

OUR STORY PAGE.

The Brakeman's "No."

A fine young fellow was Tom Jeffreys; strong, pleasant and good-looking. He was but eighteen years of age when he began "rail-roading," but he could set a brake with the best. When his clear, deep voice announced the stations, people listened, and made no mistake. Old ladies caught the gleam of his pleasant eye, and let him help them on and off with grateful surprise. Mothers with more children than they could manage, tired women, burden laden, and old men, recognized a friend, and made use of him. Nor were the railroad officials blind to the young man's helpfulness and popularity, and, although Tom did not dream of it, his was one on the list of names that meant promotion.

The young brakeman's easy-going good nature, however, was a drawback in one direction. He disliked to say "No." When the train reached Boston he always had two hours to spare. In that time some one of the boys was sure to say: "Come, Tom, let's go to the barber's." Now this sounded very innocent but in the barber's back room was a green door which opened on a stairway leading down into a drinking saloon. Here the men used to gather, a few at a time, to take "a little something." Tom usually said his good-natured "No," that meant a reluctant "Yes," and ended by going. He never felt wholly at ease when taking his beer. He would not have gone for it alone. Over and over again he acknowledged to himself that it was the laughter of his chums that took his courage away; and so things went on. A year slipped by, and beer had become an almost everyday drink with him, when one afternoon he was summoned from the "barber's shop" to the office.

"Jeffreys," said the superintendent, when he entered, "I have been very much pleased with the way in which your duties have been performed in the past, and I find we need another conductor." The gentleman suddenly stopped, and then the pleasant smile was gone. "Mr. Jeffreys, your breath tells me that you have been drinking."

"Only a little beer, sir," said poor Tom, flushing crimson.

"I am very sorry," replied the superintendent, "but that will be all to-day; you may go."

The young man left the office downcast, disheartened. What he had been wishing for, what he had so nearly gained, had been lost through his own misconduct. As he thought of it the good-natured lips took on a firmer curve. The next day one of the boys said:

"Comin' over to the barber's?"

"No," replied Tom.

"O come on; what struck yer?"

"That barber has shaved me all he ever will!" was the answer.

Although Tom's "No" seemed very determined in its sound, there was yet something wanting in it. He felt it, and when after a few days the real longing for a glass of liquor made itself felt, it seemed as if the "No" would be "Yes" in spite of himself.

"No use in lockin' the barn door now," said his chum; "the hess is stole, the 'super' knows you've taken a 'smile' now and then, and he'll never forget it. Better be young while you can." Tom still said "No," but the little negative grew weaker and weaker; the next thing would be "Yes." When this was almost accomplished, spurned by his danger and remembering his early training in the right, he went into an empty car, and, kneeling on the bare floor, prayed for strength to resist. "And then," he said, "I learned to speak a 'No' that all the men on the road couldn't turn into a 'Yes.'"

Willie's Lesson in Politeness.

"I was so ashamed, Willie, when I had to remind you to thank Mrs. Foster for the book she sent you Christmas," said a lady to her little son just after a visitor had taken her leave.

"Why, mamma," was his reply, "you always said you wanted me to be honest and truthful. I don't like the book at all. It is too babyish for me."

"I do want you to be honest and truthful," said his mother, "but you can be so without being rude. Mrs. Foster hasn't any boys, and perhaps she doesn't know very well the kind of reading a boy likes; but the book is bound very prettily, and it certainly was kind of her to think of you and send

you a present. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, mamma," said Willie.

"Well, then, don't you see how you could honestly feel grateful to her for the gift just because it showed her kind feeling toward you, even though you don't care for the gift itself?"

"I see now," said Willie. "If I had thought of that, I would have thanked her as soon as I had a chance. But I didn't know how to be polite and honest too."

"I am glad you are trying to be truthful," said his mother, "but you must remember that although God says lying lips are an abomination to Him, He also tells us to 'be courteous' and to 'be kind one to another,' 'speaking the truth in love.'"

"There is a little rhyme I would like to have you learn, for it is a very good definition of true politeness:

"Politeness is to do and say
The kindest thing in the kindest way."

Be Fair.

"See what a good trade I made to-day!" said Lucius to his uncle. "I traded my old knife with Jamie Neil for his nice two-bladed one that cuts twice as well. One of the blades of my knife was broken, and the other would not hold an edge two minutes. But Jamie took a fancy to it because of the handle, and I was glad enough to make the trade."

"I am sorry, Lucius, if you have cheated him," said his uncle, "but more sorry for you than for him."

Lucius hung his head a little and asked, "Why so?"

"Because one success of this kind may lead you to try it again, and nothing can be worse for a boy's prospects in life than to get into the habit of over-reaching."

"But, uncle, in all trades, doesn't each try to get the best bargains, and don't all merchants make their fortunes by being sharp in trade?"

"No trade, Lucius, is sound that does not benefit both parties. Were you cheated in a trade by your playmate, you would feel very angry about it, and probably quarrel over it. Now, don't trade any more unless the trade is fair all round."—*Selected.*

The reason some men can't make both ends meet is because they are too busy making one end drink.