

"Well, here is one," interrupted the colonel, producing from somewhere beneath his long coat a formidable switch; "and I want you to use it. Now, my son," he continued, turning toward Frank, "I want you to understand that this will hurt. There won't be any joke about it, either."

And with this last warning Colonel Crissey impressively laid the instrument of castigation across Miss Marjorie's desk, made a stately bow to the young teacher, and took his departure.

Frank watched Miss Marjorie with a pleased expectancy written upon his face as she quietly took the rod and placed it behind the chromo of George Washington which hung upon the wall.

Miss Marjorie Malcolm was just entering upon her first experience of teaching. She had undertaken the charge of a little "neighborhood school" in a booming town of Wisconsin. Her school opened with fifteen pupils, between the ages of seven and fourteen.

Every day Miss Marjorie spent the last half-hour of schooltime reading aloud to the children. The first book she chose happened to be Jacob Abbott's "Life of Nero." The children became intensely interested in the story, and they were loud in their expressions of indignation against Nero for his cruelty, while their admiration for the martyrs who suffered under the wicked emperor's persecutions was unbounded. Miss Marjorie took advantage of the enthusiasm awakened to tell the children several stories of heroes who had sacrificed their lives for their faith. The stories often became the subjects of animated discussion among the children; and one day, before the morning session had opened, Miss Marjorie overheard through the open window the following fragments of conversation:

"What would you do, Franky, would you give up, or would you die?"

"I would never give up," came the firm reply, in a clear, childish voice.

"Would you let them burn you?"

"I would never give up," he repeated—"never. If I once said a thing I would never take it back. No one could make me."

"But when you saw the fire?"

"I would be perfectly immovable. I would walk into the fire myself—calmly, like this."

Miss Marjorie looked out of the window, and saw an admiring group watch the little fellow, as, with dignified bearing, he walked toward the woodpile. He climbed upon it, and, when he had found a firm footing, he turned toward the spectators with an expression of lofty and serene resolution upon his face. The girls all clapped their hands, and some one cried, "Good for you, Franky!"

He was in dead earnest, and he did look like a real little hero. Miss Marjorie's heart swelled with admiration.

The school had been in progress three and a half weeks, and all had gone well. No pupil had been more docile and lovable than little Frank Crissey.

Miss Marjorie had resolved, when she learned from his father, who surely ought to know, of the boy's obstinate disposition, that she would be very careful to avoid giving him any occasion to exhibit it, but that she would get him so much interested in his work that he would forget to be obstinate. The plan had worked admirably; and now, as she watched him from the window, the thought occurred to her that possibly the father had wholly misjudged the son's character.

That day Miss Marjorie completely forgot her resolution not to come to an issue with Frank, and the result was—her first case of discipline.

The trouble began out of a very little matter. An orange dropped out of Bessie Tubbs' desk, and rolled demurely out into the middle of the floor. This started a general laugh, in which Miss Marjorie herself could not help joining, when she saw the comical expression of helpless distress in Bessie's face; for Bessie was the only one who saw nothing funny in the behavior of her orange. Frank was fairly ecstatic with delight when he observed that even Miss Marjorie couldn't help seeing how funny it was, and he became quite uproarious and clapped his hands. Finally, when the orange had been restored to its owner, the mirth subsided. But Frank did not like to have the fun over so quickly. He punched his seat mate, made signs to various ones to go on laughing, and even whispered to Bessie Tubbs, who sat beside him, to let her orange roll out again; but

all to no avail. Finally, he made five little paper balls, and began to throw them about the room, aiming at different ones. Miss Marjorie thought it was time for her intervention.

"Frank," she said, "that will do; go on with your work now."

Frank was quiet for a moment, and then aimed another ball at Harry Van Sleik.

"Frank," repeated Miss Marjorie, in a decided tone, "we have had enough fun now. You must go on with your work."

Miss Marjorie noticed that as she was speaking Frank slipped the last of his paper balls into his right hand, and held it in readiness for a throw under his desk.

"Will you be good now?" she asked, with a smile.

Frank, seeing her smile, was encouraged to hope that she might be made to laugh again; and so he replied, more in fun than in earnest, "No."

Miss Marjorie stopped smiling and said: "Frank, you must not throw that ball."

Receiving no reply, she added: "Are you going to be good now?"

Frank, sobered down immediately and replied, "No."

Miss Marjorie was taken by surprise. Here was open defiance before the whole school. Surely the time had come for the birch rod.

"Then I must punish you," she said. "Come here."

Frank walked forward, while Miss Marjorie took down the rod from behind the picture of George Washington.

"Hold out your hand," said Miss Marjorie, in a firm tone, though her heart within almost failed at the thought of the approaching contest.

Frank held out his hand fearlessly, and Miss Marjorie brought down the cruel rod rather sharply upon the tender flesh.

"Will you be good now?" she repeated.

"No," he replied, in an unshaken voice.

Miss Marjorie gave two more strokes, a little harder this time.

"Will you be good now?" she asked again.

"Miss Marjorie," he replied, with dignity, "there is no need of your asking me any more. I shall not change my mind."

Miss Marjorie raised the rod higher than before, determined to bring it down with increased force, but something made her falter. She noticed on Frank's face the same expression of serene resolve that she had seen there, as he stood upon the woodpile fancying himself a martyr. Frank was holding his breath in anticipation of the coming blow, but the little hand, which lay in Miss Marjorie's palm, did not quiver.

"If I should whip him hard enough to make him yield," thought Miss Marjorie, "what a shameful victory it would be of mere physical force over a brave little heart!" She did not give the intended stroke. "You may go into the cloakroom, and sit down there," she said.

Frank obeyed, and the lessons went on as usual, until the children were dismissed for recess.

"Now, Frank," said Miss Marjorie, opening the cloakroom door, "you may come out."

He came out, pale with determination. Miss Marjorie placed a chair for him, and they both sat down.

"Frank," began Miss Marjorie, "I am not going to whip you any more, nor make you stay in the cloakroom, nor punish you in any way."

Frank looked up at her with his sweet blue eyes full of wonder.

"Even if I should succeed in making you say you'd be good, that would not make you really good. In this world everybody must choose for himself whether he will be good or bad; and I am going to let you choose for yourself. Which did Nero choose to be?"

"Bad," replied Frank, expressing in his voice his disgust at the character of Nero.

"Would you like to be like him when you are a man?"

"No," replied Frank, with decision.

"Perhaps," said Miss Marjorie, "when Nero was a little boy like you he chose to be bad, and had no idea how very bad he would get to be by the time he was a man. When bad people grow, their badness grows too. Bad little boys make bad men, and good little boys make good men. When you decide what kind of a boy you will be, you are deciding at the same time what kind of a man you will be."

Frank's face became very serious.

"Oh, Miss Marjorie!" he exclaimed, "I will be good."

"Would you be willing," asked Miss Marjorie, "to say before the whole school, when they come in, that you have decided to be good?"

"No," replied Frank.

"Well," said Miss Marjorie, "I am not going to try to make you. You may do just as you choose about it."

After a pause she went on: "Do you remember that girl I told you about who went into the arena and let the lions eat her up, and wouldn't say she didn't believe in God?"

"Yes," replied Frank; "she was brave."

"But the people in the amphitheatre thought she was wicked and silly."

"Yes," said Frank, "and that made it all the harder for her to hold out. I tell you, she was a brave one to let those lions get her."

"But did it make her any happier to be brave?" asked Miss Marjorie.

"No," replied Frank; "for she had to be eaten up. Oh, I tell you, it must have hurt. But I'd rather be brave than happy. I'd like something very, very hard to bear, so I could show how brave I could be. You didn't whip we very hard," he went on, with an apologetic smile. "I wanted you to hit harder, so I could show how much I could stand."

"I am sure, Frank," replied Miss Marjorie, "that you could stand a very hard whipping."

Frank flushed with pleasure at these words.

"But," said Miss Marjorie, "doing wrong isn't brave, even if it is hard. It's doing right when it's hard that's brave. I know of something you ought to do that would be much harder for you to do than to bear a whipping. I don't know whether you would have the courage to do it or not."

"What is it?" asked Frank, eagerly. "Try me and see."

"If," said Miss Marjorie, "when the scholars all come in, you should say before them all that you had decided to be good, they might laugh at you afterward, and say you had to give up after all, and that you weren't so brave as you thought you were. You see, this would be a very hard thing for you to do; but it is brave to do right when it's hard."

"Oh, Miss Marjorie, I can't do that," said Frank, his eyes filling with tears.

"I was afraid it would be too hard for you," said Miss Marjorie, sadly, as she took up the bell to ring it.

"Oh, Miss Marjorie, wait a minute. Isn't there something else? I will say I've been naughty, and I will let you whip me, oh, so hard—till my hand is swollen, if you want to."

"No," said Miss Marjorie, as she rang the bell, "that wouldn't do any good. You may just take your seat as usual with the others when they come in."

"Miss Marjorie," said Frank, seizing his teacher's hand as she laid down the bell, "I will do it. I can. Ask me when they all come in. Just try me."

When the scholars had taken their seats, Miss Marjorie began, "Frank, have you decided"—but she could go no further, for Frank was upon his feet, pale as a sheet.

"Yes," he choked out, "I will be good."

He sank back into his seat, and buried his face in his hands.

That afternoon, instead of the usual reading, Miss Marjorie talked to the children about true bravery and false bravery. They listened very soberly, and went away more quietly than usual when school was dismissed. As they passed the window, Miss Marjorie heard Harry Van Sleik's voice saying, "I say, Franky, aren't you glad you said you'd be good?"

Two months later, Colonel Crissey said to Miss Marjorie: "I want to thank you, Miss Marjorie, for what you've done for my son. There's a change come over him since he's been in your school. He hasn't had one of his obstinate spells for two months, and he used to have them nearly every week."—*N. Y. Independent.*

A little eight-year-old Irish boy in one of our Public Schools was reproved by his teacher for some mischief. He was about to deny his fault, when she said: "I saw you, Jerry."

"Yes," he replied, as quick as a flash, "I tells them there ain't much you don't see wid them purty black eyes of yours." That was the soft answer that turned away wrath.