

THE PRIZE STORY.

NO. 21.

One lady or gentleman's Fine Solid Gold Watch offered every week as a prize for the best story, original or selected, sent to us by competitors under the following conditions:—1st. The story need not be the work of the sender, but may be selected from any newspaper, magazine, book or pamphlet wherever found, and may be either written or printed matter, as long as it is legible. 2nd. The sender must become a subscriber for *Truth* for a year, and must, therefore, send one dollar along with the story, together with the name and address clearly given. Present subscribers will have their term extended for the dollar sent. If two or more stories are sent in the same story the first one received at *Truth* office will have the preference. 3rd. The publisher reserves the right to publish at any time any story, original or selected, which may fall to obtain a prize. The sum of three dollars (\$3) will be paid for such story when used. Address—Editor's PRIZE STORY, "Truth" Office, Toronto, Canada.

The following attractive and well written story has been chosen as our prize story for the present week. The sender can obtain the Watch offered as the prize, by forwarding twenty-five cents for postage and registration.

CLIVE'S LENTEN WORK.

SELECTED FOR "TRUTH" BY REV. J. FORSYTHE, RECTOR HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, PEMBROKE, ONT.

Clive Morton was a cripple; he was lame, and also slightly deformed; but his face was beautiful, and its sweet expression revealed the pure and noble character within. All the luxuries that wealth could supply were his, and a fond father was always on the alert to discover new sources of happiness for him. Servants, horses, and carriages were hourly at his command; and on the first floor of the house, he had rooms furnished to his taste. Unable to enjoy the life that other boys led, he turned to books as his consolation, and, with the rare mind that often accompanies an infirm body, was far advanced in Classic and English literature. But often he wearied of his life, for he and his father lived alone, and his only companion was his tutor. As he drove out for his daily airing he longed more than ever to mingle actively with the busy throngs that surged up and down the crowded streets of the city.

One Sunday before Lent his Rector preached an able sermon upon Lenten Work. He urged his people not to be content with mere passive goodness during the solemn season, but to desire active religious work. "Do not forget," said he, "to decide what you will do, as well as what you will not do. For many who are eager to renounce worldly amusements neglect to fill the precious hours thus gained with charitable employments."

Clive meditated much upon this discourse, and longed to do more than merely to donate money from the large allowance given him by his father.

Shortly after this, when driving near the ferry, he saw several forlorn newboys evidently engaged in a fight, and two stalwart policemen putting an end to the row. It was not an unusual sight to Clive, but to-day a thought suddenly entered his mind, and ordering Sam to stop the horse, and open the door of the coupe, he called two miserable-looking little fellows, who were wiping off the drops of blood that were trickling down their faces, and bade them come to him. Clive bought all the papers the boys had, and asked them to get into the carriage with him. They would not have been afraid to jump on or off the car platforms, or hang on to any passing dray, but they were really afraid to enter that beautiful carriage. But Clive looked so kindly at them, that they concluded to accept his invitation. He questioned them as to the cause of the quarrel, and found that Jim Slocum had tried to beat Teddy; Tommy had interfered, and the result was that both Tommy and Teddy had got the worst of it. "We all go together," said Tommy, "and share everything, Teddy and me."

In answer to Clive's inquiry, they said they had no parents, and lived with a cross old man and a still crosser woman whom they called Uncle Billy and Aunt Lilly. Clive directed Sam to drive to the alley where the boys said they lived, and sent Tommy up the rickety stairs of the old tenement to tell Uncle Billy that a gentleman wanted them for several days. John went with him leaving Sam to hold the horse. Uncle Billy, who was half intoxicated, said he hoped he would never set eyes on the boys again, and taking from Tommy what he had earned for his papers, bade him begone.

Clive then drove to a clothing store, and going in with the boys, bought complete outfits for them, of plain but warm materials. The boys felt awkward and fidgety as they stood there in their rags. Ordering

the purchases sent up immediately, they again entered the carriage, and leaving Broadway, rolled up Madison Avenue and stopped before Clive's home.

Here John, always respectful, faintly remonstrated upon bringing these little beggars into the house. But Clive silenced him with a gesture of authority, and bade them follow him into the study. "Now John," said he, "take Tommy and Teddy to the bathroom, and let them have all that is necessary, and then we will try on the new suits."

The boys hardly knew the uses of the different garments brought them, but with the help of the unwilling John they were finally dressed. You would never have recognized these fresh, refined faces, as belonging to the boys that had haunted the street-cars and ferry-boats every day.

Clive led the way to the dining-room. Mrs. Best, the housekeeper, held her head very high when she heard of Mr. Clive's eccentric conduct, and even Mary tossed her head as she brought in the soup. Clive had lunched while the boys' toilets were being attended to, as he knew they would feel more embarrassed if obliged to sit down with him. Charging them to eat all they needed, he seated himself by the window and pretended to read, but in reality watched them. They drank their soup from their plates, ate with their knives, or took their food up in their hands. Poor Clive shuddered: Could he ever train them, he thought, even should his father consent to let him keep them. But his plans were formed, and he hoped his father would permit him to carry them out. That afternoon Clive showed them pictures, wound up his music-box for them, and played to them on a grand piano in the great drawing room. Fearing lest they should weary of the restraint, he sent them out in the back yard to play ball with John, while he watched them from the window. Poor little fellows, they knew but little of games, since for several years they had been participants in the struggle for bread.

Hearing his father come in, Clive went to meet him, and bringing him to the window where he could see the boys told him what he had done.

Mr. Morton was charitable, and he was religious, but he looked upon Clive's proceedings as rash in the extreme. Doubtless they were thieves, he said, unprincipled in every respect, and he felt that Clive had run a great risk in bringing them home. But Clive was eloquently persuasive and talked his father over to his side. His plan was to keep them through Lent, supporting them from his own allowance, and then, if he found them worthy to send them to some institution where he would pay for them.

Mr. Morton said that he would go himself to Uncle Billy and ascertain if possible something in regard to their parentage.

That evening Clive went with them to a room he had assigned for them, and tried to explain the necessity of prayer. At first they did not seem to comprehend him, but soon a look of intelligence came into Tommy's blue eyes, and he said, that he remembered a woman who never spoke cross to him, and who had taught him a prayer. "She might have been my mother," he cried, "I think she was, but it was a long time ago." "Try to remember it, Tommy," said Clive. Tommy leaned his head on his thin hands, and tried to think. How old he looked for his years!

"Mister," he said at length, "I ain't

thought on it for years, but I know now; and she told me allers to take care of my little brother, and that must be Teddy. I can say the prayer I think. It begins, 'Our Father, Which art in Heaven.' Clive turned his head to hide the tears that rose to his eyes in spite of his efforts to prevent them. He well remembered his own sweet mother, and her saintly teachings.

Mr. Morton had gone immediately after dinner, with John and a policeman to the tenement-house, and learned from Uncle Billy all that he knew respecting the children. When he returned he placed upon Clive's study table a strong ironbox, and seating himself by the open grate-fire, related to his son the occurrences of the evening.

Not deeming it necessary to speak in the vernacular of Uncle Billy, Mr. Morton told in his own words the history of the new-boys as he had learned it.

About five years ago, a pretty but sickly woman with two little boys came to the tenement house, and occupied a room on the first floor. She brought with her a trunk and many nice dresses, but pawned or sold them one by one. When she had been there about six months she died suddenly of heart disease. Uncle Billy appropriated the trunk and what it contained, which he sold, and retained the money. He took the children, intending that they should help support him by begging then, and, as they grew older, by selling newspapers. After the mother's death Tommy had been found with an iron box, which, he said, she had told him always to keep. Billy confessed that he would have opened the box, and sold the contents, had he been able to do so, but the key had evidently been lost, and he was unable to pry open the cover. I asked for the box," continued Mr. Morton, "and it was at length found with the dust of years accumulated upon it. I told him we had taken the boys and, therefore, must have the box, but would pay him what he asked for it. He agreed to give it up for fifty dollars, and promised to make no further claim upon the boys. And now, although it is rather late, perhaps, to satisfy our natural curiosity, we had better open the box. I succeeded in getting it unfastened at a locksmith's, but have not looked into it yet."

Clive lifted the cover; first came a delicate lace handkerchief, then papers and letters, a jewel-case, a ring-box, two miniatures, and a few other trinkets. The jewel-case contained a set of pearls, the ring-box a plain gold ring, with "Lilla and Thomas" engraved upon the inside. Among the papers was a marriage certificate, stating that "Thomas Gordon and Lilla Clarence were married in London, February 8, 1874." And, what was of great interest, a journal containing much of the history of the family.

It seemed that Lilla Clarence was the daughter of a wealthy English gentleman, and that she had eloped with an American by the name of Thomas Gordon. He had died in New York a few years after their marriage, and his young wife was left alone with her two boys. She lived quite comfortably for a year or two, but then by the failure of a bank where her money was invested she lost all. Putting her pride in her pocket, she humbly wrote her father, begging his forgiveness, and entreating for help. But the letter never reached its destination! Poor Mrs. Gordon grew heart-sick as the weeks went by and she received no answer from home. She thought that even her stern step-mother would forgive her, could she see her helplessness. At length she had been obliged to take a room in a common tenement, and, as she could not leave her boys to go out to work, tried to obtain sewing from some of the second-class shops. Proud and beautiful as she had been, it was no wonder that she refused to associate with the low creatures that swarmed around the doors of the house.

The last entry in this journal must have been written just previous to her death, for she writes: "To-morrow I will seek some lawyer, and, stating my case to him, will get him to write to my father, and beg him to take us home. For, if I was to die and leave my children here, what would become of them?"

But to-morrow never came for her on earth, and without any warning she had passed away, and her sad life was at an end.

It was nearly morning when Clive entered his bedroom, which adjoined his study, and tried to compose himself to sleep. For a young boy he had a great responsibility resting upon his shoulders. He understood

now why these boys had such delicate features, such refined expressions, and soft voices. Even their street education had not wholly obliterated the evidence of good breeding. It is true that they lacked all outward polish, but that was inevitable, considering where they had been for five years. It was deemed best by Mr. Morton not to tell the boys about the papers until news came from their grandfather. If he refused to acknowledge them, and had other heirs, then Clive would legally adopt them, although he was little more than a boy himself, being barely seventeen. The papers were put in the hands of a reliable lawyer the next day.

Ere many days elapsed, the boys began to adapt themselves to their new life, as only boys of good family could, for a low-born child would have chafed at the restraints of a home of culture. It is not to be supposed, however, that Tommy and Teddy were by any means perfect, but Clive's corrections were so gentle, and his treatment of them so kind, that they soon learned to love him; and it is always easy to teach, and easy to learn, when monitor and pupil both love each other.

While Clive was busy with his tutor, who had been absent for some weeks, the boys studied the tasks appointed them by their young teacher. They could not read much, and what they had learned had been acquired by studying the hand bills. It being Lent, Clive desired the boys to accompany him daily to Vespers, and instructed them in the teachings of the church.

He also tried to draw them out in regard to their parents, and showed them the iron box, the pearls, the ring, and the miniatures of their father and mother. Tommy seemed to remember them, and as time flew by many little incidents of his former life recurred to him.

In the meantime the lawyer had sent a full statement of facts to England. Eagerly Mr. Morton and Clive awaited the answer. It came, and was a letter of great importance. Mr. Clarence stated that he had not received his daughter's letters, and, on the contrary, had written her several times himself, but these also must have been lost. He declared himself anxious to receive the boys. His only son, a younger half-brother of Mrs. Gordon's, had died recently just after, his own mother's death. Thus little Tommy was the next heir.

By the death of an uncle, since his daughter's elopement with Mr. Gordon, Mr. Clarence had become a baronet; and so Tommy, the newboy of a few weeks since, would in time become Sir Thomas Gordon! Mr. Clarence said furthermore that he would come himself in the spring, and take the boys to their future home in England.

The lawyer congratulated Clive on the good fortune that awaited his proteges, but advised him not to adopt all the street arabs of New York, as it was not probable that any others would turn out to be lords or dukes. Clive felt both glad and sorry at the news. Glad that he had rescued these boys from such a degrading life, and that he could give them to their lawful guardian, a now childless old man. Yet he felt sorry to give them up so soon, for he had become more attached to both Tommy and Teddy.

But Clive's Lenten work was well done, and at Easter, by their own request, both boys received the holy Rite of Confirmation. Certificates of their baptism had been found with Mrs. Gordon's papers.

Soon after this Mr. Clarence arrived from England, and at the earnest request of Mr. Morton passed several weeks with them. And when he returned to England with the boys, it was with the promise that Mr. Morton and Clive should soon visit them in their own home. A promise which was fulfilled.

Several years elapsed, and then Clive went a second time to Europe, this time alone, for his beloved father had passed away, leaving him desolate indeed. Clive had made a will, in which he left a large sum to a "Home for Newboys," and all the rest of his property to Teddy. For Tommy being the elder would succeed to his grandfather's title and estate.

Clive was delighted to see his boys again, now manly fellows, and busy with their studies; for Mr. Clarence could not bear to part with them to go to Eton, and so provided tutors for them, until they should be ready to go up to the University. The boys were shocked to see how thin poor Clive was, and they saw with Mr. Clarence that he must soon follow his father to the grave. But Clive was ready, and there was no

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