My Neighbour's Boy.

BY MARIANNE FARNINGHAM.

He seems to be several boys in one,
So much is he constantly everywhere!
And the mischievous things that boy has done
No mind can remember, nor mouth declare.
He fills the whole of his share of space
With his strong, straight form, and his merry face.

He is very cowardly, very brave,
He is kind and cruel, is good and bad,
A brute and a hero! Who will save
The best, from the worst, of my neighbour's lad?
The mean and the noble strive to-day—
Which of the powers will have its way?

The world is needing his strength and skill,
He will make hearts happy or make them ache,
What power is in him, for good or ill!
Which of life's paths will his swift feet take?
Will he rise, and draw others up with him,
Or the light that is in him burn low and dim?

But what is my neighbour's boy to me
More than a nuisance? My neighbour's boy,
Though I have some fears for what he may be,
Is a source of solicitude, hope and joy,
And a constant pleasure. Because I pray
That the best that is in him will rule some day.

He passes me by with a smile and a nod,
He knows I have hopes of him—guesses, too,
That I whisper his name when I ask of God
That men may be righteous, his will to do,
And I think that many would have more joy
If they loved and prayed for a neighbour's boy!

JUDGE ECKFORD'S JUDGMENT.

BY EUGENIA D. BIGHAM.

His youngest child—a boy—was Judge Eckford's "Judgment."

Herty Eckford was fully sixteen years old before he had any idea that he was said to be a judgment sent on his father. He found it out in the following manner: He and a crowd of his companions had been running in and out among the cotton-bales on the long platform of the freight depot one night expecting to see the nine o'clock express come in. Herty finally became tired and escaped from the crowd. He threw himself flat on his back between two piles of cotton-bales and clasped his hands under his head. He had rested thus for some minutes when two gentlemen came sauntering up the platform and leaned against the cotton. "Yes," said one of them, "that boy Herty is a judgment sent on old man Eckford."

Herty's sense of hearing at once became alert. The same voice continued: "Judge Eckford has carried things with a high hand in his day, and does it yet; but his proud independence will find a fitting recompense in his son Herty."

"What's the matter with the boy?" asked a second voice.

"Matter enough," replied number one. "He walks the streets at night; he smokes more cigarettes than any other boy in town; he uses profane language, and he has no kind of class stand at school. He is simply going to the bad as fast as he can, and Judge Eckford will find out some day what he has done for me and mine. He will find out when his boy is where mine is. He gave my boy a sentence that disgraces him forever; but he'll suffer himself. He prides himself on being a just judge; just let him wait, he will have justice some day."

The words had been spoken in hard, bitter tones, and the last few sentences had revealed the identity of the speaker to Herty. He remained perfectly quiet until the men moved away, when he got up and went home. The express was already overdue, and he had lost his wish to see it anyhow. His step in the hall at home was the signal of joy to a placid-faced lady who came at once to meet him.

"Why, son," she said, "I am so glad you are home earlier to-night. Come in and talk to me awhile."

"Can't possibly, mother," he said. "I got a scolding at school to-day, and I'm going to study harder than usual now. Friday night we will have a regular old-time confab. Good-night!"

He kissed her, then bounded up the steps, three at a time, she watching him and laughing.

Safe in his own room, he sat down and began writing rapidly. He wrote:

"Herty Eckford, sixteen years old. He smokes cigarettes to excess, runs the streets at night; he swears, and he is a nobody at school. Because his father is brave enough to sentence the sons of rich men justly, as they should be sentenced, the rich men backbite him, and call his own bad son his curse while they wait to gloat over the calamity ahead of him. But this same Herty Eckford has just seen himself as others see him, as he really is, and the sight has shocked him. One year from this night he will record a different pen-picture of himself—if he should be living, of course. And Mr. Willdon will deserve a great deal of the credit! "Herty Eckford."

"At home, October 20th, 1890."

He read the words, folded the paper, put it in an envelope, which he sealed, wrote on it the word "Private" and his own name, and then placed it in a lock box in the bottom of his trunk.

Without a moment's delay he took up a book and began studying, writing an exercise with much care, and feeling pleased at the result.

Some days after that Judge Eckford and his wife sat talking. The lady said: "I do not understand the change in Herty, but it is such a delight to me that I shall not care if I never understand it. I do not remember when he was last away from home at night, and he is studying so well."

"Something woke him up, I guess," said the judge. "I gave him a kind of lecture not long ago; perhaps it did the young man some good."

The weeks passed by, and though Herty had to use every atom of determination of which he was capable, he continued to forsake his old habits and to form new ones. At the close of a month his school report was marked, "Class stand third," and a little memorandum book showed that his expenditure for cigarettes was cut off.

It did not prove hard to keep off the streets at night; he broke that evil habit immediately. But to quit the use of profane language was very, very difficult, and it cost him the most watchful care before he saw even a slight betterment. By nature and by home training Herty was polite, and he had a breezy, cordial manner of greeting people that won him many a good opinion. Often on his way to and from school he passed a certain sad-faced man, but always with a cheery greeting. This greeting never met with more than a scowling response, and as time wore on and Herty's general improvement was the talk of the town, he met the scowl without the response. It seemed to make no manner of difference to the boy, and he went on his way bright and alert. Little did the rich man think that his own cutting words had been the magic helps toward the change in Herty. The boy noticed the sadness in the face of the crushed father as he had never noticed it before, and it aroused his generous pity, and added a kindly ring to his voice in his daily greeting. But he felt more determined than ever to win the gentleman's respect and to force him to take back the words he had spoken at the freight depot. The time came when Herty was no more reckoned among the set of boys who had once been his familiar spirits. By degrees he won second class stand, and every one felt confident that he meant to press on until "Rex" was written across the back of his school reports.

Mr. Willden, his father's rich enemy, soon began to cut at the boy in public, though in a covert manner. All the people of the town understood this, however, as did Herty, and so no harm came of it. "He did me a big favour once; I won't forget that," the boy would say to himself. "I mean to make him see that I am a good judgment, if any. Dear old dad! To think how I was preparing to reward him for all his life of uprightness."

Almost a year passed, and the day really came when old Judge Eckford's eyes lit up with pleasure at seeing the word "Rex" on his son's report, and Mrs. Eckford could not restrain her words of joy. Herty began to think of the time when Mr. Willdon would be compelled to see his steady improvement; but he did not know how near the time actually was.

Mr. Willdon was quite a famous huntsman, and he often spent a day in the fields with his dog and his gun. He left home at dawn one morning to see a tenant on a distant farm, and he carried his gun as usual. He found shooting such fine success that he decided to hunt until after the dinner hour, at any rate, as such a course would still leave time for the visit to the farm. At noon he hitched his horse in a grassy opening near the road, intending to go afoot over a promising-looking field. But in mounting a rail fence near the road his foot slipped, his gun fell as he tried to steady himself, and both loads were discharged, one wounding him severely. He fell to the ground and lay there groaning, unable to raise himself to a sitting posture. His two dogs hurried back, scrambled over the rails and stood by him, their eyes having an expression very like sympathy as they waited, dumb, anxious.

Quite an hour later the suffering man heard buggy wheels rolling over the hard road, and his restive horse gave a glad whinny. Then a voice exclaimed: "Mr. Willdon's horse, I do declare! Whoa, Charley!"

The wounded man could see no one; but he felt vaguely conscious that he know the voice and that it affected him unpleasantly. Nevertheless, he tried to call, his effort ending in repeated groans. A moment or two later footsteps came crashing over the dry twigs, and Herty Eckford's lithe form appeared.

The two dogs sat on their haunches, close to their master, thumping their tails on the ground and looking at Herty with almost human welcome as he advanced, though it is somewhat remarkable that neither of them left his post.

"Why, Mr. Willdon, what is the matter?" asked Herty, dropping on one knee by the prostrate man.

"Go away! Let me alone; I want no favour from an Eckford," said Mr. Willdon.

"But I can't leave you, and I won't," said Herty. "You have lost a great deal of blood, and it would not do for me to leave you even to get some one else to come."

Then, with the utmost care, and yet with haste, he bared the wound and with knotted handkerchiefs tried to stay the loss of blood, using his tie and Mr. Willdon's as bandages, that gentleman unable to resist the determined youth.

Herty hastily decided to bring his buggy to the fence, knowing that he could not possibly carry Mr. Willdon even the short distance to the road. Saying this, he went off and was only a few minutes in finding a place sufficiently open to allow the passage of the buggy.

Herty was a boy of stout muscle; but it seemed to him that he would be compelled to fail when he tried to get Mr. Willdon into the buggy. The gentleman could help himself but little, and he kept wasting his strength telling Herty to go away and let him alone. At last, however, he was in the buggy occupying the entire seat in as comfortable a position as was possible under the circumstances.

"Now, Mr. Willdon, said Herty, "I am going to kneel on the back of the buggy to drive. I have your gun, and I will tie your horse to the back of the buggy. I will drive slowly, so as not to jar your wound. You be as patient as you can, and I will have you at home pretty soon. It is only two miles."

He took his position and very carefully drove to the road, secured the waiting horse and started back to the city, the dogs walking mournfully by the buggy

A week from that day Mr. Willdon made his first inquiry about the boy.

"How's young Eckford?" he asked, suddenly, of his physician.

Doctor Balfour knew the state of affairs, and he grasped his opportunity "Oh, Herty's all right," he said, briskly.. "He doesn't seem to care a fig that he lost all that money the day he brought you home; nor does his father. Judge Eckford told him that he did exactly right to stand by you, and that if he had failed to bring you home promptly he would have felt like disowning him."

"Lost what money? How?" asked Mr. Willdon.

"Well, you see, the judge had business at Stanton involving some four or five hundred dollars," the doctor explained, looking at the patient as if happy to explain. "He was sending Herty over on a rapid drive to wind up the business, as he himself was too sick to go. The boy knew that he had been delayed to the last possible moment, hoping that the judge could go. But when he found you, and saw how dangerously you were hurt, he decided that life is worth more than money, and so brought you back to the city, not a moment too soon, either. He's a fine young fellow, Herty is!"

It is not easy for hatred to die. All the rest of that day, then the next day, Mr. Willdon lay on his bed thinking, thinking; but the third day he sent for Herty, and the boy went at once. It does not matter to us what they said just at first; it is enough to know that peace was made—peace so perfect that a little later on Judge Eckford himself sat by Mr. Willdon's bed, in pleasant, good-will conversation, his former enemy now his friend. Yet it does concern us to know that just as Herty left Mr. Willdon's room, he said: "Mr. Willdon, I have a paper here in my note-book that I want to leave with you until I come again. It will show you what a good turn you did me once. I think it puts us about even, since you insist that I saved your life. As he spoke he found the paper and put it in the gentleman's outstretched hand. His words had excited Mr. Willdon's curiosity, and he did not wait for Herty to get out of the room, but began unfolding the paper.

Then he read the words Herty wrote on the first night we met him, and he also read *something else written on the* same sheet, but at a later date. Here it is:

"To-night, one year ago, Mr. Willdon showed me myself as I really was, for I heard him talk about me as I rested behind cotton-bales at the depot. This night I am not the boy I then was. Judge Eckford's 'Judgment' is now seventeen years old. He would scorn to smoke a cigarette or anything else, he has not used a profane word during the last four months; he has not been on the streets for fun at night during the entire year; he has been leader of his class at school for five months, and he means to advance in improvement all the time, becoming an honour to his father, never a trouble. I, the 'Judgment,' shall never cease to feel thankful to Mr Willdon. I wish every boy, who is what I was, would see himself as others see him, and would face about.

"Herty Eckford."

"*October 20th, 1891.*"

"FOR CHRIST AND THE CHURCH."

BY ANNA FRANCES BURNHAM.

"Will anybody have the goodness to tell me what is the chief end of this society?"

The suggestive form of words was too tempting. Bell answered it out of the catechism.

"To glorify ourselves, and enjoy it forever!"

A merry peal of laughter from the president broke the kind of shocked hush that fell on the infant missionary society at Bell's reckless speech, used as they were to all her speeches.

"Girls," she cried impulsively, "I believe Bell has just told the truth in her dreadful way, and we have either got to change our name and motto, or—change our actions."

They had not been exactly quarrelling you know. Just talking rather hotly over the introduction or invasion of new members. In the beginning they had meant to have a nice little missionary society to do good and have a good time, which was all right if only they had not forgotten the first part of it. It was such a cosy little parlour, and when the sewing was done they had such a cosy little time, and any more would spoil it. So said Nan Ellsworth, who had been put down to table next the Ruggleses' second girl.

"It's horrid to have to sit close and get your sleeves crushed!"

"Wear fibre chamois!" flashed Bell. "Everybody can't, and when they go away, they're the one that's crushed, and you're as much puffed up as ever in five minutes!"

Bell's language was obscure, but her parable wasn't. Nan turned red as she turned away, and Bell listened to what the others were saying.

"It sounded awful enough to say," said the president, twining an arm around Bell's waist as she came up, "but isn't it true that we have been 'glorifying ourselves' and 'enjoying ourselves' and forgetting our motto?"

"'For Christ and the Church,'" repeated somebody softly.

"Olga belongs to the church," said Bell, thinking of Nan Ellsworth's neighbour at the supper table.

"I never thought!" said Dora Fanning, who had sat on the other side of Olga.

"Sh-h-h-h!" went round, as the door opened suddenly and Olga came back for her rubbers which she had forgotten.

"It iss been so lofely!" said the Swede girl, stopping timidly after she had stamped them on, and ought to have been going. "I not sit with such goot ladies efery day that do all dings for Christ and the Church. All dis two week I say, 'Olga, be goot, till once again you goes to sit with those Christ ladies!'"

"IT'S THERE ALL THE SAME."

"What are you doing there?" asked a passer-by of a lad holding to a string.

"Flying my kite," said the little boy.

"I can see no kite!" exclaimed the man.

"I know it, sir," answered the boy; "I can't see it, but it's there all the same, for I feel it pull."

If we hold on to God's promises an unseen power draws us heavenwards, and, although unseen, we know it.