make the winds and waves "Be still." Repeating this—his first prayer—again and again, he at length arose, with a calm in his heart. Going down stairs, his mother said: "Seems to me the wind does not blow quite so hard."

Bob smiled, and whispered: "I shouldn't wonder if he heard! I didn't know as he would hear me, but Miss Vinton said he would."

He piled on more fuel, saying aloud: "Father will be here soon, and we must have it warm, and

have supper ready. Mother, don't you think we ought to set the table?"

"Oh, yes! I suppose so. But I thought if your father never comes home we would not want any supper," said the poor woman, in a despairing tone.

"I know. But don't you think the wind has gone down considerably?"

It seemed ages to the waiting group, but it was not more than an hour when the voice of the fisherman was heard, and Bob—throwing open the door—welcomed the father.

"I tell you," said the dripping man, "I began to think I should never see the shore again! The storm was awful; but about an hour ago, it began to let up a little. The clouds broke away, too; and then I saw Nell's light there, and, I tell you, we just steered for that!"

"About an hour," repeated Bob to himself. "That was when I was up there asking Jesus to say, 'Be still.' I guess he did hear!"—*The Pansy.*

Bits of Fun.

—Old Mrs. Bently (in an art gallery)—"The programme says that's the Venus of Milo."

Old Mr. Bently—"I reckon she must have been killed in a railroad accident, Mirandy."

—Mistress—"What are you doing, Bridget?"

Bridget—"Catching the flies, mum, and putting them on the fly-paper, sure; ain't that what it's fur?"

—Her mother was sowing some seeds, and tried to explain to Maggie how they were put into the ground little seeds and came up plants. "O, yes," she said, her face brightening. "They go to bed babies, and get up growed people!"

—Guest (at summer hotel)—"Who is that distinguished looking young man wiping dishes?"

Proprietor—"That is Mr. Emerson Tracy Bancroft, who delivered the magnificent oration on 'The Ideality of Life' at Yalemouth commencement."

—Why They Don't Go.—First Mosquito—"What a queer smell. Wonder what it is?"

Second Mosquito—"Guess somebody's cooking cabbage."

"O, I see now. He! he! This fellow is smoking so as to drive us away."

—Mrs. Brown—"You told me that if I left my table-cloth out all night the fruit stains would disappear. Well, I put it out last night."

Mrs. Jones—"Of course the stains were gone in the morning?"

Mrs. Brown—"Yes; so was the table-cloth."

—An up-town father a few days before the Fourth gave his ten-year-old heir a five-dollar bill with which to buy himself a pair of shoes, a hat, and some fireworks. The patriotic son brought home a 35 cent pair of shoes, a 15 cent hat, and \$4 50 worth of fireworks.

—A Different Vine Altogether.—"What a delicious drink!" said an agriculturally ignorant young woman, who was sipping some kumyss at the cattle show. "Is it made from the product of the grapevine, George?"

"No," replied George, "It is made from the product of the bovine."

—American boy—"Doctor, how long will it be before I get over these Fourth of July hurts?"

Doctor—"It will be nine or ten months before you will be in first-class condition again."

"How long will that be before the next Fourth comes?"

"Oh, near two months."

"That's all right."