

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

Vol. XVI.]

TORONTO, FEBRUARY 15, 1896.

[No. 7.]

WHY TOM LOST HIS PLACE.

BY CARLISLE B. HOLDING.

Tom Lemasters was a bright boy, industrious, and very fond of his mother. His father had been dead about a year, and Tommy felt the responsibility of helping to earn a living.

"Mr. Harrison wants a boy in his store," Tommy's mother said one afternoon, coming in from down town and putting several parcels on the table.

"Did you tell him I wanted a place?" Tom asked excitedly, jumping up from the chair where he was reading a book.

"Yes, and he said you should come down at once to see him about it," she replied.

"I will go now." Tom seized his hat and was bounding toward the door, when his mother called, "Wait; black your shoes, wash your face, and I will get you a clean waist to put on. First impressions are lasting."

"All right, mother," he said cheerily, hurrying out to do as she bade him.

In an hour Tom was home again. He rushed into his mother's presence, tossed his hat up and caught it, and exclaimed,

"I got the place! I got the place!"

"Sure?" his mother asked delightedly.

"Sure!" Tom said. I am to go to work in the morning. Mr. Harrison said it was on your account, mother, for while he did not know much about me, he knew you, and that was enough for him."

"How very kind; and, Tommy, you will not do anything to make Mr. Harrison sorry he took you and break my heart, will you?"

"Indeed not, mother." So Tom went to work determined to please

his employer and to honour his mother. "Here, boy," the cashier called one day; "take this note over to Lawyer Parson's office, and fly, I tell you, for he is going away on the nine o'clock train."

The manner of the cashier was cross and his words sharp, and Tommy grew red with anger; but he took the note and ran every step of the way to the office, and in fifteen minutes was back again.

"Mr. Parsons said, 'All right,'" he reported to the cashier between gasps for breath.

"Good boy," the cashier said, and turned away to his work.

"Here, Tom," Mr. Harrison called; "take these letters to the post office, and be quick, for the mail closes at nine; it's five minutes to nine now."

"O, dear," Tom sighed, as he hurried out; "I just went by the office. Why could not I have done this when I went

to Mr. Parson's?" Nevertheless he ran again, and the letters were mailed at the very last minute.

When night came Tom was thoroughly tired, for he was kept busy all day long running here and there for this clerk and that.

"Mother," he exclaimed one night, "people think because I am a boy I never get tired. I just must give up that place."

"Please don't," his mother said. "We need your wages, and then it is a starter for something better."

"Well, mother, suppose you pray about it. I must have more strength or I can never get through another week."

His mother smiled at his simple faith in her prayers, and that night she did ask the Father to give her boy patience and strength for his daily task.

And so the weeks went by until the holidays.

Then there was a rush in the store for sure. Everybody was busy. Crowds of people came to buy armfuls of things. Many weary tramps Tom made to the trains carrying parcels for customers who lived out of town. Many hurried runs were made to the express office, to the bank, to the post office, and elsewhere. When Tom came into the store, there was always something to be done, and he did it.

It was in the latter part of January; the great rush was over. The big store seemed very quiet, with only here and there a customer where hundreds had crowded the counters a few weeks before.

The floor walker found Tommy one morning in the basement straightening up the reserve stock.

"Mr. Harrison wants you in his office," he said.

Tom went to the office and found there

four or five heads of departments and the cashier.

"Tom," said Mr. Harrison, looking at him a second and then whirling his office chair around so Tom could not see his face, "it is the opinion of these gentlemen—and I agree with them—that you are not wanted as errand boy any longer."

"Sir," said Tommy, bursting into tears, "my mother!" He could say no more.

"There! there!" said Mr. Harrison, in softer tones; "I did not know you would feel so bad about it."

"I would not, sir," said Tommy at last, drying his tears and trying to be very brave; "but I promised mother not to lose my place if I could help it."

"So I see," said Mr. Harrison; "but, Tommy, there is one thing I did not tell you. The cashier is at the bottom of this. He says he does not want you to run errands any more, for he wants you in his office to help him. Now, if you don't care, you may go there at five dollars a week instead of three, as now."

"Sir," Tommy began.

"That is all, gentlemen," Mr. Harrison said, rising, and the men went out, the cashier taking Tommy with him.

And that is how Tommy lost one position to get a better one.

PRAYING FOR PAPA.

"Did you see that, mister?" said an elevated railroad guard to a man who stood with him on the rear platform of the first car the other night.

"Yes."

"Well, then," added the guard, "you saw my three little children. They were kneeling at

a trunk in front of the

window of that house we passed. Over them stood their mother. She was about sending them to bed, but before they go she teaches 'em to pray for me. Yes, and she brings 'em there so as I can see 'em. And," he added, with a manly attempt to stifle a sob that welled up in his throat, "she has told me what she tells 'em to say."

"What is it?" inquired the auditor.

"I hope you won't think me foolish, sir, but as I guess you are a married man and a father you may care to hear it. You see, it is this way: The children, they go to bed at nine. That's about the time my train goes by the house. It's right on the line. So just about that moment she brings the little 'uns up to the trunk in their nightgowns, and make 'em kneel down with their hands clasped on their faces. And then they pray and pray—"



A DAUGHTER OF THE NILE.—(See next page.)