



### 'Is the Young Man Safe?'

(II. Sam. xviii., 29.)

'Is the young man Absalom safe?' saith he;  
Let the King have prompt reply:  
'Is the young man Absalom safe? Ah, me!  
'Tis a parent's yearning cry.  
They have fought his foes; the victor's won,  
And the treason plot is dead;  
But, oh! for the fate of a rebel son  
His heart is heavy as lead.  
'Is the young man safe?' 'tis the anxious  
thought  
Of the throbbing hearts at home,  
When a rumor of victory, dearly bought,  
From the far-off field has come.  
Has he fallen, smit, with the leaden hail,  
Where the field is strewn with dead?  
Or spared, shall he yet rehearse the tale  
How his country's bravest bled?  
Is the young man safe? He has found his  
way  
From his boyhood's peaceful glen,  
To a city life with its subtle sway  
O'er the vassal souls of men.  
In the whiff of a dainty cigarette,  
And a coxcomb's posing air,  
There is slender promise of fruit as yet  
For a parent's pious care.  
Is the young man safe, when the fuming cup  
Is flushing his heart and brain,  
And his baser self is rising up  
In its strong desire to reign?  
Let the tears on a mother's cheek so pale  
The sorrowful answer be;  
Or the tone of a father's stifled wail,  
'Would God I had died for thee!'  
Can the young be safe while the snares are rife,  
And the tempter rules with power?  
Shall they stand or fall in the mortal strife?  
'Tis the question of the hour.  
God smite the foe of our country's youth,  
Frustrating his dire design;  
And let our sons for the cause of truth  
Be girt with a strength divine!  
—W. Maxwell, in 'Irish League Journal.'

### Jimmie's Account.

The dead twigs of the bare trees snapped and whirled hither and thither in the cold, sleety wind. Some of the twigs struck Jimmie in the face as he ran toward home, carrying his school books. He had found that the stinging cold did not pinch his feet so badly if he ran fast. Poor feet! A toe peeped out here and there through the rents in his old shoes.

Though Jimmie's feet were aching, his heart was full of joy, for he had in his pocket the last dime needed to pay for a new pair of shoes. Mr. Boulder had kept the shoes for him for two months now, waiting until Jimmie could make up the full amount, one dollar and a half. He had paid all but twenty-five cents, and the dime in his pocket, added to the fifteen cents hidden at home, would settle his bill and give him the shoes.

Jimmie was the son of the drunkard, Tom Hillbrecht. Although but twelve years old, this neglected boy was able to earn many a dime, which he sadly needed. His father often took his money away from him, and passed it over to Mr. Saybright, the saloonkeeper. Jimmie had learned that the only way to save money enough for his shoes was to hide some of his earnings. He did not leave his money in the house any length of time, for his home was a small, shabby place, and his father always succeeded in finding the hidden money.

When Jimmie reached the door of his home this cold wintry day, he did not burst into the house with a shout as most boys would have done; he was too cautious for that. He opened the door noiselessly and looked at his mother inquiringly. She seemed to know what he meant, for she shook her head and smiled at him. Then he eagerly cried:

'I have enough money to pay for my shoes, mamma! Can't I go right over and get them before father comes home?'

'Not to-night, Jimmie. The last stick of wood is in the stove, and you must gather some more at once.'

Jimmie never disobeyed his mother. After he had gone up the rickety stairs to his corner overhead, and hid away his precious dime, he got his cart and hurried off to the woodyard to gather up some refuse wood which the owner had kindly given him.

He had not been gone long when Mr. Hillbrecht came home. For once sober. He had no money to buy drink that day, and the bartender would not trust him. He had been a kind husband and father before the drink habit mastered him, and his wife still clung to him, never giving up hope.

He glanced at the table spread for the evening meal, and saw how meagre was the supply of food. Then a thought came to him, and he stumbled up the stairs to the loft overhead, to hunt for his long neglected rifle. He used to be a good shot; perhaps even now he could win the turkey in the shooting match next day. He took down the rifle, dusted it, and looked around for something with which to clean it. A wad of old rags was stuffed behind a rafter. He pulled it out, and down rolled something metallic on the floor. He stooped and picked up a dime. His eyes glittered. He could get his usual glass, and with the thought he started toward the stairway. But stop! There might be more money, so he shook out the rags, and there fell from them a paper wad. He undid it, and found another dime and a nickle. As he thrust them into his pocket, he noticed writing in figures on the paper. This is what he saw:

Oct. 2.—Paid Mister Boulder a dime. Earned it carrying water for Mrs. Green. O how my back ached.

Oct. 15.—Paid Mister Boulder 15 cents. Earned a quarter but had to give father ten cents for likker.

Oct. 25.—Paid 10 cents more on my shoes.

Nov. 2.—Got up at three and raked leaves for squire Green. Got 25 cents. He's going to pay Mister Boulder so father wont get it for likker.

Nov. 9.—Sold the bread bord I made at sloyd. Mother said she could get along without it as well as she had done. Got fifty cents and paid to Mister Boulder.

Nov. 20.—Tom Saybright twitted me to day of being a drunkard's son. My! wasn't I mad! 'Who made him a drunkard?' I sang out. Tom luffed and said something more hateful still about the frills on my shoes. O dear—shall I ever get new ones? Paid in 15 cents to-day. Only 25 more to pay.

Nov. 23.—Earned 15 cents. I wonder if I had some real heavy stockings if I couldnt get along with these shoes. Mother needs so many things before snow comes. Couldnt see Mister Boulder to-night. Father didnt ask for enny money. Seems to have enough and is drinking awful. Mother cries a lot.

A flush of shame crept over Mr. Hillbrecht's face as he read by the fading light. He began to review the past years and to see to what depths he had fallen. He did not hear Jimmie coming up the stairs, and was only aroused by his little son's cry of dismay as he saw that his father had found his money.

'Don't take it from me, father!' he begged piteously.

The poor drunkard gazed at the handsome boy with his threadbare garments and tattered shoes, and then thought of the pampered son of the saloonkeeper. What made the difference? He knew, and he vowed that Jimmie should have a fair chance with other boys.

Taking Jimmie's hand, he said, 'Come with me.' Jimmie did not dare disobey, but as they left the house and went toward the business part of town, his little heart throbbed with fear and pain, for he felt that his father was going to the saloon to spend the hard-earned money. His father had never before taken him to the saloon, and as they stood in the doorway Jimmie held back, but his father drew him in and up to the counter.

'I've come to tell you that this is the last time I'll ever cross this threshold,' said Mr. Hillbrecht to the astonished saloonkeeper. 'I'm going to give my boy a fair chance with yours. It's my money and the money of such fools as these,' he added, as he looked round at the loafers who had been his companions, 'that keeps your family in such fine style, and gives them a chance to sneer at our ragged children. You'll never get another cent from me.'

Then he stalked out of the saloon, still holding Jimmie by the hand; he hastened home;

father, mother and children rejoiced together. Traps and snares were laid for him, but he stood true to his vows and he became a good husband, a loving father, a true Christian and a law-abiding citizen.—The 'Presbyterian Witness.'

### The Golden Goblet: a Christmas Story.

(Maggie Fearn, in 'Alliance News.')

(Continued.)

The old dame shook her head apprehensively. 'So traitorous an act has never shadowed a Christmas banquet in the castle hall,' said she, in an agitated whisper. 'The custom must be maintained. My lord's anger would never be appeased should any refuse. Once angered, he is said never to forgive, and the honor of his ancient house is dear to him as life.'

Like a statue, stood the beautiful lady; like a shadow fearing coming evil hovered the old nurse.

'When will my lord return?' asked the Lady Elvira. 'I would speak with him before he enters the banquetting hall. Aileen, let my order be made known. I have a word for his ear alone.'

The old dame curtsied low.

'Maybe, fair mistress, the Lord Roderick will be late at the chase, and will come back in haste,' she said.

The lady turned away restlessly, and at that moment the tiring woman came to seek her, saying it was time my lady should dress for the banquet. But all the fascination of toilette duties, and the grave importance of the tiring room, could not lift the cloud from Lady Elvira's white brow; and she hastened her attendant, and when the last touches had been added to the adornments of her graceful person, she threw aside the tapestry hangings, which shaded one of the high casements in her chamber, and looked out anxiously along the frozen highway, by which her lord should come. Why did he tarry? The impatience which had seized her upon the recital of the ancient story in the oaken gallery consumed her. There was a great outcry in her secret heart against some hidden danger. How fast the precious moments were speeding past! Oh, why did not her lord return?

List! Were there not sounds of chargers' hoofs ringing on the icebound flinty road? The ringing of iron-shod hoofs, and the clang and clash of steel armour? But the hour was late, and already the banquet was prepared. She wrung her jewelled hands. Why was she hampered with those gleaming satin robes and loaded with priceless gems? She had a frantic desire to tear them off, and throw them aside in her hapless misery, and fly adown the castle corridors, and stairs, and kneel at her dear lord's feet, regardless of the frozen snow and icy breath of the winter night, and the splashing mire of horse and rider.

Yet she dared not, she dared not: and the moments flew on, and the herald sounded the summons to the Christmas banquet. She drew her gleaming robes about her, and choked back the suffocating terror which held her in its iron grasp. She cast one hasty glance over the oak carving before descending to the great hall, and saw on its cloth of crimson and gold embroidery the sparkling Golden Goblet. Then her little feet, encased in their white satin shoes, tiny as Cinderella's famous glass ones, twinkled from under her sheeny robes as she glided down the stairs into the banquet hall, where Lord Roderick awaited her with outstretched hand, to place her in her seat of honor at the royal feast.

'You were late at the chase, my lord,' said Lady Elvira. 'I would fain have spoken to you before the banquet.'

'You shall speak with me when and where you list, sweet mistress,' answered he, with light gallantry. 'My ear shall be for yourself alone, when the banquet is over, and thy speech will be the dearer to me for my long waiting.'

'Yet it was before and not after, that I would fain have spoken,' she said, faintly.

(To be continued.)

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