

BOYS AND GIRLS

A Morning Prayer.

Lord, for to-morrow and its needs,
I do not pray;
Keep me, my God, from stain of sin
Just for to-day.

Let me both diligently work,
And duly pray;
Let me be kind in word and deed
Just for to-day.

Let me be slow to urge my will,
Prompt to obey;
Help me to mortify my flesh
Just for to-day.

Let me no wrong or idle word
Unthinking say;
Set thou a seal upon my lips
Just for to-day.

Lo, for to-morrow and its needs
I do not pray,
But keep me, guide me, love me, Lord,
Just for to-day.

—Canon Wilberforce.

A Call for a Legion.

(Angelina M. Tuttle, in the 'Congregationalist and Christian World.')

'Mother, what would you do if you were afraid; just downright scared, you know?'

Mother was very busy. She looked at Walter a full second before she replied. Then her thoughts grasped the question and she said, 'I should pray.'

'But s'pose there wasn't time?'

It was one of the lovely things about mother that she gave you her whole attention when she talked with you.

'If I were to meet Fear by the wayside and he should say, "I give you five seconds in which to act," I think I should spend at least three seconds on my knees. I would pray God to send one of those legions of angels, you know. What would you do?'

'I was thinking I'd just go ahead and tell him to scare me if he could.'

Mother was preparing a pudding for the oven, thinking up her order for the grocer, amusing the baby who was tied in his high chair, seeing that little Jessica washed her hands clean and did not upset the bowl of water and doing a few other things all at the same time. It was Saturday morning and the cook had just gone out at the back door saying she had some advertisements to look up and could not stay till another girl was found.

'Walter, can't you take Jess out this forenoon?' asked mother, presently. 'She'll be good and there is so much I must do.'

Walter loved his mother and he loved little Jessica, but did he not dearly love Saturdays too? and there were so few of them, only one a week and five long school days with Sunday which did not count, between. And to-day the Iroquois were to play the Invincibles. He had told Jack he would be over early. Any other boy of ten would have kicked the table leg and frowned and felt cross, I am sure.

If it was with a silent and ill-humored companion that little Jessica shortly set forth, she did not mind. The sun shone gloriously, the yellow leaves were fluttering down and dancing along before the gay little breezes, all the babies were out and half the people they met had a smile for Jessica. Walter refused to let her hold his hand. It was bad enough to have to take care of a baby without looking like a child's maid, he was saying to himself. Other people had nurse girls if they happened to have any bothersome babies in the house. Jack had not any, no meddling little hands tore his best books, or got his pencils, and he could play all day Saturdays and before and after school.

Jessica walked at the edge of the sidewalk and scuffed the leaves up before her small feet.

'Let's go up and see Uncle Theodore. Come, Jess, want to see Uncle There?' Walter coaxed, Jess preferred the sunshine but Walter had a feeling that he should meet some of the boys before long unless he could get off the street.

It was in at a big door and up three long flights. Jess toiled serenely up, taking each stair as a separate achievement, while Walter tramped on ahead, calling back from the top of each flight: 'Don't be so slow.' 'Hurry up, can't you?' 'Come on'—and under his breath were smothered, I am sorry to say, such cross words as, 'Old botheration,' 'Nuisance!' Jess made the last climb quite by herself, and finally trotted into Uncle Theodore's study rosy and panting, for she was a plump body and her long cloak was heavy for a big climb. Walter was there already, leaning on the big table before the windows where his uncle sat at work.

'Good morning, Jess,' called the tall, spectacled man, who had a pen in his fingers, a world of papers, books and drawings spread before him and a tall, brass microscope on a stand close by.

Jess came and leaned against his chair. Suddenly Uncle Theodore remembered that he was not behaving well to his visitor. He wheeled about, took little Jess on his lap and kissed her pink cheeks. He asked how Tab was and why she did not bring the baby.

'Baby tan't walk,' said Jess. 'Tab 'cratches me, he do.'

Uncle Theodore took off her bonnet and cloak, then he put her down and fetched a box from somewhere and a drawing board from somewhere else. With these he made a table. Then he gave Jess his shears and some picture papers. The sun shone in at the big windows. Jess clipped away, and Uncle Theodore explained to Walter about the queer plant whose cotyledon he had under the microscope.

After a time Jess said she was thirsty. 'Please, Bover, I wants a dwink,' she urged, coming around and pulling at Walter.

'Oh, bother!' said Walter, but he went over to the corner where there was a water faucet behind a screen.

'There is filtered water in the big bottle outside the window,' called Uncle Theodore.

'All right,' Walter replied, and he got the glass from its little shelf. At his feet stood a big bottle nearly full and he said to himself: 'Uncle Theodore is always forgetting things. He has filled the bottle and left it here. That is the one I always get a drink from.' So he turned out a glassful, and saying, 'Here, Jess,' put it into her hands.

The walk and the sunshine had made the little girl very thirsty. She took a large swallow. 'Oh, oh, hot water! He burn me. Oh, oh!' she gasped and began to cry.

Uncle Theodore bounded from his chair and was there behind the screen with the children in a flash. He caught up the glass and smelled the colorless liquid in it.

'That's wood alcohol, and it is poison.' His voice was husky and he snatched Jess in his arms and ran out of the room calling back something which Walter did not catch.

Poor Walter! It was days before he forgot the pain of that dreadful fear which had clutched his heart. He did not cry out, nor faint, nor run after his uncle. He just stood there miserable, with that horrible fear strangling and suffocating him. Poisoned! Dear little Jess! Sweet, merry, gay little Jess! Fa-

ther's delight, Mother's treasure, the very fun and sunshine of the whole house!

Walter looked at the glass and longed to drink the rest and die too. Then he remembered mother and tried to think what he must do. 'If you have five seconds, spend three of them asking God for help.' It came back as if spoken in his ear. Down on his knees went the boy and sobbed out his cry, adding: 'Oh, forgive me, do forgive me for being cross to her. And send a legion, please, right away. Oh, send them quick and tell them to fight hard.'

Steps paused before the open door, and a voice called into the room: 'Boy here? The Professor says tell him she is not going to die. He is taking her to the drug store. Wants the boy to come too, I guess.'

Walter scrubbed the tears from his eyes and came forth as the steps retreated. He caught up Jessica's bonnet and cloak and ran down the three flights at such headlong speed that as he gained the sidewalk his uncle and little Jess, her yellow hair tossing in the wind, just rounded the corner down the street. For Uncle Theodore had fled first to the telephone on the first floor, called up the doctor and asked him what to do for the poisoning, and then rung up the druggist and ordered a dose of ipecac made ready. So Jess sat on the counter when Walter reached the drug store, her first dose of ipecac already down and Uncle Theodore wiping the tears from her eyes. For ipecac has not a nice taste, you know.

They put on her bonnet and cloak and took her home, Uncle Theodore carrying a vial containing more ipecac. Fear had met Walter upon the highway and now stalked at his side with a heavy hand on his shoulder. But Walter had not been thinking this morning of a Fear at all like this one.

Uncle Theodore was carrying Jess, and his legs seemed to measure off a yard at every stride. Walter ran at his side, with one hand reaching up to grasp the tiny, warm fist of little Jess. They must hold her fast. Fear's hand weighed like lead upon him, but all his soul reached up, begging that the legion might fight hard.

Mother turned very white when Uncle Theodore stammered: 'Don't be frightened, Lucy. Something has happened to Jess, but don't be alarmed. She has drunk something poisonous, but it won't hurt her. She is going to get all right.'

It was a sad and anxious day for them all. Jess had to be made to swallow two more doses of ipecac, and of course she grew pale and sick from it. Walter scarcely left her side. When she fell asleep he went every few minutes to listen to her breathing and see if she did not look less pale. Then he overheard the doctor say something to Uncle Theodore about blindness. This seemed too much to bear. Walter drew away by himself and hid in the first thing he came to. It happened to be the doctor's big coat in the hall. So when, a moment later, the doctor came to put it on, he unrolled a very wretched boy.

'There now, my boy, you don't want to take an accident that way,' said the big man, gently. 'They are happening all about us, every day or so. Nobody is ever blamed for an accident.'

The doctor and Walter had been good friends from the start ten years back. So now Walter stammered out:

'I asked God for a legion of angels. Do you think they are helping you much?'

The doctor stood suddenly still. His eyes glistened and his voice was low and very kind