

'Oh, Bill, take me!'

'An' me!'

'I'll tell ye what,' said Bill importantly, glancing round, 'we'll take our chance tomorrow, and see what we won't do!'

The following afternoon, when Mrs. Brown was busy over her washing, and old Jones gone into market with his fish, three little conspirators might have been seen at work with his boat, pushing it down to the water. The boat was heavy, the sand deep; but with a long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull altogether, they succeeded. The boat floated, the children scrambled in, and off they went.

The tide and the wind were setting offshore, and helped them along famously. Bill began rowing, but it was harder work than he expected, for the farther they went from land the bigger the waves became. The cliffs grew lower and lower, the sea and sky opened wider and wider.

'Be France a long way off?' asked Amelia Ann. 'It's getting evening.'

'And I don't like this jumping: it makes my head ache,' added Jack. 'I'm getting tired. Here, you come and help row, Amelia Ann!'

He got up to move into the next seat, leaving one oar in the oar-lock for the little girl. But as she stepped over to it a sharp cry from Jack made her turn her head.

'Ugh! I'm so wet! A wave came right in!'

When Amelia Ann looked again the oar had slipped out, and was floating away on a wave.

'Row hard, and I'll pick it up!' she cried.

Bill pulled with all his strength, but the wave carried the oar faster than he could row.

Crack! The remaining oar, unequal to the strain, snapped off short, leaving only the handle in his grasp.

Amelia and Bill looked at each other dismayed.

'Whatever shall we do?'

'How ever shall we get to France with no oars?'

'We shall be drowned!' sobbed Jack. 'There's another wave coming in!'

Drifting helpless, the boat began to wobble and toss in a very unpleasant and dangerous manner. Jack, feeling very seasick, crouched, half asleep, at the bottom. The wind rose as the sun set, and the crests of the curling waves dashed over more and more frequently and drenched him.

All round, wide and desolate, spread the heaving sea. Only the hoarse laugh of a solitary sea-gull, hovering near, broke the sound of the splashing waves.

'We shall all be drowned in the dark!' said Amelia Ann, in a low voice.

'I wish we'd never come!' echoed Bill.

'Lunnun 'ud be better nor being drown-ed!'

Jack said nothing; he was feeling too ill. The sea-gull laughed again as it skimmed past.

How long this went on the children never knew; it seemed hours. Then suddenly out of the still glowing west came a sail.

Jack took no notice, but Amelia Ann waved her handkerchief with all her might, and Bill held up her hand.

'Will they see us and come to us, d'ye think?' he asked.

It was a terrible suspense. But at last, when it was fast growing dark, the boat bore down upon them and they were saved.

Mrs. Brown was too anxious to be angry when three weary, wet little figures were brought home to her late that night. Nor was she even angry when they explained to

her what had led them to run away.

'Afeered o' goin' back, are ye? Want to stop here? Well, to try and drown yer-selves wasn't the way to do it! Wait till I speak to missus.'

Good Mrs. Brown did speak to her mistress to some purpose. The children were never sent back to London. Bill was taken on as garden-boy at the Hall, and Amelia Ann stayed to help Mrs. Brown with the washing, while Jack was sent to school till he was older and able to work for his living. I need not say they never tried to run away again.—Edith E. Cuthell.

27 Dull Street.

(By W. Bert Foster, in the 'Christian Endeavor World.')

'How do the books balance, Archie?'

'Splendidly. Our bank account is growing every day.'

McAlister raised his head from the ledger to look at his questioner, but there was enthusiasm in neither voice nor look. His thought was evidently engaged with some problem other than his bookkeeping.

The girl who had disturbed him was a bright-faced little creature some three or four years his junior, who sat perched upon a high stool with her hat and cloak on. Ada had waited for more than an hour already while her brother pored over his accounts.

The long narrow room, with its polished cherry-wood furnishings, the lunch-bar at one side and the tables down the other wall, had long been deserted saving for the two at the cashier's desk. The rattling of crockery in the kitchen had ceased and the dish-washers had gone home.

'And that's where we should be, Archie,' said the girl, covering a yawn. 'What is the matter to-night?'

'Nothing, my dear. That is, nothing new.'

'You are still worrying over New Years?'

'And what comes after,' said her brother, with a smile.

'Don't you suppose we can afford to pay Donovan's price, then?' asked the girl, with some anxiety.

'I think the business would warrant our giving the twenty-five dollars more a month that he demanded the other day. But I don't believe that he would be satisfied with even that.'

'Why not?'

'Because he intends to drive us out. That's what he bought the property for. I do not believe he would give me another lease of the place at any price.'

'The mean old thing!'

Archie smiled quietly. 'I think he's a sharp business man, that's all. He doesn't like my business and I don't like his. Mine conflicts with his and with that of my other neighbors. Another liquor-saloon on this corner will do him less harm than we do; so he thinks, anyway. No, Ada, we shall have to go.'

'It seems just too mean! Where will we go? There's no store empty anywhere on Front Street—none that you can get, at any rate—for blocks and blocks.'

'I know it. And I don't want to go out of this neighborhood. My work is here.'

'Your work! Archie, you always talk as though the good you can do here is of more importance than the business itself.'

'Well, isn't it?' he asked, smiling as he put away the ledgers and locked the safe.

'I—don't—know,' returned Ada, doubtfully.

'I do!' said her brother, leading the way into the street. 'Just look around you. From our door you can count eight saloons—the three other corners and five beside.' He smiled grimly as he added: 'Eight to one—eight places where "liquid refreshment" can be had, and only one to which a man can go to eat without having liquor thrust upon him. And this is a populous neighborhood in the daytime, too.'

'It isn't altogether deserted at night, Archie,' said his sister, looking disgustedly about her while she waited for him to turn the key in the door.

The only stores now lighted (it was already past ten o'clock) were the saloons to which Archie had called attention. Floods of yellow light bathed the sidewalks before their doors, making the patches of unlighted street between them the blacker in comparison. The crowd moved sluggishly across the illuminated spots, and groups hung about the corners and in the darkened doorways. Occasionally a police officer appeared, and his approach spurred the loiterers into sudden activity.

Ada shuddered and crept closer to her brother's side, but he looked on the scene as he had gazed on it hundreds of times before. For two years now he had been a factor in the neighborhood. By day it was a place of busy mercantile pursuits; the 'after-dark crowd' was seldom in evidence then. But after he closed his doors at seven o'clock the only place for these men and women to get food was the saloons.

'And they are open till eleven,' he said, putting his thought into words. 'I wonder—'

'O, Archie, you won't tie us here any more hours in the day, will you?' cried his sister.

'Not you, sis. You ought to be at home now. You shouldn't have waited for me to-night. This is no place for you to walk, even with an escort, at night.'

'But what is the use when you will have to leave here anyway in a month or two?'

'The use of what?'

'I know what is in your mind, Archie,' she cried. 'You mean to keep open later, too.'

He laughed a little. 'You are too bright for me, Ada. You know my mind before I scarce know it myself.'

'But why should you tie yourself to such long hours?'

'If I have to leave here,' he said, and again the stubborn look came into his face, 'if I have to leave here, I'll do all the harm to Donovan and Company I can while I stay. Besides, an all-night lunch would pay here, I believe. I've thought of it before. These side streets are full of cheap lodging-houses. That's where the bulk of this crowd comes from. I—believe—I'll—do—it.'

Ada signed, but said nothing. They were away from the place now, and she clung less closely to his arm. She knew by past experience that there was very little use in trying to 'talk Archie out of an idea,' provided it was one that he had decided was right. Ever since he had broken off his college course and invested the sum left from his father's estate in the restaurant 'for the good of the family' he had looked upon the business, not as a money-making effort alone. There were great things to be done for the Master, and he seized the opportunity for service joyfully.

He had used every legitimate means in his power to attract custom. He served