

in his care one of the prettiest little girls, directed to Master Fred Carlton, that ever was seen.

This together with a nice little present for the Widow Gordon, was a gift from Mr. Taylor, who seemed to think, and rightly, that a part of the good fortune belonged to Fred who had put the whole of his dollar in the Easter offering, and not lost it all by spending a part.

### TED'S LENTEN COMPACT.

(Southern Churchman.)

#### CHAPTER II.

'Deck the altar with bright flowers,  
Let their fragrance fill the air.'

The clear young voices rose and fell in the glad Easter hymn, as they followed the rich baritone of their leader. It was the second Sunday in Lent, and they were practicing their Easter carols.

'Well done! Very well done, indeed!' said the instructor. 'You boys belonging to the church choir sing particularly well. Now once more,' and again they sang, the voices of Jack Murray and Ted Langham soaring above the others.

'I just tell you what, boys,' said Jack, in his most disagreeable voice, as the boys entered the vestry room after the practice, 'Ted Langham thought he was taking the roof off just now, and he came mighty near tearing his throat after Mr. Wells bragged on our singing; thought it was all meant for him.'

Some of the boys laughed and looked at Ted, expecting an angry retort, but to the surprise of all he paid no attention to what had been said. For one moment his eyes flashed, but that was all.

'I'm sorry you think so, Jack,' he answered quietly, 'but I'm glad you are mistaken. I was not fool enough to take it all to myself; and I thought your singing was unusually good.'

'Oh! you don't say so?' exclaimed Jack. 'Then turning to the others he said, in what was meant to be an awed and anxious whisper: 'What you guess is the matter with him? He must be ill; he's been as meek as a sick lamb for two weeks. Maybe he swallowed a Bible and it's disagreein' with him; hard to digest, you know.'

'I know what it is,' said Sid Thomas: 'his sister told Milly that he had promised his mother not to get mad all durin' Lent.'

'Oh, ho!' said Jack. 'That's it is it? And how much is she going to pay him? I guess she's going to get him a new Bible at Easter in place of the one he swallowed. I tell you what, fellows, it's a mighty good thing to be a good little boy and be tied to your mother's apron strings.'

'You might be tied to a great many worse things, Jack,' answered Ted. 'If more boys had been willing to be tied to their mother's apron strings they would never have been tied to the wrong end of a rope with the gallows under them.'

'He got you that time, Jack,' said Sid, laughing.

'I believe he did mean that for me,'

said Jack hotly, 'and he knew he was lying when he said it.'

'Take that back!' Ted replied, fiercely, stepping up to Jack with his fists doubled.

'Make me if you can!' Jack said.

In a moment Ted stopped, and looked Jack squarely in the eyes, said, his lips trembling with the effort he made to control himself:—

'It can go, but it's the first time I've ever taken it.'

'It won't be the last, though, if you don't take care what you say,' Jack answered.

The choir-master came in at this moment and the conversation ceased.

'Mother,' said Ted, when he reached home, 'please let me off from my promise. It's just like I knew it would be. Jack Murray has heard about my promise, and he's just doing all he can to make me break it. He's worse than ever; called me a lie to day.'

'And what did you do, my boy?'

'I was awfully angry, and came near striking him before I thought; but remembered and kept from it. Let me off, mother.'

'No, Teddy; I am prouder of you now than I would have been if you had given Jack the worst thrashing he ever had. You have won a greater victory than many a man who has taken a city, she said, kissing him.

About a week later Ted came in one day after school and told his mother he had heard that Jack Murray was quite sick.

'Some one told me so a short time ago, and I have fixed something nice for you to carry him,' said Mrs. Langham.

'Who, me, mother!' exclaimed Ted.

'Of course. The next best thing to overcoming your temper is to cultivate kind feelings. Carry it along now. Go in to see Jack if they will permit you, and ask him how he is getting on.'

When Ted arrived at Jack's home and was shown into the sick room, his heart smote him when he saw the great change that had already taken place in Jack. His face was pale and thin, as though he had been suffering. To Ted's surprise he seemed quite glad to see him, and when he rose to go asked him to come again. After this Ted called every day, but was not permitted to seek Jack again for a week, while they said he was at the point of death. Then one day the doctor told him he could go in and see Jack if he wished; that he could not live anyway except by a miracle, and had begged to see him. It was the first time Ted had ever seen one so near unto death and he felt awed.

'Ted, I want you to do something for me before I go,' said Jack, and his voice was so weak Ted could hardly hear him. 'I have been very mean to you, Ted, but I hope you'll forgive me now; and I wanted to ask you if you would not bring the boys down and sing some for me. I have been hard and wicked; I wouldn't be confirmed but Christ is so good maybe He will take me as I am. Won't you bring some of them and sing for me this afternoon?'

Ted promised, in a choking voice, and left the room. A few hours later he came back with a half dozen of

the other members of the choir. They were allowed to enter the sick room; and there by the bed side, they sang with tremulous voices several old hymns, selected by Jack himself, the last being, "Abide With Me." When they left Jack told them all good bye, and they never expected to see him alive again.

But Jack did not die. When Easter morning dawned he was better, having slept peacefully all night. The doctor said it was nothing short of a miracle, but Mrs. Langham and the boys said they believed it was in answer to the prayers each one of them sent up to God that night that Jack's life might be spared, if it was His will.

If one were to hear those two boys or any other two of Ted and Jack's acquaintance talking about them now, it would be hard to realize that they were speaking of the same boys, so different would be their verdict.

And from that day to this Ted has never regretted that he gave his mother his promise and faithfully tried to keep it.

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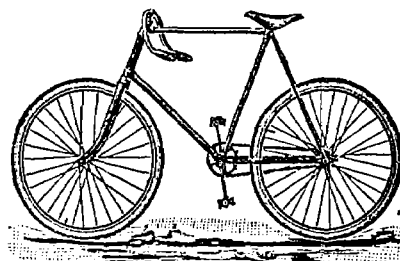
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