

His pennies had been few and far between, of late, for people seemed to run their own errands more than they used. So Tom had plenty of spare time on his hands.

Of course he had heard of Mr. Allison's sickness, for Tom heard everything. And when he heard how the minister had nearly died, and how weak he was still, the little fellow longed to do some service for him.

And what could a poor boy like Tom do, you wonder? Evidently he meant to do something, for he remembered the time when the minister had one something for him. It was of a cold day he did it. A winter day, when the snow and sleet came cuttingly against one's face. Some man had driven up before a store, and seeing Tom, called out:

"Here, boy! Hold my horse, will you?" And with that he gave him five cents.

So Tom put the money in his pocket, and stood holding the horse, wishing all the time that the man would return, for the wind blew cold through this thin coat.

"I don't care, anyway," Tom said to himself. "I've held it as long as five cents' worth, I'm sure." And it was then someone chanced to brush against him, then stopped and smiled. And the face that smiled at Tom was the minister's, and the minister's voice said heartily:

"Well, laddie, you are keeping to your duty as though the wind were not whistling to you to leave it." Then he passed on, and Tom felt ashamed and sorry. But never afterward was he tempted to leave a work he had begun, and in his heart he was grateful for this service. And now he felt that he, in his turn, would like to do something for the minister.

"I can't give any fine thing," he said to himself. "but I s'pose he knows I'm not fine, anyway." And with that, Tom made himself as clean and neat as he knew how, and then he started to fetch his gift for the sick man. When he first set out, the sun was just climbing over some heavy clouds in the east, and the dew was still trembling on the grass tops. And Tom noticed all the beauty about him, and walked faster because of it. He left the city streets; left all the awakening noises of the early morning, and went out to the quiet of the fields beyond. And there, in a purple patch—there, where any sharp, loving eyes could find them—were the wood violets, or Johnny-jump-ups, as Tom called them. And seeing them, Tom ended his search.

Such a wonderfully glorious bunch as he picked, and such a hurried walk as he had homeward, until at last he stood on the minister's porch, tired and warm, but rejoicing. Nurse Patterson was a bit particular about letting visitors in to see her patient, but when she saw that boy's face, she said:

"Take them in to him? Why, yes, I will, but wouldn't you like to do it yourself?"

So Tom, just a bit awe-stricken at delivering his own flowers, walked in, but he forgot his timidity when he saw Mr. Allison's face.

"I s'pose you don't remember me," said the boy, "but I heard you were sick and—"

"Oh, yes," answered Mr. Allison, holding out his hand, as he spoke, "I remember you very well. I have seen you down town many a day."

Tom smiled in pleased surprise. And then he laid the bunch of Johnny-jump-ups on the minister's table, rather apart from the hot-house roses and the vase of sweet lilies of the valley.

"They're not just fine," he said. "Bring them to me," said Mr. Allison, still smiling.

"I think," he continued, "that these are just what I have needed to make me well again, for these are the same little fellows, I believe, that were growing in my mother's garden at home. Perhaps they are a bit prettier because of the loving thought that prompted your giving them. At any rate, they can make a bond between us two, can they not, Tom? Tom looked surprised. "I mean," went on the minister, "that these can be a pledge of our future friendship, and when you come to me, to church and Sunday-school, as I know you will do when I tell you how much I wish it, you will know that these little flowers have made us friends forever."

They sounded very sweet to Tom, those words. It made his lonely little heart glad to know that he could please this man to whom he had brought such a small offering.

"If you would care to have me, I will always go," said the boy, earnestly.

"Yes, Tom," was Mr. Allison's answer, "I care very much. But there is One who cares even more than I, the One Who gave you a loving heart and the kind thought to bring me these little blossoms. For that gift is the finest in my eyes, Tom, that is given with a heart's love. And as you gave to me, so can you give your service to Him Who has always loved and cared for you."

So Tom's violets lasted for more than a day, you see, and made a new and happy life for the lad.

BUT ONE WAY.

There is no royal road to learning. The whole way is but one long, toilsome hill, whose summit is reached only by constant and arduous climbing. But all along the way, the Master Teacher has spread pleasant words of encouragement for those who would "live and learn," and in receiving their helpful influence, the journey becomes less wearisome and the crown more easily gained.

—We open the hearts of others, when we open our own.

—A light heart will make any burden easy.

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THE LION IN LOVE.

A lion fell in love with the fair daughter of a forester, and demanded her of her father in marriage. The man durst not refuse, though he would gladly have done so; but he told the lion that his daughter was so young and deli-

cate that he could consent only upon condition that his teeth should be drawn and his claws cut off. The lion was so enslaved by love that he agreed to this without a murmur, and it was accordingly done. The forester then seized a club, laid him dead upon the spot, and so broke off the match.