

THE MESSENGER.

a secret. Tom was quite aware that he had driven his teacher to the verge of desperation. But Basil went on to intimate that he had altered this intention, and he explained what had changed him. He told of his sister's plea, 'Jesus does not give Tom up;' and warming as he went on, he laid bare the story of his own past, and spoke of Christ's love waiting for him, and of his confidence that the same tender pity of the Redeemer was seeking Tom. The boy grew uneasy and restless, but he heard him through, and said no word, good or bad.

'I shall not leave, I shall stay,' Basil said finally, 'and I ask you to remember, that it is love to my Saviour and love to you that keeps me where I am. Now, will you look me up in the Christmas holidays next week? Come and see my books, I've got a nice little library. What do you say?'

'Yes, I will, Mr. Trevor.' There seemed a lump in Tom's throat.

Had Basil conquered, or were the brighter omens false? He asked himself the question very anxiously after the interview, but only the event could determine it.

And then he began to think of Myra Elborough. Would she be at the services to-day? At Southampton she had attended a church of the same religious body as himself. But it probably depended on her friends.

He did not see her. But then his sister and he were both in the choir, and from his seat it was not easy to take stock of the worshippers.

Days passed, and Myra might have returned to Southampton for all the sign she made. Even on Christmas Day his gladness seemed curiously wanting through this fact. He could not understand himself.

Three o'clock on Boxing Day was the time fixed for Tom Houser to pay his return call upon his teacher. Basil was ready, and the room he called his 'den' was looking amazingly cheerful. But would Tom come?

When he was almost despaired of, a tap came at the door. Basil answered it, and his troublesome scholar stood there. He was very pale, and Basil soon saw that there was a difference in him that went deeper yet.

Madge kept carefully out of the way by particular request, and this was well, for soon Tom put the question:—

'There isn't anybody as can hear, is there, sir?'

'No, not at all; but I'll lock the door.'

'Mr. Trevor'—there was an awkward pause, and Basil waited, wondered, and rejoiced—'Mr. Trevor, I've been thinking about what you said on Sunday. I couldn't get away from it. And I want to tell you something.'

'Yes, Tom.'

'You know I'm entered as junior at North & Neales's, in Bridgeway?'

'No, I hadn't heard so. I congratulate you; it's a good house.'

'I've been there six weeks, sir; but I'd got into bad ways—gambling and that, like you spoke about. There are two other fellows I've been with a lot, and I was to have stolen some money, sir, to settle up a debt. I had a chance, and I don't think I should have been found out. That was to have been on Monday; but I couldn't do it, sir, after what you said. I got it in my hand and put it down again. There was that about Jesus not giving me up—and I didn't take it. I've broken with these fellows, sir; and, oh, do you think I can do better?'

'Thank the God of infinite mercies—yes; yes, Tom!' said Basil Trevor, fervently.

'I owe the money—eight pounds—and I can't ask father.'

Basil meditated.

'Suppose I see your father, and promise

myself to be responsible for the money until you can make it good?'

It was a test of sincerity.

'Must he know, sir?'

'In my opinion he ought to.'

'Then do as you think well, sir. You are kind, and I've been such a nuisance to you.'

The conference was a long one, and before it ended it was clear to Basil that what occurred had been most timely, and had snatched a young life from the very edge of an awful precipice. He was humbly grateful to his Father in heaven that he had listened to Madge and to the voice within, and had thus been able to serve as an instrument of rescue. There was every sign that Tom's repentance was sincere—not least satisfactory was his consent that the whole story should be told to Mr. Houser.

In undertaking this task Basil little dreamed that he was putting himself in the way of his life's happiness. It was so. Tom's father was met casually in Hipplebury Park avenue, and there Basil broke the unwelcome, yet welcome, truth to him, and pleaded for leniency towards the lad. It was a shock to the listener, but he had a parent's heart, and he thanked Basil warmly for his past patience and his present action, and engaged to treat Tom still as a son whom he could trust. He would not agree that the young man should find the eight pounds.

'No, no. I'll make that all right, and you need not fear that I'll upbraid the boy over it either, so long as he goes straight,' he said.

'And I believe he will.'

'Now come inside with me. I was a churl the last time you called, I know, and I beg your pardon. Come, it's not many steps further.'

Basil consented, and the first face he saw as he crossed the threshold was Myra's.

'Why—!'

'Bewildered once more,' said the maiden, with a merry laugh.

'Do you know my daughter—my wife's daughter?'

'May I not say that we are old friends, Miss Elborough?'

'Yes.'

And the winter of Basil's discontent had passed in two senses. The day came when he put another question to Myra, and to that also she shyly said 'Yes.'

That terrible Tom was altogether a changed boy, and as a consequence Basil's class was a joy to teach and not a vexation. As the months ran on, the zealous work, brought by Madge and Myra, as well as by Basil, to the mercy-seat for a blessing, was owned of God to the conversion of souls. The first who came out and declared his personal allegiance to Christ, was Tom Houser.

'In due season we shall reap, if we faint not,' had once again been proved a faithful promise.—S.S. Chronicle.

Another St. George and His Dragon.

(By Rev. Wilbur F. Crafts.)

'If you could prove to me that Christianity is all a delusion I would go home whistling.'

George Young, a rich young man, who startled me with this remark, I had met for the first time a few minutes before, in Bonanza, the great silver city, at a teachers' meeting, where the lesson studied had been the rich young ruler. George had been all that study hour the heart and soul of that group of teachers, the most thoughtful, apparently the most spiritual also, of them all. He was the teacher of a class of fifty young men, whom he held, not by greater age, but

by mental mastery. However, his superior physique, six feet and straight and round, added to the admiration and loyalty of his class, which had become his clan. He had become, in previous years, a physical director in the Y. M. C. A., and by an all-round education of his muscles, avoiding the one-sided development of an athletic specialist, had made the most of his physical possibilities. The members of his class were the more ready to accept his opinions when he had outplayed them all in the gymnasium and the ball field. He was also president of the Y. M. C. A., and a church trustee. In business he was a bank teller, with promising investments in several new silver mines. In that frontier city, where nearly all young men drank, gambled and gave free rein to passion, he had kept himself pure. In the crowd of faces about him, tanned by tobacco juice, alcohol and lust, his face seemed as white as a Greek among Turks, although it was not pale but hale. His voice was full of vim, and his step showed his whole being astir! He was what was called 'a hustler' by native frontiersmen, 'a rustler' by the more refined people.

When the preacher who led the lesson study that evening stated, as a matter of course, that it was love of money that made the rich young ruler go away from Christ sorrowful and disobedient, this rich young man had dissented with as much intensity of feeling as if he, himself, had been the subject of discussion, as indeed he was in his own mind.

'Young men,' he said, 'seldom love money for its own sake. They do not at first seek and save it even for the sake of the honor that it brings. The young man's ambition is to achieve success in whatever he undertakes, whether ball or banking. The rich young ruler held on to his money as the foot-ballist holds on to the ball, not for its sake but for the sake of victory.'

Being introduced to this young man at the close of the teachers' meeting, we found that our homeward walk would be in the same direction, and so left the house together. As we started out, he startled me by asking, with manifest earnestness, about some Bible difficulties. I replied that to my mind Christianity, in its great essentials, is a science, not a dream. He suddenly interrupted me to say, 'I have no doubts. I wish I had. If you could prove to me that Christianity is all a delusion I would go home whistling.'

I was stunned into silence by such words from such a source, and he continued: 'If that lesson we have just studied is really the teaching of Christ, and if Christ is our Lord and Master, what business have I rustling for the million I hope to make? Imagine Christ lolling at ease in a millionaire's coach and castle while men and women and children die all about Him for want of relief or reform. A Christian has no right to devote his chief energies to making his fortune, and that is the very thing I want to do.'

I could only say that a good Dives can do much good.

He replied almost fiercely, apparently speaking not so much to me as to himself: 'The devil has told me that a hundred times, but it's a lie—in the sense he means it. I may have the feast if I will not forget to do good to somebody with the crumbs. I don't love money but I love success. I want to excel in business as I used to in ball. I want a fine house as I used to want the lesser prizes that crowned my victories in sports.'

He paused, hesitated, and went on: 'And the girl I love I want to enthrone as my queen in a palace. She is not poor exactly,