

## OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

### HOW THEODORE HELPED.

THEODORE Denny had lived with kind parents for ten years in a happy home. But one day there came a change to the pleasant home on the hill. Theodore's father, who had been ill for some time, grew worse. He was not strong enough to drive out, even on the warm days, any more; soon the children were not called to his bedside for their morning kiss, and then very soon they were told that their dear father had gone to heaven. The younger children only knew that the house was strangely quiet, and their father's face was so cold and stiff, it would not smile even one little bit, and then, ever so many people came to the house, and a man read out of a book, and then that great long box was carried away. It all seemed very mysterious. Theodore could only comprehend two things; one was that he did not see his father any more, and the other that his mother looked like another person. She was pale and thin and sad, and wore such dreadful black clothes. It must be because his father was staying away so long, for when he asked her if his father would be gone a good while, she said, "Yes." Then he looked so frightened and asked her if she never expected to see him again. "Oh, yes, yes, my child, I shall go to him." And was she going away too, cried Theodore, to leave them all alone? Then his mother kissed him and said, "Not until God sent for her, but that her little boy must try to be a comfort to her, and grow fast and strong and good, so that when he was a man he could take all the care of her that his father would have done."

Theodore promised to do his best, and thereupon set his youthful mind to thinking out some plan by which he might be useful to his mother, even now.

There were some other changes in the family now, and even Theodore's young eyes saw that his mother did not have quite so much money to spend as she used to have. She had sold all the horses and carriages but one, and one day, gathering all her children about her, she said they must try to be careful in wearing their hats, and shoes, and clothes, for it would not be so easy to buy them new ones as it had been once; but that if they all were careful, she still had enough money to feed and clothe and educate her children, and to live in the same pleasant home their dear father had made for them.

All these words sank deeply into Theodore's heart, and he thought if he was the only man in the house, he ought to take some care of it; but what should he do? At first he could think of nothing at all; he could not go to town and make money, for nobody would want to employ such a little fellow as he was; there really did not seem to be any way in which he could help his mother except by being a good boy and obeying her always. So he did his best in this way and succeeded in pleasing his mother greatly but not in satisfying himself. At last one day in despair he said,

"Mamma, I want to earn some money."

"Why, Theodore, I can give you some if you are very anxious to buy something; what is it?"

"I would rather not tell you, mamma, but I want to earn some, to do work for it, you know; but nobody wants such a little boy to work for them as I am."

"Yes, my child," said his mother, "I want just such a little boy to work for me, and I will pay you for it," for Mrs. Denny thought this desire to earn, rather than receive without effort, one to be encouraged, and immediately formed a plan in her own mind to make him useful. "You know that since the under-gardener went away James cannot keep the grounds looking quite so nicely as they used to, for he has so much to do, and I cannot afford to hire another man. Yesterday I noticed that ugly plantain weeds were growing about some of the paths and through the lawn, and if you will dig them up by the roots, I will pay you ten cents for every hundred you throw away."

"Oh, how splendid, mamma," said Theodore. "I'll begin right away."

So he did, and worked bravely, though it was tough pulling for his small fingers. James gave him an old trowel, and every morning before breakfast Theodore might be seen out of doors working with all his might; though his patience was often sorely tried. The end came one day and all his weariness was forgotten when his mother counted out five bright silver pieces into his hand.

"Now, mamma, I'll just tell you what I want to do with this money," said Theodore, with a quaintly serious air. "You know you said you wanted me to help take care of you in papa's place, and I've been thinking there wasn't any need of my waiting to be a man if I could only get some money, and now I've worked for it, I want to pay you something every week for my board."

Mrs. Denny's heart was touched as she heard these words, but she only said, "Thank you, my dear child, it helps me very much to find you so thoughtful; how much do you think you can pay?"

"Well, I thought about two cents a week would make the money last longer and then I could be earning some more," answered Theodore with a grave, business-like air.

Mrs. Denny agreed to make the bargain, and every Saturday night Theodore brought her the two cents and she gave him a receipt in full for one week's board. Of course he did not know that the pennies were safely hidden away in his mother's drawer in a bright, new purse, he would find with his presents on the Christmas-tree. By that time Mrs. Denny felt that Theodore had done much towards forming a habit of self-denial that would all his life prove of greater value to him than the few cents he was now so carefully dividing. It was a thankful mother who noticed how, week after week, nothing could induce her boy to touch his board money; while she could not help hoping that her boy would grow to be a thoughtful, kind-hearted man, who might do great good in the world. So Theodore helped, and was it not in a good way?

### HOME OF REYNARD.

A YOUNG cock was strutting about the barn-yard with a very important air; he would allow none of the fowl to come anywhere near him to pick up a grain of corn, or a crumb, even; he considered himself entirely too good to associate with common fowl, for he came from very aristocratic stock. He was proud of his handsome red comb and glossy tail feathers, never thinking that the same being who gave the commoner fowl their covering, clothed him also. He felt insulted that he should be obliged to roost with them at night.

"I am not going to do it to-night," he said. "I will find a nice place by myself in a tree."

In a cave on the hillside, back of the farm, lived Sir Reynard the Fox and his family. The same day that the young cock was strutting about so boldly, Mrs. Reynard said to her husband: "My dear, you will have to get some provisions to-night, we have nearly finished the goose you brought home yesterday."

Accordingly that night Sir Reynard started off on a foraging expedition. In his rambles, he came to the farm-yard of which we have been talking. He walked round and round the chicken-coop but everything was thoroughly fastened. He couldn't find a crack even, for the farmer knew that the rogue would be after the poultry, and fastened everything firmly. Reynard tried to find a loose board or shingle, that he might force an entrance with his paws, but it was of no use; he was obliged to give it up and he walked off saying: "stingy old farmer, how does he suppose we poor foxes are to live? I must try somewhere else. Fortunately every one is not so mean."

Just as he was going out of the orchard, his sharp eyes spied something perched up in a tree. "What is that?—A fine, fat rooster, I declare!" And before our little cock could give one crow he was dead, and the fox was off with him to his den, where the little foxes had a fine feast.

### PLEASE, SIR, DON'T STEP THERE.

A LAYER of snow was spread over the icy streets, and pedestrians, shod with India rubber, walked carefully toward the village church on a cold Sabbath morning in February.

Walking somewhat hastily churchward, for I was late, I noticed a bright-looking little lad standing upon the pavement, with his cap in his hand and his eyes fixed upon one spot on the sidewalk. As I approached him he looked up to me, and, pointing to the place, said:

"Please don't step there, sir. I slipped there and fell down."

I thanked the philanthropic little fellow, and passed round the dangerous spot.

"Don't step there," was the theme of my meditations during the remainder of the walk.

A thousand times since has the clear voice of that kind-hearted child rung in my ear, reminding me of my duty to those around me, and urging me to repeat it whenever it promises to be useful. "Please, sir, don't step there."