

## THE LITTLE PROFESSOR.

There is no need to describe the Big Professor, for every one knows him. His picture, with its keen, clever look, hangs in the photographer's window; and tells you what his outer man is like; his books are bought everywhere, and sometimes read, so you can find from them what his thoughts and opinions are.

But the Little Professor—?

That is a different thing.

His portrait stands only on the study table; and when he takes pen in hand and writes a letter, none is found learned enough to decipher the writing, and the housemaid consigns it to the waste-paper basket.

The Little Professor was perched on the garden gate waiting for the tram which would bring the Big Professor home. The perch was rather insecure, as his toes barely reached the bar on each side.

The Little Professor's soft, silky hair fell on his shoulders, and his clear blue eyes saw many things that these around him never saw.

The heavy tram lumbered up the hill, and the Little Professor was on the other side of the gate in a moment, rushing towards the quiet man who had spoken to no one on his way from the college.

A spring and a shout, and then the two turned homewards.

The vicar's wife, turning in at her gate, felt the sudden rush of pity that women will feel for children who are motherless, but the Little Professor was perfectly happy.

Half an hour later, when he ought to have been in bed, he sat by his father at the dinner-table, describing the events of the day.

The Big Professor was a wise man, and he expressed no doubt when the Little Professor told him of the lions and tigers and fairies that he had seen and talked with. He did not tell the child that he was not speaking the truth and send him away, for he knew that the Little Professor's blue eyes could see into a world that was closed to him.

Then Nurse carried the sleepy child to bed, and at breakfast his dreams suited conveniently any topic that was mentioned.

The little head with its yellow locks was in sight till the Big Professor was round the corner on his way to college; then Nurse's voice called: 'Master Clifford, Master Clifford!'

'He's coming,' said the boy, who generally spoke of himself in the third person.

The Big Professor was busy correcting the proofs of a book which would show the world how foolish it was to believe anything that could not be proved; and people said it would be one of the deepest books of the day.

But the Little Professor would have made you believe twenty impossible things in five minutes; and you would have learned what the bee said, and heard the butterfly talk, and seen fairies dancing on the lawn.

To the Big Professor the invisible was unreal, but to the Little Professor nothing was invisible; and his blue eyes had a look which his father's had lost long ago. Every night and morning he lisped his prayer that 'God would bless dear father, and make him a good little boy'; while on the study table lay proofs of the chapter which was to show how futile a thing prayer was to alter the laws of the universe.

One evening when the Big Professor came home, the Little Professor was not at the gate.

'I am early,' he said, but he entered the house hastily, and called, 'Little Professor!'

The nurse came to him.

'Master Clifford is not well,' she said, and he followed her into the darkened nursery, where the boy lay in his crib, hugging a toy lamb.

'He's tired,' said the Little Professor, 'and the lamb's tired. Kiss him, father.'

'I think, sir, he will be better in the morning,' said the nurse, remembering too well the night that the Little Professor became all that her master had in the world to care for.

But when the morning came the boy was really ill, and his father went for the doctor instead of going to the college.

'Not much the matter, is there?' asked the Professor, nervously, as the two stood in the study.

'I hope not,' said the doctor gravely. 'He must be kept quiet. I will come in again this afternoon.'

The Professor stood in the same place after he had left, looking stupidly at a child's top which lay on some uncorrected proofs.

There came a tap at the door, and the announcement:

'Please, sir, Master Clifford wants you.'

'What is it, my darling?' said the Professor as he bent over the crib.

'He's so tired,' said the child wearily, 'and something hurts his head.'

'He will be better soon. Father will stay with him.'

'Sing "The Cat and the Owl,"' said the Little Professor, with a child's sudden fancy.

The Professor's vocal powers were small, and no one but his little son had ever heard his somewhat chromatic rendering of a few songs.

'Not now, dear,' he said, feeling that the nurse would not be an easy addition to the audience.

'Sing "The Cat and the Owl," please,' repeated the Little Professor, in the same tone, and the Big Professor sang with complete indifference to time—

'The owl and the pussy-cat went to sea  
In a beautiful pea-green boat,  
They took with them honey, and plenty  
Of money,

Wrapp'd up in a five-pound note;  
The owl looked up to the moon above,  
And sang to the light guitar,  
'Oh, pussy, dear pussy, oh pussy, my love

What a beautiful pussy you are.''  
By the end of the chorus, the Professor was a tone and a half lower.

'Pussy said to the owl, "You illigant fowl,  
How charmingly sweet you sing,  
Too long we have tarried, so let us get married;

But what shall we do for a ring?"  
So they sailed away for a year and a day  
Till they came where the Bong-tree grows,  
And there in a wood a piggy-wig stood.

With a ring at the end of his nose.  
"Dear pig, are you willing to sell for a shilling  
Your ring?" Said the pig, "I will."  
So they took it away, and were married  
next day.

By the turkey that lives on the hill.  
They fed upon mince and slices of quince,  
Which they ate with a runcible spoon,  
And hand-in-hand by the edge of the sand  
They danced by the light of the moon.'

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The heavy eyes were closing.  
'Good-night, father. Good-night, nurse,' and the Little Professor was asleep.

The doctor came again, and he looked grave. Children so quickly fall ill.

For days and nights he lay weakly delirious, asking for things they could not understand, and crying pitifully.

'He wants a runcible spoon,' he said one day, and every spoon in the house was offered him in vain till his father brought a beautifully chased silver spoon from the study.

'The poor Professor,' said the doctor to the vicar's wife, whom he met in the garden.

'No better?' she said, thinking of the six healthy children she had just left, and of the tiny figure always waiting for his father on the garden gate.

'No better,' said the doctor. 'A delicate child, too sensitive and imaginative for the struggle.'

In the study the father sat alone. He had come down from the nursery, where so often with failing voice he had had to sing 'The Owl and the Pussy Cat,' each time more hopelessly out of tune than the last.

Unanswered letters lay in disorder on the table, repeated requests from the printer for corrected proof.

He looked at them stupidly; then he took the top in his hand, and opened a drawer where there were colored marbles, and a toy whip, and a battered tin train.

He touched these things gently, and

then he rested his weary head on the desk before him.

A knock came at the door.

'Please, sir, Master Clifford, is asking for you. Nurse has sent for the doctor,' and the poor little housemaid, who had loved the child as they all loved him, found that her voice was failing.

The Little Professor lay still, grasping his 'runcible spoon,' and he no longer babbled the nonsense he had talked for so long.

'Father.'

'My Little Professor! My darling.'

'He's so tired.'

'Go to sleep, dear. Father will stay here.'

'He hasn't said his prayers.'

'Never mind now, dear.'

'God will mind,' said the Little Professor, and in spite of all his learning the Big Professor knew that on these subjects the child's wisdom was deeper than his.

'But He won't mind if you say them 'stead,' said the child gravely.

The doctor had come into the room quietly, and saw the change.

'You say them, and he will say "Amen,"' said the Little Professor.

'Shall Nurse?' whispered the Big Professor, but the child answered, 'No, you, father.'

The Big Professor knelt down by the crib.

'Out loud,' said the boy. 'God likes us to say them out loud.'

What was he to say to satisfy the child?

'Out loud,' came again from the crib, and the poor father said:

'What shall I say, darling?'

'Oh, don't you know? "Pray, God, bless dear father—"

'Pray, God, bless dear father.'

'And make me a good little boy—'

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'And make him better to-morrow—'

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seemed an absurdity; nothing could be more conclusive than his arguments against it, but—

The Professor wrote to the printer and said that he must have some time in order that he might carefully revise the work; and the world is still waiting for it.

People say it will be a great loss to the world if it never appears, but the Little Professor thinks differently.

He is down again now in the study, looking whiter and fairer than ever, and the Big Professor, whose artistic skill is on a par with his musical powers, has covered the backs of the proofs with wonderful drawings of cats, and owls, and runcible spoons.

These pictures the Little Professor looks at while his father sings the song, pointing to each object in turn.

The printer is still expecting the revised proofs; perhaps under the Little Professor's influence the revision will be so complete that little of the original will remain.

But the pages are scattered on the study floor, and the Little Professor, shrieking with delight and brandishing his whip, is riding the Big Professor round and round the room.

'Poor man, he is wasting his powers,' said those who looked for the book in vain. 'He might have been a great man.'

But they little knew; for in the kingdom of the great ones the Professor has at last found an entrance through a door to the land of childlike spirits, held open to him by the tiny hands of the Little Professor.—E. M. Green, in 'Sunday at Home.'

## POOR BOYS WHO SUCCEED.

Robert J. Burdette gives so many instances of great men who were poor boys that it would almost seem as if poor boys have a monopoly on success. He says:

'My son, the poor man takes all the chances without waiting to have one given him. If you give him any more chances than he takes, he will soon own everything, and run the Texas man out of the country. He has crowded the rich out. But for the poor man the world would have cast anchor six thousand years ago, and be covered with moss and lichens to-day, like a United States man-of-war. Edgar Allan Poe was the son of a strolling player; George Peabody was a boy in a small grocery; Benjamin Franklin, the printer, was the son of a tallow chandler; John Adams was the son of a poor farmer; Gifford, the editor of the "Quarterly Review," was a common sailor; Ben Jonson, rare Ben Jonson, was a bricklayer; the father of Shakespeare couldn't spell and couldn't write his own name; neither can you; even his illustrious son couldn't spell it twice alike; Robert Burns was a child of poverty, the eldest son of seven children, the family of a poor bankrupt; John Milton was the son of a scrivener; Andrew Jackson was the son of a poor Irishman; Andrew Johnson was a tailor; Garfield was a boy of all work, too poor to even have a trade; Grant was a tanner; Lincoln was a rail-splitter, and the Prince of Wales is the son of a queen. It is his misfortune, not his fault; he couldn't help it, and he can't help it now. But you see, my dear boy, he's just the Prince of Wales, and he's only that because he can't help it. Be thankful, my son, that you weren't born a prince; be glad that you did not strike twelve the first time. If there's a patch on your knee and your elbows are glossy there is some hope for you, but never again let me hear you say that the poor man has no chance. True, a poor lawyer, a poor doctor, a poor printer, a poor workman of any kind, has no chance, he deserves to have none; but the poor man monopolizes all the chances there are.'

## SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT.

Canada spends an average of \$16 per head annually on liquor and contributes an average of ten cents per head to missions. What are you doing to decrease the former and increase the latter?