

fall, and Robbie's mamma came running in, to find him lying on the floor, rubbing his eyes and looking very much surprised at seeing her. He jumped up quickly, and, throwing his little arms around her neck, he held her tight, and said:

"Mamma! mamma! I love you most of anything in the world, and I'll never be a naughty boy again."—Helen E. Middlebrook, in Sunday-School Times.

AN OLD MAN'S STORY.

Half a dozen boys were gathered about an old barn under which a defenceless dog had taken refuge from their tormenting attentions.

Some were lying flat on the ground peering under; some were hurling small missiles as far as they could reach, while two others, more enterprising still, were trying to pull up a board in the floor.

Amid their excited shouts "There he is; I see him!" "Hold on, there, I'll fix him!" and kindred exclamations, they did not hear carriage wheels in the soft, dusty road, or see the occupant, until a quiet voice said: "What is it, boys?"

One or two slunk away in a shamefaced manner, but two or three others began all together to tell him what their victim was.

"He hain't nobody's dog," said one. "Nd we think he's got hydrophobia," said another, while a third added: "He's a no 'count dog anyhow, 'nd if we can git him out we're going to tie a stone to his neck 'nd drown him over in Simmond's pond."

"Has he bitten any of you?" the quiet voice inquired again.

"He sort o' snapped at Wallie's hand, 'nd he'd a bit me if I hadn't been too smart for him," said the largest boy, while "Wallie" examined his dirty fingers with a martyr-like air.

"I suppose you boys were quietly playing somewhere and the dog pitched into you?"

There was a profound silence for a few moments, when one bright-eyed little fellow said, manfully:

"No mister, he didn't. He was lyin' down by the brew'ry with a bone—just gnawin' it, ye know—'nd we sort a got to pleggin' 'nd pesterin' him, 'nd 'twas when Wallie snatched the bone that he snapped."

"Have you time to listen to an old man's story?"

Instantly sticks and stones were dropped, though two of the lads tried to put on an indifferent front.

Driving his horse into the shade of the building, the stranger began:

"You boys do not realize it any more than I did when I was a boy, but nevertheless it is true that every day of our lives we write out a page in the book of life; and when one is old he has a great deal of time in which he must look back and read over these pages, and when I saw you tormenting that helpless dog it seemed to me as if some unseen finger swiftly turned the leaves of my life back to a page—a page which I wish to God could be blotted out forever, but it never can. No, boys, we may be sorry for things, may get forgiveness for them, may even forget them for a time; but if we do a wrong, it is somehow bound to rise up before us at times when we least expect it. I hold that in this world we never get entirely away from our wrong doing. But I did not intend to preach a sermon, but to tell you a story.

"As a boy I was naturally cruel; I delighted to rob birds' nests, torment cats and dogs and smaller children. As I grew older and helped my father on the farm, I was rebuked for my abuse of the animals, and my mother used to say that if she had her way I would never get a horse to go anywhere. Also, as I grew older, I became fond of hunting, and spent many days with my noble dog Stanley in the woods. I professed to be very good to him; but of a truth 'the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel,' and when I think of the whippings and kicks the noble fellow received from me while, as I called it, I was 'training him,' I am amazed at the affection he gave me in return, but the worst was yet to come.

"He had never been a good retriever. You know what this is, of course—a dog that will go anywhere after you have shot your game, and bring it to you without musing or tearing it in the least. I had repeatedly beaten Stanley for his failure in this line, though I knew it came from the fact that his former master had whipped him for carrying home dead chickens, or anything like that he found in the neighbourhood during his puppy days, true to his retrieving instinct. One day, while shooting ducks, I said to him: 'Now, sir, you'll bring me that bird out there on that island or I'll kill you; do you understand it?' I shall always think he did, from the troubled look he gave me, and the pleading way in which he crept to my side and attempted to caress my hand. Roughly I shook him off and bade him go fetch that bird. Obediently he plunged into the ice-cold water,

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duck. Angrily, I shouted my orders, swam to the island, and then stood in an irresolute manner beside the but he only put his nose on it, then swam back toward me. I sent him back three times; then he attempted to land. I knew that he was too chilled to make it possible for him to return to the island, but my passion mastered me, and again and again I struck him back into the water with my gun butt, fiercely declaring that he would bring me that bird or never land alive. Oh, the look in those brown eyes as he turned them upon me at each effort to land! Boys, I'll never, no, never, forget it, and I expect to meet it when I stand before God's bar of justice."

The stranger paused here for a little ere he found voice to go on.

"Presently he grew so helpless from cold, struggles and blows that he let himself drift beyond my reach, but, frenzied with rage, I dropped my gun, and, snatching up a long pole, I leaned over the water's edge to strike him. As the pole came down some sod or root under my foot gave way, and I found myself struggling in the coldest water I was ever in; but it was only for a few brief moments, for, with the icy hands of death already tightening about his faithful heart, that noble dog roused himself at sight of my peril, worked towards me as best he could, and with a last desperate effort, born of love and fidelity, he dragged me to the shore, sank down,



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