

To her great surprise he was the valedictorian of his class, and carried everything before him. He won a prize, and when it was given to him, he went down before the whole audience and kissed his mother, and said: "Here, mother, here is the prize. It is yours. I would not have had it if it had not been for you."—Ex.

WHERE IS MY BOY?



young civil engineer, who assisted his father in his business of railroad prospecting and surveying, had contracted intemperate habits. His work from place to place threw him into the society of loose men, much more than his father seemed to be aware of, and being a generous, convivial fellow, he paid for his popularity by copying their indulgences.

His dangerous appetite and occasional fits of dissipation were so shrewdly concealed that his parents were kept in ignorance of them for two years—until he was twenty years old. They were worthy people and constant church-goers, the father being choir leader and the mother a fine soprano singer.

Once, while the young man was employed on a section of road forty miles from home, it became necessary to lie over from Thursday noon till Monday. His father would be detained till Saturday, reaching home in time for the choir rehearsal, but the son returned at once, and went to a liquor saloon to commence a three days' spree.

The saloon-keeper understood his case too well, and kept him hidden in his own apartments. When his father returned, expecting to find the boy at home, a surprise awaited him. Trouble began when the question, "Where's Harry?" informed the startled mother that he was missing.

For the Sunday evening service she was to sing a solo, and by special request—because she sang it so well—her selection was to be the song, *Where is my wandering boy?* It seemed to her impossible to perform her promise under the circumstances; and when, on Sunday morning, Harry was found by a policeman, the certainty was no more comforting than the suspense had been; but she was advised that he would be all

right to-morrow morning, and that she had better not see him until he had sobered up.

She controlled her grief as well as she could, took her part that day in the choir as usual, and made no change for the evening.

Toward night Harry began to come to himself. His father had hired a man to stay with him and see to his recovery and when he learned that his mother had been told of his plight, the information cut him to the heart and helped to sober him.

When the bells rang, he announced his determination to go to church. He knew nothing of the evening programme. He was still in his working clothes, but no reasoning could dissuade him, and his attendant, after making him as presentable as possible, went with him to the service.

Entering early by the side door, they found seats in a secluded corner, but not far from the pulpit and the organ. The house filled, and after the usual succession of prayer, anthem, and sermon, the time for the solo came. It was probably the first time in that church that a mother had ever sung out of her own soul's distress:

"Oh, where is my wandering boy to-night,
The child of my love and care?"

What faith sustained her, when every word must have been a cruel stab? The great audience caught the feeling of the song, but there was one heart as near to breaking as her own. That he was present she had no knowledge. She had sung the last stanza:

"Go find my wandering boy to-night,
Go search for him where you will,
But bring him to me with all his blight,
And tell him I love him still?
Oh, where is my boy to-night?"

when a young man in a woollen shirt and corduroy trousers and jacket, made his way to the choir stairs with outstretched arms, and sobbing like a child, exclaimed—

"Here I am, mother"

The mother hastened down the steps and folded him in her arms. The astonished organist quick to take in the meaning of the scene, pulled out all his stops and played *Old Hundred*—Praise God from whom all blessings flow. The congregation, with their hundreds of voices, joined in the great doxology, while the father, the pastor, and the friends of the returned prodigal stood by him with moist eyes and welcoming hands.

The wayward boy ended his wanderings then and there. That moment was a consecration, and the beginning of a life of sobriety and Christian usefulness.—Pres. Witness.