

The Minister's Saturday Night

BY FRANK RILEY HAYWARD

Rest him, O Father! thou didst send him forth With great and gracious messages of love; But thy ambassador is weary now, and worn with the weight of his high embassy. Now care for him as thou hast cared for us in sending him, and cause him to lie down in thy fresh pastures, by thy streams of peace.

Let thy left hand be now beneath his head, And thine upholding right, enfold him; And underneath, the everlasting arms Be felt in full support. So let him rest, Hushed like a little child, without one care, And so give thy beloved sleep, to-night.

Rest him, dear Master! He hath poured for us The wine of joy, and we have been refreshed. Now fill his chalice, give him sweet new draughts Of life and love, with thine own hand; be thou His ministrant to-night; draw very near. In all thy tenderness and all thy power, Oh, speak to him! Thou knowest how to speak.

A word in season to thy weary ones, And he is weary now. Thou lovest him— Let thy disciple lean upon thy breast, And leaning, gain new strength to "rise and shine."

Rest him, O loving Spirit! Let thy calm Fall on his soul, to-night. Oh, how does Dove, Spread thy right wing above him; let him rest Beneath its shadow; let him know afresh The infinite truth and might of thy dear name— "Our comforter!" As gentlest touch will stay The strong vibrations of a jarring chord, So lay thy hand upon his heart, and still Each overstraining throbb, each pulsing pain;

Then, in the stillness, breathe upon the strings, And let thy holy music overflow With soothing power, his listening, resting soul.

Selected Serial

SHILOH: WITHOUT AND WITHIN.

BY W. M. L. JAY.

CHAPTER XXX.

GATHERING IN.

Next morning I began the real work of gathering in. The first step was easy; it took me up to a house where I had once washed, and where death had prepared the way for me. The door was open, and I stepped next before a rough, weather-browned house in the midst of a potato-field, above whose low roof a large stone chimney rose like a watch-tower. Here I had often noticed, in passing, two or three neglected-looking children playing around the bar-place which served in lieu of gate. The premises seemed to be deserted, now; nevertheless, I knocked at the door, and, getting no answer, lifted the latch. It admitted me into a small, dingy kitchen. A sturdy boy sat on the hearth, amusing himself by sifting ash through his fingers into his hat; near the window was a cradle with a sleeping babe in it; and by its side sat a pale, quiet, little girl, rocking it with a patient foot and face, as if she had come unannounced to a comprehension of what was to be her chief business in life. Both stared at me.

"Where is your mother?" I asked. "She's gone a-washin'," said the girl. "And left you to take care of baby and brother?" The small hero in the ashes resented the implication. "She takes care o' baby, but she don't tetch me, I can tell yer. I takes care o' myse'f," with immense dignity.

"And he will get inter the ashes," added the small woman—"though mother said he mustn't, and she'll give it to him, when she gets home"—the prediction being uttered, not with a righteous exultation over merited punishment, but in the wild tone of a prophet hearing the story of his own foreboding.

"Did you ever hear the story of Cinderella?" I inquired. Libby shook her head; Bob vouchsafed no answer. "If you will come here," said I, addressing the latter, "I will tell it to you." He looked tempted, but doubtful. He was balancing the attractions of stories and mischief. I settled the matter by lifting him quietly by the collar, giving him a little shake, and then, having won the assent, and setting him down on the other side of me, remote from the hearth. He put his finger into his mouth, and looked at me, speculatively. He was uncertain whether to take notice or not. Without giving him time to decide, I commenced the story of Cinderella—with variations. The heroine's worst trial was a boy-brother, ingenious in methods of torment, and with a perverse inclination for ashes. The fairy godmother gave him wonderful gifts; but previously on the wrong moment, they fell on ashes in his hands or his mouth. The details were harrowing, and the finale was made to suit the new version. When I finished, the eyes of my audience were like saucers.

many details, I left a note for the mother, begging her to let the children come to see me, and, in the firm conviction that the young rascal who stood kicking his heels together on the doorstep would give her no peace until he had worried a consent out of her, which proved to be well-founded.

"My next visit was to a red-haired virago, who had just set her foot into the middle of a pig-sty, and was kicking the middle of the street with her heel. She was the reddest way of residing the implication that she needed charity, while the heavier load, by crimson with mortification and discomfiture. She lost no time in giving me to understand that "struck-up city folks," meddling with what was "none of their business," need not look for much better treatment at her hands; nevertheless, by dint of a few good-lumbers, and sharp retorts—which seemed greatly to her taste—I got her first or two to me, then, to my question or hint, and finally, to my gratification, to my Sunday School here 'better come arter 'em."

"I think he has called," replied I; he did not say so at home. "Wouldn't hurt him to come again, would it?" "Doubtless he will come again, in due time; you must recollect that he has been in Shih Shih for five weeks." "Who's agoin' ter be in yer class?" "I have but three prepared positively—Jimmy Lang (her lip curled) and Mrs. Danforth's two children." "His daughter! that the city woman down on Hope Plains, ain't it?" "The same."

"Did ye ask her if she was willin' ter hev' her younguns go with mine?" "Did I ask you if you were willing that your younguns should be in the pot and pan round the doortstep, it had made the kitchen its headquarters, and I smiled me a good-natured welcome from the mistress's face. She said I was an asker for knowledge. Before I had fully explained the object of my visit, she interrupted me with—"Ye're from York, ain't ye?" "I am."

"Born thar?" "No, in the city." "Lived thar long?" "Four or five years." "Didn't ye like the place?" "I did not dislike it." "Did ye leave for, then?" "Oh, account of my health." "What ail ye?" "And so on, for full three quarters of an hour, yet in a manner quite free from any taint of impertinence; by the end of which time I had given her all the necessary and useful information relative to my origin, education, friends, age, means of support, the cost of my garments, and a hundred attendant matters of interest. In requital, she graciously allowed me to write down as my scholar a certified and signed copy of her name—Mehitabel Baker by name, and to all appearance a second edition of the mother.

But all this was scarcely more than preliminary skimming. The true top of war was to come, I imagined, at Mr. Warren's. I wanted to capture Jack for my class, and I had reason to know that he was made of material as slippery as his father's was unmanageable. To win the adhesion of the one and the consent of the other would be no easy task. At sight of the little brown house, I gathered together my forces, and reviewed my weapons, as for a battle; nor did I forget to invoke higher aid. God has put into the hands of His children two powerful agencies, labour and prayer—the first we use moderately, the other we are prone to neglect; yet it is, I believe, the mightier of the two. And in conjunction with the other—not flows to a laud and only resource, when that has failed—it would be powerful, I think, for all things. The two were meant to go together, as the helve with the hatchet; divorcing them, no one has a right to complain that either is inefficient.

class. I had naturally desired that it should reach a redoubtable chamber, the more, that I have undertaken to gather it on my own responsibility, unprompted and unhelped.

"You choose your phrases well," returned he, with a cynical smile. "To an old stunner like me, the vice of ambition, and the sturdy, everyday virtue of independence are better motives to allege than a simple wish to do good." I was provoked into a satisfactory direction by the remark, unless they were intended for me or Jack, which you well know they are not? The question simply is, whether—as a personal favour, or out of regard for me, or from indifference, or for any other reason, good or bad, secret or avowed—knowledge—you will let me have Jack."

"Miss Frost, would you not object to send your son to be taught what you did not believe?" "Not unless I had something better to teach him that I did believe." "What right have you to assume that I have not?" "What have you taught him, Mr. Warren?" He made a kind of grimace. "Little enough, to be sure; but he is too young yet to know about these matters. He cannot understand either the dogmas of religion, or the duties of citizenship." "Of good things, I must say, he may be a good deal older than being what most are; but of religion, yes. Those ideas of a God, a Hereafter, Human Responsibility, Reward and Punishment are—his ideas of the Hereafter, Heaven and Hell, and philosophers as stick and bang, are always comprehensible enough to a child. I never knew the dullest to profess any difficulty in understanding, nor in receiving, in receiving, in receiving, most children do, when they readily there is opportunity—even when there is no direct effort to inculcate them. If you are willing to make the experiment, we will find out, on the spot, whether Jack has them; whether, having them, he makes any difficulty of understanding and accepting them."

Mr. Warren puffed away in silence for some moments, then he spelt a stern call of "Jack!" It found that remarkable urchin in some remote corner of the premises, and brought him hither, at breathless speed, with mixed feelings of awe and curiosity. There was a tone in his father's voice to which he was unaccustomed; and he doubted whether it boded him good or evil.

Not to linger on this part of my story, a few questions served to show that Jack, being gifted with somewhat unusual powers of memory and observation, had a tolerably correct notion of the Christian scheme, derived from various chance sources of information. He knew who made him and all things—believed that God saw him at all times, and was especially conscious of His clear-seeing eye upon him when he had done wrong, and afraid of His wrath. He knew that Heaven and Hell were plainly somewhat coloured by his experience of an earthly one; also knew the main incidents of the life of Christ and the object of it—had read about Him in the Testament at school. On being asked if he believed in the Testament, that he did, though a similar inquiry with reference to Mother Goose and other stories, elicited only a disdainful curl of the lip. Furthermore, under considerable pressure, acknowledged an expected to go to hell, if he died just as he was. He knew he was a bad boy, but couldn't seem to get to be any better, though he sometimes tried. And having thus made his Confession of Faith, Jack was dismissed to his work or play, or mischief, as he would within himself, doubtless, what it all meant.

Mr. Warren smoked on silently, seeming to be the prey of bitter and corroding thought; after a little, as he said nothing, I remarked, dryly, that I supposed I had not much to teach Jack in the way of Christian doctrine. The most I could do was to show him how to apply his knowledge to his own heart and life, by faith, so that he might continue his struggle to be a better boy and man. He inquired, furthermore, with some sarcastic emphasis, if he (Mr. Warren) had any new truths to impart to him like to afford him more efficient assistance in the good, or to break those old ones which had so imperceptibly made their way into his understanding?

ed; coolly, between two puffs of his pipe, he said, "I have not much to teach you, but I will try to do it." "Hume, by all means," I replied, rising, "for it is most fit that a man who begins by getting rid of the Gospel, a Saviour, and all that the renewed heart holds most dear, should end by getting rid of himself—and everybody else—as does that most subtle and abstruse philosopher! For, having proved—to his own satisfaction—that there has no identity apart from the perceptions conveyed to him, he goes on to say that if any one has a different notion of himself, he cannot longer argue with him! See to what absurdities men are reduced who reject the revelation of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit!"

"I turned to go." "Sit a moment longer," urged Mr. Warren, "I want to ask you a question, or two." "To what purpose?" said I, still standing; "It will be the old story—aimless discussion, and no result, besides, do not care to treat serious matters any longer in this light way." "I won't discuss," returned he, "I will only question; and you may be as serious as I." "I sat down reluctantly." "Seriously, now—and honestly—Miss Frost, do you believe the Bible, every word of it?" "Yes, I do."

"Ma. W. And yet you are, I take it, a pretty well educated woman, as much so as if you had been through college?" "I cannot say as to that—I only know that in most respects, my father gave me an education, and that he would have given a son." "Ma. W. And you have travelled in Europe?" "I see, and elsewhere. But to what end this catechism?" "I am meaning to it. I want to understand how these ignorances argued us can believe in the Bible's absurdities and impossibilities; but it passes my comprehension how a thoroughly trained and informed man can do so."

I. Lord Bacon was a profound thinker than Voltaire; and Bishop Butler was a more learned man than Tom Paine. "Ma. W. Have you read the 'Age of Reason'?" "Yes; my father would have me read it, under his supervision." "Ma. W. And what do you think of it?" "I think it as shallow a work as ever palmed off on a credulous public for a product of profound thought."

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