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## OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

BY AUNT BECKY.

Dear Girls and Boys:

There are letters from two little friends this week whose names have not been seen in the corner for such a long time; a third is a newcomer, and very welcome indeed. Margaret speaks of hooking mats, and wonders if any of our readers do that kind of work. We might hear through the corner. Minnie M. is really the first to write to me from Sherbrooke. So you have not had sufficient snow to enjoy your toboggan and sleigh to your heart's content. That is the complaint here too. Mary and Winnifred E. have come among us again. I am so glad to know that it was not because my little friends had forgotten me that they did not write, but because they have been busy studying. I would be so pleased to see pieces of Winnifred's new frocks. Send them along. How very interesting that an aunt of two of my little ones should be in the mission field with Father Charlebois, the good old Indian missionary whose letter we published last week. Love to the nieces and nephews.

Your loving  
AUNT BECKY.

Dear Aunt Becky:

Well, I had not written to you for some time, so I thought I would write to you. It has not been very cold here. I got lots of presents this Christmas, a telephone, a book, and a box of candy, and two prayer books and lots of other things. The teamsters can hardly get the wood out of the woods. I think I will close.

Yours truly,  
ROYAL C.

Dear Aunt Becky:

I am a little boy eight years old. This is my first letter. I thought I would let you know what I have been doing this winter. I don't go to school, but I study at home most every day, and I am gaining with my lessons pretty fast. I am living on a farm and I have got quite a stock. I have three little calves, and four horses and a little colt, and a dog named Carlo. Hoping to see my letter in print, with love to all the cousins. I remain,

Your loving nephew,

FREDRICK A.

Smith's Mills, Que.

Dear Aunt Becky:

It is a long time since I have written to you. We are having lovely weather now. The snow is nearly all off and the sleighing isn't very good. I do not go to school now, but am staying up at my grandma's for a few days. My sister Katie lives here and we have quite a time. We are hooking a mat now. I wonder if any of the readers of this paper hook mats? I think it is great fun. I have eight sisters and two brothers. Isn't that quite a lot? I like to skate and can do very well. We have a nice rink here, it is quite large, it reaches from one street to the other. I got quite a few presents Christmas. My little brother got a little tin bank. He is waiting until he gets it full of money before he opens it. He has got quite a lot in it already. I will close now, hoping to see this letter in print.

From your niece,

MARGARET F.

P.S.—I hope there will be a lot of letters in print this week.—M. F. Pughwash, N.S.

Dear Aunt Becky:

I read the True Witness every week. This week I was sorry to see that nobody had written to you, so I thought I would write to you. I think I am the first to write from Sherbrooke. I am ten years old, and I am going to the convent and I hope to make my first Communion in the spring. We have not had much alighting this year. Our hills are all bare of snow, but we hope to have more alighting before the winter is over, for we want to use my large toboggan and bob sleigh that my brother Harry made me. The last two or three days we have had good skating. Our rink froze over well after the big thaw. I must not forget to tell you that we have dear little kittens. They are not quite old enough to play yet, but will soon be. We have two rabbits. They have grown quite

large this winter. They belong to my brother, but I often feed them. I hope my letter will please you. With love,

Your little friend,

WINNIE M.

Birklands, Sherbrooke.

Dear Aunt Becky:

I am sorry to see no letters in the True Witness this week. I hope it will not happen again. Since Christmas I have had extra study—my Catechism. We have had lots of nice flowers, and they are all beginning to bloom. Of all my lessons, I think I like music best. My little sister and I hope to go to the convent in May to prepare for first Communion. We are going to make our cousins a visit next summer, at Miletta. Would you like me to send you some pieces of my new dresses? Good-bye, dear Aunt Becky.

From your loving niece,

WINNIFRED A. E.

Warden Que.

Dear Aunt Becky:

I have not written for a long time. I thought I must write to you. The trouble was that I didn't write because I was studying and got a new study after Christmas. I like to read Father Charlebois' letter, because I have an aunt out there a Sister. My brother is going to school out at West Brom to Aunt Addie. If I see my letter in print I will write again. When our school closed we had an examination. For the first the children recited, and after that the teacher gave us maple sugar and she gave lots of prizes. My little sister is going to write to you too. So I will say good-bye.

From your loving niece,

MARY E.

Warden, Que.

MR. THROCKTON'S GUARDIAN.

"Please, sir, lend a quarter?" It was a small ragged boy that repeated the request, addressing a number of passing men one winter night by the light of the lamp. Some of the men shook their heads; others passed on without noticing the appeal. Finally two men who were walking together stopped.

"Why don't you ask me to give you a quarter?" one of the men questioned the boy.

"Because I'm a-goin' to give it back to you," was the prompt answer. "I ain't a-beggin'."

The man that had asked the question laughed not altogether pleasantly.

"Ho, ho, here is a refinement," he said with ironical emphasis to his friend. To the boy he continued: "Look here, little man. I lend you money only on good security. What security can you give me?" "Security?" replied the boy, helplessly. Then two eager eyes brightened, as the meaning of the word was suggested, and he added: "I can't give you none—only my word and my willingness to work."

The man laughed a great haw, haw. "Good! You've earned your money, little Ready Wits," he said, as he tossed a quarter to the boy, and started up the street with his friend. "Please, sir, you ain't told me your name yet, nor where you live," pursued the boy.

"Not done with you yet," said the man sharply, as he stopped again. "Are you getting up a directory in the interests of beggars, boy?" "No, sir," replied the little fellow seriously; "it's in the interest of you."

Both men laughed.

"Well, my name is John Throckton, and I live at 16 Fairfield Avenue," said the giver of the quarter. Mr. Throckton's house was large and handsome, and full of fine furniture and works of art. He was very rich, but by no means generous with money. He had given in this instance merely out of caprice. The boy's manner of asking had amused him. Seldom did he give so much as a quarter for charity. Meanwhile little Bernard invested the borrowed quarter in a loaf of bread, a little piece of meat, and a little paper of tea, and carried the provisions home. His home was a single room in a tenement house. His father was dead, and his mother made a living by sewing shirts. This week, however, she had been too ill to work, and her money was all spent.

"Oh, Bernard, where did you get those things?" Mrs. Wells asked when her son came in. Bernard told his story. "We must return the money as

soon as possible," said the mother. But his mother was not able to go back to her work. Bernard earned a little money now and then selling papers, but this was needed to buy food and coal. Finally Mrs. Wells died, and a brother of Bernard's father, a poor, hard-working man, came forward and offered the little boy a home. Bernard worked for his uncle, who kept a little store. But the boy was not given any money. Once Bernard asked for a quarter that he might pay Mr. Throckton, and was laughed at by his uncle.

"John Throckton has too much money already," the man said. "He's one of the richest men in town, and one of the meanest. I guess I don't want him to get any of my quarters."

A year passed. Bernard did not forget his obligation to Mr. Throckton. Many were the plans that he had made for redeeming his pledged word.

One day when he was passing along a crowded street it was his good fortune to find a pair of glasses that a lady had accidentally dropped, and the lady rewarded him with a quarter.

Bernard set out immediately for No. 16 Fairfield Avenue. "How pleased mother will be! I hope she knows!" he thought to himself as he hurried along with a light, springy gait. His steps were not lighter than his heart. It was about five o'clock and Mr. Throckton had returned from his library. He was not particularly engaged, and he told the servant to show the boy in.

"I came to pay you the quarter, Mr. Throckton," said Bernard, advancing into the splendid room and holding out the money. "I'm much obliged to you for trustin' me. I couldn't git it for you sooner."

Mr. Throckton gave Bernard a searching look. "Have you not made a mistake?" he asked. "I never lent you a quarter to my knowledge, nor do I know you."

"It was on the street, sir," said Bernard, "one night—"

"Oh, yes, I do remember you now!" Well, well," Mr. Throckton laughed.

"Yes, sir, I'm him," and Bernard laid the silver coin on the table beside Mr. Throckton's hand.

The man of business appeared to be interested. "Well, my little fellow," he said, "I confess you have taken me by surprise."

He leaned back in his armchair and regarded the boy narrowly while he slipped the quarter into his vest pocket. Mr. Throckton liked to investigate the motives and actions that seemed strange to him, so he resumed:

"Now, my little boy, if you don't mind telling me, I should very much like to know why you return this money. Didn't you understand at the time that I never expected to see it or you again?"

"I kind of thought that a-way sir," said Bernard; "but I didn't know as that made any difference."

"Yes, I see," said Mr. Throckton; "you wanted to feel that you were honest, and it wasn't a bad thing to plume one's self on, either. Was that it?"

"No, sir, I don't know as it was," answered little Bernard thoughtfully. "It was more this-way. If I hadn't brought back your money you would have thought I was deceivin' you. Then, 'sposin' somebody else'd ask you for somethin', some one as was real honest and needin', and you, thinkin' of me and the mean trick I'd played on you, would say 'No' to the other fellow, then I'd be 'sponsible. I'd be 'sponsible for somebody sufferin' for want of food, and I'd be 'sponsible for makin' you mean and spiteful and unfeelin'—see?"

Mr. Throckton did not smile now. His fine, self-satisfied face flushed as he looked at the earnest little speaker before him. He was perhaps more surprised now than he had ever been in his life. He was touched, too. The idea of this crude, little, common street boy considering himself responsible for the doings of John Throckton. The man felt his hardness ebbing away and in its place there came a desire to do something good and worthy with his money. And what better thing could he do, he reasoned, than to care for the child that had been the means of saving him from his own selfishness.

What was that gleaming in the waning light of departing day? A cross-crowned steeple. That was surely a Catholic church. He would go in for a few minutes. Good Brother Anselm had often admonished him: never to pass a church without making at least a short visit. The coolness and quiet of the holy place was refreshing. Benny thought he might stay to recite his rosary and, perhaps, some one might come, and he would ask about the train.

He began his rosary very devoutly, Bill.

Mr. Throckton's acquaintances were considerably amazed when they learned that the bright-faced little boy that appeared often in Mr. Throckton's company was an orphan whom the rich man had adopted. A friend said to him one day: "I wonder you are not afraid to assume so great a responsibility." Mr. Throckton, as the guardianship of a child? "My little boy was my guardian first," answered Mr. Throckton with a smile.—Parish Visitor.

THE TALE OF LITTLE BEN.

Aunt Sally was in a brown study. Little Ben, with a scared look on his sad little face, watched her from his corner. When Aunt Sally was very silent, and her knitting needles flew with uncommon speed, there was usually trouble ahead.

"Ben," the old lady called out suddenly.

"Yes'm."

"Ben, I have just been studying."

"Yes'm."

"You are getting to be a great boy"—surveying him critically—"eleven years old."

"Yes'm," put in Ben, "going to be eleven next Fourth-of-July."

"Is them your manners, interrupting your elders, eh? When I say you're eleven, then you're eleven."

"Yes'm," admitted Ben.

"And I have been a-toiling and slaving for you all these years, haven't I?"

"Yes'm," answered Ben, ruefully. "And I'm a-thinkin' it's time you did somethin' for yourself."

"I could run errands," said Ben.

"Errands, indeed! The laziness is in him; comes naturally by it. Running errands. It's time you learned to earn your bread by the sweat of your brow like a decent Christian."

"Yes'm," replied Ben, downcast. "Now, I've just been a-calculatin' that if you'd go to your Uncle Jake—he's got as much and more right to do for you than me, a poor lone widow woman."

Ben was at a loss for an answer this time.

"So I've concluded you'd better pack your belongings, and take good care of 'em, mind you, and start for your Uncle Jake's to-morrow mornin'."

Ben was again at a loss for an answer. He had never seen Uncle Jake, but Aunt Sally gave him minute directions how to find his way, and at an early hour sent him to his poor little bed in the attic and cautioned him to be up at break of day. Ben had led a very joyless life at Widow Grey's cottage; still he shrank from facing the unknown.

"You'll find your bundle and a bit of lunch ready for you, Benjamin, and start right off early in the mornin'. You can't expect me, at my time of life to be up at that unearthly hour," she called after him.

"Don't need to, Aunt Sally: I'll get on all right."

"Don't need, indeed. Well, that's gratitude for you. After all I've done so impudent: 'don't need to.'"

"But, Aunt Sally, I—"

"Don't interrupt me, young man. I was just goin' to tell you to be honest and not disgrace the family."

"I will, sure, Aunt Sally."

"Well, get to bed, and I do hope you will learn to take care of yourself and stop being a burden to other people."

"I won't be a burden to anybody as soon as I can get to work."

"Well, the independence of him! That's the thanks for raising other people's children."

Poor little Ben's sleep was troubled. He was awake long before day-break. The lunch was ready, but his poor little heart was too full to allow him to eat. He shouldered his bundle and softly stole out into the grey dawn. Was that Aunt Sally's voice, with a very perceptible quaver in it, calling out:

"Good-bye, Ben; be a man, and don't disgrace the family."

The sun arose in unclouded glory, flooding earth and sky with beauty. The birds woke the woodland with their thrilling songs of joy. But one sorrowful young heart was very heavy. The morning deepened into the sultry noontide. Poor little Benny was weary and footsore, but he hurried on to reach the next station before the night would overtake him. At last, quite exhausted, he reached a little village.

What was that gleaming in the waning light of departing day? A cross-crowned steeple. That was surely a Catholic church. He would go in for a few minutes. Good Brother Anselm had often admonished him: never to pass a church without making at least a short visit. The coolness and quiet of the holy place was refreshing. Benny thought he might stay to recite his rosary and, perhaps, some one might come, and he would ask about the train.

He began his rosary very devoutly, Bill.

## DOES YOUR HEAD

Feel As Though It Was Being Hammered?  
As Though It Would Crack Open?  
As Though a Million Sparks Were Flying Out of Your Eyes?  
Horrible Sickness of Your Stomach?  
Then You Have Sick Headache!

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but ere long the tired littlehead with its crown of clustering auburn hair sank lower, and he was soon fast asleep.

The sexton closed the windows and locked the church, but Ben slept on unperturbed. He was in dreamland and so happy. No doubt pitying angels brought sweet dreams to cheer the lone orphan boy.

Suddenly he was awakened by a rasping noise. He started up in horror to find himself alone in the great dark church.

But was it dark? What light was that gleaming in the sanctuary? It was not the sanctuary lamp—and those dark figures, what were they? Ben held his breath with horror. Ghosts! Oh, not in God's holy house. He saw distinctly now. There were several men. They were at the Tabernacle!

In an instant Ben had realized the situation.

"Oh! they are wicked robbers, and they want to lay their wicked hands on the adorable Sacrament!" thought Ben.

He took a step forward. He wanted to tell the robbers not to do anything so horrible. But they would not listen to a little fellow like him.

Heedless of consequences, he rushed to the window and smashed a large pane of glass with his little fists, which were soon bleeding. Calling out into the night, "Robbers! Robbers in the church!" his voice was heard by some men passing.

The thieves were struck with fear. Whence that cry? Who had witnessed their fearful crime? One of the number discovered the boy and, rushing on him, felled him to the ground with a heavy blow.

But the alarm had been heeded and hurrying feet were approaching. The robbers sought safety in a hurried flight, leaving their tools behind them.

When the pastor had ascertained that the adorable Sacrament was untouched, he was deeply thankful to the merciful providence of God which had interposed to prevent so horrible a crime. But who had given the alarm? No one was to be seen. They proceeded to the broken window, and there, very white and still, lay little Ben.

"Here is the little hero that saved us from a great calamity," said the priest with emotion. "Has the child fainted, or is he hurt?"

His hands were bleeding, and from a deep gash in his head the blood flowed freely.

"Let us take him to the rectory immediately, and get Dr. Connees instantly," said the kind priest.

The boy was still living, but that was all. He breathed faintly.

"Where's there's life, there's hope," said the physician, "and we'll do our best to save our little hero."

The kind doctor's efforts were crowned with success.

When the good priest learned the little wail's sad history he was deeply moved.

"Benny, suppose you ask Aunt Sally and Uncle Jacob to give you a t. me."

"I think," said Benny, sadly, "they would give me to anybody; but I would love best to work for you, Father."

"We'll see about the working part of it when you get strong again, my boy," said the good Father.

Aunt Sally and Uncle Jacob were duly consulted and were glad to be rid of the boy.

When Ben was able to be about again he was very anxious to work, but the good priest insisted on his attending school. The boy had a bright mind and a pious heart and progressed rapidly.

Our Lord singled out His little champion to work in His own vineyard. He became a zealous priest, and led many to the long and service of the Redeemer, for whose sake he was ready on that lone, stormy night to sacrifice his life.—Vesper Bell.

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