

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

HAROLD'S DREAM—Harold Temple was a bright, bonny little fellow of ten years old. Unlike many little boys he was fond of going to Church and would always sit and listen attentively, as long as any one would tell them to him the stories of the Holy Family and of the Saints.

It was his mother's habit to go to Church every Friday afternoon, and on many of these occasions Harold would accompany her. He would generally sit quiet at her side and call to mind all he had read or heard of the Holy Child and His Blessed Mother, hardly ever stirring until his mother was ready to return home. Sometimes, though very rarely, he would slip quietly out of his place if he got tired of the very long wait, and go away home alone. When Harold did this his mother was never anxious, as she always found him waiting for her, or playing with the little friends who were his companions.

On the occasion of our story Harold and his mother arrived at the church about four o'clock in the afternoon—it was winter time, and was growing dark—the church had not been lighted up, but was wrapped up in that dim gloom which has such a soothing effect upon us, and which helps to make us so much more devotional.

Harold's mother was on her knees praying, and for some time Harold remained at her side, but, at last, growing restless, he slowly and reverently walked around the church.

"At either side of the sanctuary was a statue, on one side that of St. Vincent de Paul, and on the other Our Lord, as the Good Shepherd.

After wandering about for some time, feeling a little tired, Harold grew sleepy and sank down at the foot of the statue of St. Vincent de Paul and fell fast asleep, the last thing his drowsy little eyes having fastened upon being the Good Shepherd statue opposite him.

And this was what he dreamt:—He was still in the same Church, but instead of the dimly lighted building they had entered, he saw what appeared to be a cloud of beautiful light, spreading itself all over the sanctuary. Brighter and brighter it became, seeming to issue from the Tabernacle, which was the centre of this radiant cloud.

Harold had always been taught that this was the Home of our Lord, and, of course, had a great reverence for it.

Gradually out of the clouds appeared a glorious company of angels, hovering round and chanting in sweetest music their beautiful hymns of praise. The music of angel voices the sweetest music ever heard, appealed to the little lad, and he looked with wonderment upon the scene.

As the singing died away into a soft and tuneful melody, the angelic host formed themselves around the gilded doors of the Tabernacle, which were now one blaze of brilliant light. The doors seemed to swing back silently upon their hinges, the curtains part asunder, and there issues forth Our Lord—the Good Shepherd—bearing in His sacred arms a little lamb.

As Harold watched the imposing form of Him, of Whom he had heard so much, and Whom he loved so well, accompanied by the angel choir, the Divine Shepherd walked slowly and with gentle steps towards him, until at last, stopping at his side, He placed the little lamb upon Harold's knee.

"Harold, love this little one, make him your companion; he is an orphan care for him for My sake," the Good Shepherd said, and, as slowly and majestically as he had come, returned to the Tabernacle. The doors closed, fainter and fainter grew the voices of the angels, gradually the brilliant light faded into the cloud which had at first appeared, and so died away, leaving the church even darker than it had seemed when he and his mother had first come.

"Harold, my darling, wake up. Whatever made you go to sleep there for so long, too? Mother has been looking for you all over, and could not tell what had become of her little boy. Why, Harold, whom have you got here?" exclaimed his mother, as she found the sleeping boy.

As consciousness began to dawn upon the little fellow, he, too, was as surprised as his mother to find upon his knee a little baby boy.

Harold told his mother the wonderful dream he had had, and she, good woman that she was, realized that the Good Shepherd had singled out her little boy to care for one of His little lambs. They took the wee mite home, to keep it until it might be claimed.



"Until it might be claimed." Yes, the Good Shepherd Himself might ask the little one back at their hands but no earthly claimant would ever appear. The mother, whose own sad story is only too familiar, had abandoned her baby when she left it on Harold's knee.—Contributed by C. A., Montreal, February, 1904.

FRED'S SURPRISE—It's provoking, so it is," exclaimed Fred Winters, leaving the window where he had stood for the last five minutes watching the snowflakes come tumbling down on streets and houses and fences, decking all in a fleecy attire. Feeling quite exhausted, Fred threw himself languidly down on a couch, and held both hands over his eyes, as if by so doing he could forget the disappointment which had lately been his.

The facts in the case were that Fred had been quite sick with la grippe for the past week, or, as he himself expressed it in the note sent his teacher, there was a terrible grip holding him down until his brain was nearly wild with pain. To-day, Saturday, was the first day on which he had been allowed to leave his room and come down to the library, but this was not very much appreciated. Why? Well, because it was too late, anyway, he declared.

Now, to be more explicit, Fred was a boy of fifteen years, who loved fun and sport about as well as most healthy young fellows do. Not that he did not care for his books. Ah, no, don't misunderstand me thus, for this had something to do with his disappointment and—but let me begin once more.

Brother Andrew's class of boys in College was about as jolly a crowd of fellows as you could find anywhere; but their teacher could also tell you that they were a more intelligent class than he had the pleasure of having for several years before.

"How they do work for the prize," he said to another of the Brothers, a few weeks ago. "There's Fred Winters, who makes you think that it's the whole world to him, while Charles Frohman impresses you with a look that seems to say, 'Who'll get ahead of me?' Then Frank Brent takes home every book in his desk to brush up for the contest."

"It's going to be a close fight, no doubt of that," the other Brother replied, and praised the scholars' ambition.

The week before Fred contracted that dreaded la grippe the scholars went through the ordeal familiar to all students; namely, semi-annual examination in all studies, and it was on that very Friday afternoon, the last day of the spirited contest, that Fred came home complaining of a terrible headache, which was the beginning of his sickness.

Saturday, Sunday and Monday were days of most acute suffering, doubly hard to a boy unused to illness, hence very seldom did Fred's thoughts refer to school matters. When, however, the pains gradually lessened and the raging fever had somewhat abated, his mind continually wandered to the school and he waited impatiently for news of the examination's results.

It had not been customary for the school faculty to give prizes in the middle of the school year, but a certain friend had donated a fine set of books with this special purpose. Hence all the boys' anxiety.

All day on Thursday Fred waited for Frank Brent to come, for Thursday was free day at school, and Frank was Fred's best friend.

"I thought Brother Andrew might have come anyway, when we're only three squares from the college," Fred complained to his mother that evening; but she seemed for once a poor consoled.

"Oh, well, it just shows how I'm deceived in those whom I thought were my best friends," he went on in a bitter, sarcastic tone. "I wouldn't care so much, but I happened to see Frank down at Guy's corner from my window upstairs, and he was talking with some of the boys. Friend ship, Bah! there's nothing in it; it is all a sham. I thought once they all looked this way and then laughed heartily. All right, Frank Brent," continued the boy bitterly, after Mrs. Winters left the room.

The next day passed in anxious

waiting, but no one came. On Saturday Fred came downstairs, as before stated, and waited, as the day proceeded, in vain.

"Mother," he said, when she finally came in and inquired whether he felt worse. "I've been wondering how I could ever like Brother Andrew as well as I did. It makes me angry now."

"Why, Fred," his mother interrupted, "I'm sure he deserves all your affection and esteem, and something is certainly keeping him from coming. Do you feel strong enough to eat with us in the dining-room to-night? Jennie is preparing a few of your favorites—fried oysters for instance."

"Good for her, but why has she been in the kitchen ever since school? Where's papa? No one cares—"

"What's that I hear?" rings out a manly voice, and Mr. Winters, tall, portly, and distinguished looking, enters the room. "How are you, old boy? Better eh? Doctor says you'll be all right in a day or so," and Mr. Winters, in a kinder manner than his speech would indicate, patted his son on the shoulder.

"I've been so lonesome and was waiting for you, papa; but disappointments are getting to be an old thing. Oh, how harsh that door-bell did sound! Who could have given it three such rings?" he exclaimed, impatiently, as Mrs. Winters went to open the door. The tread of many feet in the hall, and a well-familiar, much-loved voice caused Frank to grasp his father's hand and sit upright on the couch.

"Surprise, Fred, surprise, for yours is the prize!" came in gleeful tones from the boys who stood in the doorway, while heading them all was—Brother Andrew, with a package under his arm.

For a moment Fred's pale face grew still whiter. The unexpectedness, the shock, one might almost say, however pleasant it undoubtedly was, proved a little too much for him, still so weak; but when Brother Andrew came up with the words, "My dear boy, how are you? We wanted to please you by bringing your prize in this manner"—when he said this and clasped Fred's hands in his, the boy felt the hot tears fill his eyes, and, in a voice choking with emotion, he said, "I don't deserve it—indeed, I don't, Brother."

"That's for us to decide, not you, my boy," replied the teacher kindly, bidding Fred lie down on the couch again.

But the boy would not be silenced. "No, you don't understand, for—Brother, I've been thinking awful mean about you. You see, I thought I had a few true friends, and, of course, expected them to visit me while I was sick; but when no one came on Thursday, free day, I told mother that friendship's all a sham and wondered how I ever came to think so much of you as I did. I was very angry at you, brother, and that's why I don't deserve this kindness." But the prize," he continued, as Brother Andrew began unwrapping the books, "surely it can't be mine!"

"You bet it is, Fred," and from the boys in a chorus, and Frank Brent stepped forward with outstretched hand, adding, "I want to congratulate you, Winters—excuse me, I mean Fred. Your average was three ahead of mine."

Not a word could Fred say in reply, but his face now flushed with suppressed emotion, and his eyes glistening with suspicious moisture, explained all he could have said, while Brother Andrew again interposed.

"We can understand your disappointment, Fred, when you thought we all forgot you; but you see, it was this way: We planned this surprise on Thursday, and, of course, under the circumstances, none could have called, for you surely would have inquired about school and the prize, and then what could we have said?"

"It was hard work keeping Frank Brent away, though," Clarence Thorpe began. "He said he's risk coming, anyway, for it seemed shameful to let all Thursday go by without coming to see you."

Just then a tiny silver-toned bell sounded from an adjoining room and Mrs. Winters rose to lead them all to supper.

"I asked Fred a while ago if he felt able to eat with us in the dining-room, but then he didn't seem

to care for supper. How about it now, Fred?" she added, turning to her son, who had risen beside Brother Andrew, while Mr. Winters was laughing heartily with the boys at their success in making it all a complete surprise.

"Nothing could keep me from going now," he replied; and then what fun they did have at that bounteously spread table.—Young Catholic Messenger.

THE BALLAD OF ATHLONE—The courage of the Gael cannot be gainsaid. History records countless deeds of valor done by Irish soldiers in every age, in every land. Take, for instance, the siege of Athlone in 1691, by the united Dutch and English under Ginkle, in the service of William of Orange. Athlone is built on both sides of the Shannon, one part, "The Irish town," being situated on the west bank, and the other, "The English town," on the east bank. Gen Ginkle's army had already taken "English town"; they were elated with the victory and were about to cross the bridge to Irish town, but the Irish determined to prevent them by breaking down the bridge. To effect this, six warriors rushed through a storm of shot and shell from the enemy. They wrenched at the planks amid a hail of fire, but fell in death before their task was half done. The bridge still remained firm, while nearer and nearer the foe swarmed darkly, densely on from the other side. Then a second appeal was made to the valor of the Irish soldiers. Six more warriors rushed forth from their ranks and flung themselves upon the fated bridge.

Again and again they dashed at the rocking planks; four were shot dead and the two surviving heroes tugged at the groaning timbers till the arch, giving away, the whole bridge was precipitated into the surging waters below, carrying with it the two gallant swimmers, who, being stalwart swimmers, gained the shore amid the cheers of their loyal comrades. St. Ruth, the French commander in chief of the army of James II in Ireland, stood up in his stirrups and declared that he had never seen a deed like that in France, but Sarfield, the Irish general, replied with a toss of his head, that such deeds of heroism were common in Ireland. For many and many a year upon the banks of the Shannon, upon heath and moor, was heard the song in praise of the heroes who bravely faced death for Faith and Fatherland.—Paraphrased by F. Keegan, St. Patrick's School, Montreal, February, 1904.

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