

**A Queer Boy.**

He doesn't like study, it weakens his eyes."  
But the "right sort" of book will insure a surprise.  
Let it be about Indians, pirates, or bears, And he's lost for the day to all mundane affairs;  
By sunlight or gaslight his vision is clear;  
Now, isn't that queer?  
At thought of an errand he's "tired as a hound,"  
Very weary of life, and of "tramping around."  
But if there's a band or a circus in sight, He will follow it gladly from morning till night.  
The showman will capture him some day, I fear,  
For he is so queer.

If there's work in the garden his head "aches to split,"  
And his back is so lame that he "can't dig a bit,"  
But mention baseball, and he's cured very soon,  
And he'll dig for a woodchuck the whole afternoon.  
Do you think he "plays possum"? He seems quite sincere,  
But— isn't he queer?  
—St. Nicholas.

**RALPH WELDON'S RECRUIT.**

BY J. MACDONALD OXLEY.

"O mother!" exclaimed Ralph Weldon, rushing into the room, and sitting down in one of the easy chairs with a bump that threatened to damage the springs, "I wish you could have seen Patsy Connors diving off the head of the lumber-wharf. He's a boss swimmer, and no mistake."

"And who may Patsy Connors be, Ralph?" asked Mrs. Weldon, smiling indulgently at her eldest son's reckless ways.

"Patsy Connors? Ah! he's a boy that's always about the lumber-wharf," answered Ralph.  
"But you know, Ralph, I don't want you to be having as a companion a boy that I know nothing about," said Mrs. Weldon. "He might be very bad company for you."

"Patsy Connors would never do anybody any harm, mother," replied Ralph. "He's a real nice boy."

"Admitting that Patsy is a nice boy, and won't do you harm, Ralph," said his mother, with a meaning smile, "will you do him any good?"

"Will I do him any good, mother?" echoed Ralph, a bewildered look coming over his countenance. "I never thought anything about that."

"Well, but don't you see, my boy, that if you and Patsy are much together, you must have either a good or bad influence upon each other?" Mrs. Weldon explained; "and so, if you are sure that he cannot do you any harm, I want to know if you are equally sure that you are doing him good."

Ralph had not his answer ready. His mother's question was to some extent a poser. The idea of his doing his playmates any particular good had never been put to him in just that way before.

"For instance, Ralph," his mother went on, "do you know if Patsy goes to Sunday-school?"

Ralph shook his head dubiously.  
"I never asked him, mother; but I feel pretty sure he doesn't. I guess he spends most of his time on Sundays down at the lumber-wharf," he answered.

"I suppose you never thought of inviting him to go to your Sunday-school?" inquired Mrs. Weldon.

Ralph blushed a little and fidgeted in his chair.

"No, mother," he replied; "I don't think he'd care to come, anyway."

"You don't know that until you've tried him. Suppose you give him the chance?"

"O mother! his clothes are so shabby, you know; and he's poor, and can't get any better ones!" protested Ralph.

"Surely my son does not judge people by their clothes!" said Mrs. Weldon, in a tone of reproach. "Didn't you say Patsy was a nice boy and a boss swimmer? If you're not ashamed to play with him, surely you would not be ashamed to go to Sunday-school with him."

Again Ralph had no answer to make; and after he and his mother had talked together for some time longer, the upshot of the matter was, that he promised to do his best to get Patsy to accompany him to school the very next Sunday.

This was on Friday, and the next morning, Ralph, true to his promise, gave Patsy the invitation in a very pleasant, cordial way. Patsy was

greatly surprised. It was all well enough for Ralph Weldon, the son of the rich merchant, to go in swimming with him at the lumber-wharf, where there was nobody to see, but to walk through the streets on Sunday with so shabby a companion seemed quite a different matter; and then, besides, if Ralph's friends at the Sunday-school were all as finely dressed as himself, they might object to having a poor boy brought in among them. For these reasons and others Patsy was not easy to persuade. But, having promised to get him if he could, Ralph was not to be put off, and in the end carried his point, for Patsy consented to go with him once, at all events.

Early in the afternoon of Sunday, so that they might be in their seats before the rest of the class arrived, Ralph called for Patsy, and they set out together. The poor little fellow had done his best to make a respectable appearance. His face and hands shone with soap, his clothes had been carefully brushed, and a paper collar, several sizes too large for him, adorned his neck. But his hat was fit only for a scarecrow, and his boots seemed all patches. He had no mother to look after him, and his father was a cooper who spent more money on drink than on his boy, whom he shamefully neglected. Not even the sense of satisfaction at the doing of a good deed prevented Ralph from feeling very conscious and ill at ease, as in his shiny broadcloth he walked through the streets, meeting so many he knew, with his strange companion. He was glad when they reached the handsome Calvary Church, and made their way to the corner where Mr. Tenderley's class sat.



PATSEY QUITE FORGOT HIS SHABBY CLOTHES IN THE WARMTH OF MR. TENDERLEY'S WELCOME.

The teacher was already in his place, and greeted Ralph with a winning smile. Then, on Patsy being introduced, he gave him the heartiest of handshakes, and a seat right beside himself.

"I'm very pleased to see you bringing in recruits," said he, beaming upon Ralph; and then, turning to Patsy, "I hope you'll like our school so much that you'll be as regular an attendant as Ralph."

Patsy fairly blushed with pleasure. He quite forgot his shabby clothes in the warmth of Mr. Tenderley's welcome, and did not feel at all so uncomfortable as he expected he would when the other members of the class came in, and stared curiously at the new addition to their ranks.

The lesson for the afternoon was about Zachaeus and his eagerness to see Jesus. Mr. Tenderley spared no pains to make it both intelligible and interesting to Ralph's recruit, without singling him out in any marked way, and Patsy listened with eager eyes and open mouth. He was sorry when the teaching ended, and shyly whispered to Ralph: "Will there be more about Jesus another day? I'd like to come again."

That was the beginning of better times for Patsy Connors. Ralph told his father about him, and Mr. Weldon authorized his wife to have the boy fitted out in a suit of clothes that would help him to be more at his ease in the Sunday-school. Lest his father should take them from him to pawn for liquor, Patsy was permitted to keep his new clothes in Mr. Weldon's coach-house, whither he came for them every Sunday, putting them back again before returning to his miserable home.

About six weeks later, Patsy in the interval having been faithful in his attendance upon the Sunday-school, Mr. Weldon, one morning at breakfast, looked up from his paper with the inquiry, "Ralph, what's the name of that boy you got to go to Sunday-school with you?"

"Patsy Connors, sir," answered Ralph, wondering why his father asked.

"Well, Ralph, I see he's been distinguishing himself. Here's half a column about him in the paper."

Mr. Weldon then went on to read a graphic description of a gallant rescue from drowning at the lumber-wharf the night before. A steamboat excursion had landed at the wharf, which was not properly lighted. A young girl, missing her way in the darkness, had stepped off the high wharf, and fallen with a scream into the dock. Immediately all was confusion. No one knew what to do; and the girl would undoubtedly have drowned but for the heroic action of a boy named Patsy Connors, who leaped into the dock, dived after the girl, brought her to the surface, and held her there, in spite of frantic struggles, until at last ladders and ropes were brought, and both were lifted up to safety, amid the cheers of the spectators. The account closed with the expression of a hope that so splendid a deed would not be suffered to pass without due recognition.

The moment his father finished, Ralph, with a whoop, snatched up his cap and dashed off for Miller's Alley, where Patsy lived in a tumble-down tenement. He found his recruit being interviewed by a reporter for an evening paper, and as soon as he could got him away hurried him back to his own home, and straight into the breakfast-room which his father had not yet left.

"There, father," said he, proudly, "that's Patsy Connors!"

"Ah, indeed!" said Mr. Weldon, looking kindly at the blushing, breathless boy. "Come here, and let me shake hands with you, Patsy. You've been a brave boy, and I must see if something cannot be done for you."

Very proud did Ralph feel of his recruit, and great pains did he take to introduce him to his companions as the hero of the gallant rescue at the lumber-wharf. Mr. Weldon, too, was as good as his word. He started a subscription list in his behalf, heading it with a generous amount, and raised a goodly sum for the purpose of sending Patsy to school, where he might learn to read and write. Not only so, but he presented his case to the Royal Humane Society, and obtained a beautiful bronze medal for the little life-saver.

Patsy's progress was surely and steadily upward. Under Mr. Tenderley's teaching he grew in knowledge of the Saviour, and at his school he learned so quickly that at the end of a year Mr. Weldon thought him fit for his employ, and gave him a place as office-boy, with a promise of promotion in due time. One day, after all this had taken place, Ralph was talking about him to his mother.

"Do you remember the question, Ralph," said she, "that I asked you when first you spoke of him to me?"

"No, mother. What was it?"

"I asked you if you thought you were doing Patsy any good. What would be your answer now?"

"Well, mother," answered Ralph, "I don't know whether I've done Patsy much good, but he certainly has done me good. And I'm very glad I asked him to come to Sunday-school, for Mr. Tenderley says he's one of the best boys in his class."

**GRANDMOTHER'S WINDOWS.**

BY MRS. EMMA HERRICK WOOD.

Grandfather and grandmother lived alone in a little brown house with holly-hocks up to the eaves in front and a dreamy old orchard of cherry and apple climbing the hillside behind the dwelling. They were very old, but they still "kept house" like two happy children. "Father" brought in the wood and water, and built the fire, and filled the teakettle, and put three or four nicely washed potatoes in the oven if it was the midday meal, he also made a daily journey to "tother house," leaning on his stout staff, where his son's family lived, for any little household want or necessity. Then "Mother" would put up the leaf to the little spinning-legged table, spread on the small white cloth—how white it was!—put on two (or three, if I was to stay to dinner) of those delicious old-fashioned blue plates, whose memory haunts me yet, like the violets in the brook hollows, cups, saucers, and cream pitcher of the same cerulean dye; and in the crystal holder the dearest, most fragile little spoons, that gave to the

thick golden maple syrup a taste that nothing else ever could.

"Mother" didn't bake many "knick-knacks"—"Father" didn't care for them—but she always had a round white loaf of "salt-rising" bread in the pantry, some scalloped cookies, and generally some "riz" cake. Did you ever eat any "riz" cake? If it was intrinsically as good as it used to taste to me in those days, they do not keep the ingredients for sale now, or if they are to be had, the formula for the melting morsel is hopelessly forgotten.

Grandfather's hair was almost as white as the abundant snows that drifted about the cottage in the long winter; but his eyes were full of a soft, mellow radiance, as if there were a lamp hidden away within, fed from some unfailing fount of illumination. And so there was; for grandfather was only waiting, in the eve of a well-spent day, the summons to come away to the "hill country," and with as little concern or apprehension as he would meditate a quiet walk to "tother house." How he loved his Bible! How he leaned on its promises in those days of weakness and infirmity, so that his feet never slipped! Fifty years they had walked together, hand in hand, he and "Mother," and "Mother" was just the same dear little woman to him as when the cherry blossoms whitened on her bridal morn. But as for "Mother" herself, her identity was well-nigh merged in his. She depended on him, groped for him, so to speak, in the indistinctness that was gradually creeping like an Indian summer haze over her life's landscape. Knowing him near, she was content. It was touching and inexpressibly beautiful to see them moving thus gently down the last declivity of time, her hand in his, and his in the strong one reached down out of the invisible, the upbuying of infinity in its raigly class.

But it was of grandmother's windows that I set out to speak. There were two of them in the sitting-room, of the small, many-paned kind, of course, overlooking a pleasant slope, down toward the "meeting house," and the cluster of dwellings at the corner. Well, grandma didn't clean house much nowadays. Others did it for her in its proper time, and the old eyes were dim that used to spy out the enemy, dust, in its every-day lurking places. How she used to make those windows shine, to be sure! One day she sat gazing off down the road, with her dear, mild old eyes, her knitting work dropped in her lap, and "Father" in his arm-chair opposite dozing in venerable content. At length she spoke, as the result of her long reverie:

"Don't you think we have a dreadful sight of kind o' smoky weather nowadays, father?" Father raised up and "looked at the weather."

"I dunno, mother, I dunno but we do. I hadn't thought much about it. Mebbe there's a fire on the plains, or som'ers."

But the young granddaughter, who was spending the day with the old people, divined the reason of the preternatural appearance of the atmosphere.

"It's your windows, grandma, dear," she cried. "They want wiping off a little; you see, in a room like this, where one sweeps a carpet every day, they will get dusty. Just wait and see if I don't clear up the weather a bit," which she proceeded to do with one of grandma's old bits of snowy linen and a basin of water.

How grandma "chirped up," watching the process like a delighted child; and when the transformation was complete, and the little panes shone like diamond squares, how grandma laughed! "And there wa't anything wrong with the weather after all; it was just because my windows were dirty!" And grandpa muttered something in his facetious way—he did like to tease grandma—about "pretty slack housekeeping for a young woman like her!" which made her put on a deprecatory smile, and say: "Now, father!" to the delight of his warm old heart.

That was years and years ago. The dear old couple have long since "moved away" from the brown house among the cherry trees; but I have never forgotten the incident. Sometimes, when everything seems blurred and befogged from my point of view, and things present and things to come take on strange and gloomy semblance in the murky atmosphere, I say to myself: "Maybe grandma's windows want wiping!" And sometimes, when I hear others grumbling and mourning over the dismal outlook, how everything is under a cloud and the church especially in a lamentable haze of error and misguidance thicker than the proverbial London fog, I say again this time under my breath: "It's just barely possible that grandma's windows want wiping!"—N. Y. Observer.