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For the Sunday School Advocate.

## THE OLD WOMAN'S APPLE-STALL.

BY CORPORAL TRY.

A poor widow who had a troop of little ones to support was seated beside her apple-stall in the street and saying to every good-natured person who passed:

"Buy an apple, sir! Buy a nice apple!"

There was a band of music coming down the street and Mrs. Scarlet turned her head a moment—it was *only* a moment—when a bad fellow, whom I will call Ned Scapegrace, pulled one of the trestles from under her apple-tray, and away went her fruit rolling across the sidewalk. Wicked Ned laughed heartily at the poor woman's look of surprise, grief, and anger, and ran up the street to meet the music. He thought he had done a fine thing, for, meeting Joe Good-for-nothing, he shouted:

"Joe, what do you think?"

"I don't think nothin'," said Joe, which was doubtless true, for Joe was too lazy to put two ideas together. His mind was an open common for evil spirits to roam about at will.

"Well, I've just had a capital bit of fun, Joe. I upset old Mother Scarlet's apple-stall, and didn't her eyes flash!"

"I guess you'd better keep clear of her corner, Mr. Ned, for one while. If she gets hold of you it will be something else besides fun you'll get or I lose my guess."

"Ha, ha, ha! The feathers would fly, I guess, if she once got her hands in my hair; but I'm a weasel, and you don't catch a weasel napping very often—but here's the music. What's a goin' on?"

Joe did not know, so Ned went to inquire. Let us go back to the old woman's apple-stall.

The fall of her fruit gave the poor woman a sad shock. It made her feel as if the last stroke of ill-fortune had hit her. All the money she had was represented in those apples. To lose them was to lose her whole stock in trade, and to go home without a cent to buy food for her hungry self and hungrier children. She felt all this, and gazed first at Ned with anger and then at the straying apples with despair.

Just then a genteel boy came up, and seeing her trouble, seized the tray and said in soothing tones:

"Let me help you, ma'am."

The poor old woman was suspicious of boys. Ned's conduct had made her so. She replied:

"Get out with you or I'll lay this basket on you!"

"I want to help you, ma'am," replied the boy—



his name was Charlie—"I saw that wicked chap upset your apples, and I want to help you save them. All boys are not alike, ma'am."

This gentle reply soothed the poor lady's ruffled feelings and won her confidence. She sighed and said:

"Excuse me, young sir, that bad boy had made me cross."

Thus encouraged, Charlie replaced the fallen trestle, put back the tray, picked up the stray apples, and in a few minutes had the pleasure of seeing the poor woman ready to resume her trade with her old smile lighting up her face again. Only a few of her apples were spoiled. To cover that loss Charlie threw all the pennies he had in his pocket upon the tray, and bidding the woman a cheerful "good morning," walked away.

"Heaven bless you! You're a noble boy," murmured the apple-woman as a grateful tear stole down her furrowed cheek.

Charlie was a noble boy. He was more! he was a *Christian* boy, and in thus helping the woman he had done an act of Christian charity. He had lifted a heavy sorrow from a burdened heart. He was a beam of sunshine bursting through the cloud which wicked Ned had thrown around her. He had his reward, for his heart sung joy songs all the rest of that blissful day.

Which are you, my son, Charlie or Ned? If you

delight to trouble, vex, and annoy people "just for the fun of the thing," you are Ned, and I don't want anything to do with you except to persuade you to become a better boy. If you are kind, gentle, self-denying, and ready to do service to the sorrowful, you are Charlie. I give you my hand. I love you. I want you in my army. I shall expect to see you in heaven. Which will you be? Charlie or Ned?

For the Sunday-School Advocate.

## BOYISH COURAGE.

WHEN GENERAL HAVELOCK was a boy he one day climbed a tall tree in search of a bird's nest. Just as he grasped his prize the branch on which he hung broke, and down he went to the ground.

He was taken up insensible. When he recovered his father said: "Henry, were you not afraid when the branch gave way?"

"No, father," replied Henry. "I didn't think of being frightened. I had too much to do in thinking of the eggs; for I was sure they would be smashed to pieces."

That was true courage, though shown in a mean business—it is mean for a stout boy to rob a poor little helpless bird of its eggs, isn't it, boys?—A brave boy thinks nothing of himself when danger overtakes him. He thinks only of the work he is doing. It is not given to every boy to have such courage. It is a gift of nature. But *moral* courage, which always says "no" to Temptation and "yes" to Duty, may be in every child's heart. Moral courage is the gift of God, which every child may have by asking God for it. May all my readers have *moral* courage! X.

For the Sunday-School Advocate.

## MOTHER'S LAP.

HAPPY is the child who loves to sit on his mother's lap, lean his face against her cheek, and tell her the story of his little joys and sorrows. A boy or girl who does that is safe. He who runs often to his mother's lap will not be apt to run far into Satan's paths. Good boys always cling to their mothers. When a boy begins to keep away from his mother's side he is in danger. Indeed, it is seldom that he forsakes her until his heart gives itself up to do wrong. Then, as guilty Adam and Eve fled from the Lord God in the garden of Eden, he flies from his mother. A guilty child cannot look into a mother's face.

An old man, when telling his children how his