

"I am very glad you have come to me, for I have been thinking a great deal about you and certain other boys in the choir and Sunday school. I know all about your troubles, and understand how hard it is for you to obey orders and keep your high spirits in restraint. But you are not a child any longer, and must begin to learn what your work is in this life, and why it is necessary for you to be master of yourself. Can you repeat the collect for the fourth Sunday after the Epiphany?"

Harold could, for he had a teacher he loved, and always learned the lesson she set him, and so he reverently and thoughtfully said the prayer as follows:—

"O God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright; Grant to us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

And then Mr. Onceiwasaboymyself went on:

"Harold, this is a prayer that applies exactly to your case, and I want you to say it every night and morning, and think over what it means. You know how hard it is for us to walk along a slippery sidewalk, especially when people have not cleaned away the little pieces of ice and snow. Well, our inner lives are very like our outer ones; we go along very bravely until suddenly we come to a bad place, when down we go, and sometimes not only hurt ourselves, but drag others with us in our fall. Now, in church to-day, while Mr. Thomson was reading the First Lesson, you came to such a place, do you remember what I mean?"

Harold thought a moment and then said: "I think you must have seen me when I was whispering to Joe Martin; I saw his sister in the church, and wanted to know if her mother would let her go to the choristers' party with me."

"Yes," replied Mr. Onceiwasaboymyself.

"And Mr. Keyboard saw you, too, and fined you and Martin for talking in the chancel. There was one slippery place that made you fall. And why were you sent up to Mr. Sternbody's room yesterday?"

Harold thought a moment, and then said, half ashamedly, "Why, I was listening to Miss Fletcher all I knew how as she explained that new rule in arithmetic, and somehow I put my hand in my pocket and felt some throw-down crackers I had, and then, I thought what fun it would be to make the girls jump, and first thing I knew I had thrown one against the wall. Miss Fletcher was awful mad, and Mr. Sternbody said he would suspend me if I was sent up to him again this term."

Mr. Onceiwasaboymyself could hardly help smiling at the boyish prank, but he kept the smile back and said: "There was another slippery place that cost you a fall, and it might have

been a very serious one. Do you realize that now is the most valuable time of your life, you are forming habits that will probably influence you forever, and presently you will regret your wasted school-days very bitterly? You know this, and so I am not going to preach to you about it. But I want you to think over what I have said, and when you come to a slippery place, remember the collect you have just repeated, and ask God to give you such strength and protection as may support you in all dangers and carry you through all temptations. You know that Jesus Christ was once a boy Himself, and He understands how hard it is for you to stand upright. Ask Him to help you, and come to me next week and tell me how you are getting along. You have the making of a really good and strong man in you, and I do so hate to see you falling into such very bad and ruinous ways."

Harold went out feeling very thoughtful, and with his heart and head full of good resolutions, but he did not know how soon they were to be tested.

The choir boys had to practise that afternoon, and when Harold reached the church house he found his playmates holding an indignation meeting outside. The janitor, who was a very good man, but had forgotten that he was ever a boy himself, had turned them out of the playroom, and burned their collection of shinny sticks and other treasures priceless in the boys' eyes. And when Harold approached a great shout went up. "Elwood will have some scheme to pay him out," cried his bosom friend, Joe Martin, and then the whole story of oppression and wrong was poured into the newcomer's ears.

"What, burned my stick that I cut in Red Bridge Woods? Well, now, if I don't get even with him, my name isn't Harold Elwood. See here, boys, I've got the trick. You see how the pathway to his house is all down hill. Let's all of us come here at nine to-night, and pour water all over the steps. It's freezing so hard that it will be solid in ten minutes, and when he leaves the church house at ten, he'll have a toboggan slide on his back all the way free of charge. He won't spite us again for a week or two after that, I guess." Such a shout went up from the mischievous young urchins, as the proposed plan met their ears! "Didn't I tell you he'd fix him," cried Joe, "but now you fellows all keep mum, for there'd be an awful row if Mr. Thomson knew we'd done it." Just then the organist came round the corner and the boys flocked into the choir-room, where the singing was hardly as good as usual, so full were their hearts of the proposed vengeance.

Nine o'clock came, and with it the planner and perpetrators of the scheme. The church house stood silent in the moonlight, only a light in the janitor's room showing that their proposed victim was still at his post. Water was got in